

**ACADEMIC POLICY 3:
Academic Quality and Standards**

2011-2012

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Academic Quality and Standards Policy

This policy was approved by Academic Board at its meeting on 22 June 2010, it is due for review in 2013.

Aims of the policy

- 1 The aim of this policy is to provide a statement outlining the University's approach to safeguarding of academic standards and the assurance and enhancement of the quality of the student learning experience. The policy complements other relevant policies and procedures including the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and supports the University goals as set out in the Strategic Plan. The Academic Quality and Standards Handbook, Academic Research Students' Handbook and the Research Ethics and Guidance and Procedures set out the regulations and procedures to underpin this policy.

Scope

- 2 The policy applies to all provision that leads to an award of the University or an award of credit. The policy covers taught and research degree programmes and collaborative provision

Definitions

- 3 Academic standards are defined as the level of achievement a student has to reach in order to achieve a Kingston University award. Academic standards are determined against nationally agreed reference points for the academic standards of higher education qualifications as set out in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and Subject Benchmark Statements. Academic standards are concerned with the appropriateness of learning outcomes (aims, content and level) and curriculum, and the effectiveness of assessment (in relation to attainment of learning outcomes).
- 4 Quality of learning experience refers to the ways in which we provide students with the best possible opportunity to meet the stated outcomes of their course and the academic standards of their intended award, through engaging in the activities provided. The types of activities which are likely to contribute to the student experience include: learning, teaching, assessment¹ and academic guidance practices; deployment of learning resources; recruitment and admission; careers advice and guidance; pastoral support; provision of information and academic appeals, complaint and grievance procedures.

¹ Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy: goals and objectives

Principles

Framework

- 5 The University quality assurance and enhancement procedures operate within a framework set out within the Academic Quality and Standards Handbook, Academic Regulations, Research Students' Handbook and the Research Ethics and Guidance and Procedures. These documents are published widely and available on the internet and staffspace and make clear responsibility for academic quality and standards. The requirements set out in these documents are regularly reviewed in consultation with staff and students and changes are approved by Academic Board and its sub-committees.
- 6 The University aims to ensure its processes operate efficiently and wherever possible avoid duplication and align with other quality assurance processes and requirements in HE.
- 7 The framework ensures that:
 - Each course/module is subject to rigorous validation, monitoring and review to ensure appropriate standards and enhance the quality of the learning experience
 - Each course/module will be set at the appropriate level for the course module as set against the FHEQ and University level descriptors
 - Each course/module will have a programme specification/module descriptor with clearly stated learning outcomes and assessment aligned with and based on the achievement of specified learning outcomes
 - Each course/module operates in accordance with the University academic regulations and assessment requirements

8 Communication

- The associated documentation will be accessible to staff and students as appropriate.
- The University complies with external requirements for information provision including Teaching Quality Information².

9 Responsibility

- The University's Academic Board takes ultimate responsibility for safeguarding of the academic standards of awards and enhancement of the quality of the student learning experience
- All staff, whether directly providing teaching and learning or whether providing supporting services and systems, have responsibility for contributing to the maintenance of academic standards and enhancement of the quality of the students learning experience

² Teaching Quality Information HEFCE 03/51

- The University will maintain institutional oversight of quality assurance and enhancement processes so as to ensure that local responsibilities are met and to identify generic issues and opportunities that may arise
- The Academic Quality and Standards Handbook and Academic Regulations will set out responsibility for named individuals or posts in respect of quality assurance and regulatory requirements

10 Externality

- The University will include input and judgements from those external to the University within its quality assurance and enhancement processes including but not limited to, validation, review, external examining and audit, to ensure comparability of standards with other UK Higher Education Institutions
- The University takes account of external quality assurance and enhancement requirements including those of the QAA Academic Infrastructure³
- The University includes where possible representation from its partners in quality assurance and enhancement processes and within the University committee structure
- The University wherever possible seeks to ensure its programmes are approved or accredited by appropriate professional, statutory or regulatory bodies

Stakeholders

- 11 The University will ensure that relevant stakeholders are consulted regarding their views of the quality of provision and take account of these views in the quality assurance and enhancement processes. This includes the views of staff, students, graduates, employers, partners and professional, regulatory and statutory bodies.

Enhancement

- 12 The University reflects on its activities and seeks to improve both the quality of the student learning experience by enhancing learning opportunities and the processes for quality assurance and enhancement. This is approached through a process combining systematic reflection and active planning. It is achieved through:

- Annual priorities established, monitored and evaluated
- Based on evidence and data derived from annual monitoring, student feedback and assessment and progression data including targets and objectives
- Routine and periodic evaluation of quality assurance and enhancement activities including identification of good practice⁴

³ The QAA Academic Infrastructure includes the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, Subject Benchmark Statements and the Code of Practice of the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education.

⁴ Reports to ARC, QEC, AQSR, UIC, FSEG

- Evaluation of approaches to learning and teaching and assessment including identification of good practice
- Effective and incentivised educational and staff development to support the achievement of quality enhancement including the HEA accredited PGCLTHE
- Identification, dissemination and adoption of good practice