

Introduction

Index

	<i>Paragraph number</i>
• Purpose of the Academic Quality and Standards Handbook (AQSH)	1-2
• Quality Assurance and Enhancement Processes and Structures	3
○ The University's Management Structure	4-6
○ Academic Board and its' sub-committees	7-8
○ Academic Directorate	9-10
○ Academic Regulations Committee	11
○ Quality Enhancement Committee	12
○ Academic Quality and Standards Review Group	13
○ Accreditation and Approval Board	14
○ Student Experience Group	15
○ External Examiner Approvals Board	16
○ Faculty level Committee Structures	17-20
○ Field Leader or Director of Study/Board of Study	21-23
○ Management of Modules	24
○ Revisions to the Quality and Regulatory Framework	25

Guidance

- (i) Committee structure diagram
- (ii) Summary of key quality assurance and enhancement processes in relation to the committee structure
- (iii) Current fee levels

Purpose of the Academic Quality and Standards Handbook (AQSH)

1. The Academic Quality and Standards Handbook (AQSH) is intended to provide guidance and information to all participants involved in quality assurance and enhancement across the University. The University discharges its responsibilities for the quality assurance and enhancement of taught provision through the procedures set out in the AQSH. The Handbook has been framed in the context of the University's Policy on Academic Standards and Quality and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (*available on StaffSpace – [Academic Regulations](#)*).
2. The AQSH covers the following areas:
 - academic planning and collaborative partnerships (*sections A and B*)
 - validation (*section C*)
 - internal subject review (*section D*)
 - internal quality audit (*section E*)
 - annual review and development (*section F*)
 - changes to validated fields (*section G*)
 - accreditation processes (*section H*)
 - appointment of external examiners (*section I*)
 - professional and statutory body accreditation or recognition (*section J*)
 - external quality assurance and enhancement requirements (*section K*)
 - student feedback (*section L*)
 - research degrees (*section M*)

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Processes and Structures

3. The University's approach to managing academic standards and quality is through both the executive and deliberative structures of the University and operates with the framework set out in the [Academic Quality and Standards Policy](#) which includes the:
 - Academic Quality and Standards Handbook (AQSH)
 - Regulations for Taught and Research Degree provision; and
 - Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Strategy and related documents

The University's Management Structure

4. The University is led by the Vice-Chancellor (VC), supported by his senior management team which comprises the:
 - Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC)
 - Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)
 - Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Support and Student Services)

Introduction

- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Corporate Affairs) and University Secretary
 - Director of Finance
 - Head of Planning
5. Overall management responsibility for the quality and standards of all awards lies with the Vice Chancellor. In practice the DVC has responsibility for taught awards of the University and the PVC (Research and Enterprise) research degrees. The DVC works closely with the PVC (Academic Support and Student Services) in relation to the collaborative provision academic portfolio.
6. The DVC/PVC portfolio is balanced in the following way:
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor: responsible for academic planning learning and teaching, Quality Assurance/Quality Enhancement (*Learning and Teaching and Curriculum*)
 - Pro Vice-Chancellor: responsible for research and enterprise, including elements of employer engagement associated with enterprise (*Research and Enterprise*)
 - Pro Vice-Chancellor: responsible for students and academic support (*Student Experience*)
 - Pro Vice-Chancellor and University Secretary: responsible for governance/legal matters, Human Resources, Estates and Communications (*Organisation and Management*)

Academic Board and its sub-committees

7. Deliberative consideration of academic standards and quality matters is undertaken at University level by Academic Board and its sub-committees which:
- provide direction for quality assurance and enhancement, curriculum development, and the enhancement of pedagogical practice
 - develop and approve changes to relevant policies and strategies
 - approve amendments to the academic regulations, academic quality procedures, accreditation handbook and related documentation
 - receive and consider reports on outcomes from, and the effectiveness of, quality assurance and enhancement and curriculum development
8. Key sub-committees of Academic Board (AB) with roles in academic management include the following:
- Academic Directorate
 - Academic Regulations Committee
 - Quality Enhancement Committee
 - Academic Quality and Standards Review Group
 - Accreditation and Approvals Board
 - Student Experience Group
 - Faculty Boards
 - Research Committee
 - Assessment Boards

Introduction

Fuller details of these committees can be found at [University Committees](#)

Academic Directorate (AD)

9. AD is the body that considers outline proposals for new field developments or new collaborative partnerships and makes recommendations to AB that these should proceed to validation or, in the case of new partnerships, that a collaborative partnership should be approved or re-approved. AD is the link between the planning processes and validation.
10. AD also considers changes to field titles, modes and length of delivery of fields and the withdrawal of fields from validation and makes recommendations to AB.
[AD Terms of Reference](#)

Academic Regulations Committee (ARC)

11. ARC considers all matters pertaining to the University regulations and assessment processes for approval and recommendation to AB and reports directly to AB.
[ARC Terms of Reference](#)

Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC)

12. QEC is a sub-committee of AB and is the central quality assurance and quality enhancement committee of the University. The University monitors the effectiveness of its processes for quality assurance and enhancement through QEC and its sub-committees and working groups. QEC has a number of sub-committees with delegated authority to perform particular functions. The sub-committees refer major policy issues, areas of concern and issues of strategic importance to QEC.
[QEC Terms of Reference](#)

Academic Quality and Standards Review Group (AQSRG)

13. AQSR is a sub-committee of QEC. It has been established as a forum for the consideration of matters relating to quality assurance policy and procedures.
[AQSR Terms of Reference](#)

Accreditation and Approval Board (AAB)

14. AAB takes a central role in administering the accreditation processes, as a sub-board of QEC.
[AAB Terms of Reference](#)

Student Experience Group (SEG)

15. SEG was established as a consequence of the NSS. The committee is the key focus for the receipt and consideration of the output of all institutional student satisfaction surveys, both internal and external. SEG also ensures that all key stakeholders are involved in consultation regarding matters relating to the student experience.

External Examiner Approvals Board (EEAB)

16. EEAB is responsible for the approval of all external examiner nominations. The committee is chaired by the DVC and its membership includes one senior

Introduction

member of academic staff from each of the faculties.

Faculty level committee structures

17. Faculties have committee structures developed in line with the terms of reference laid out by AB. Faculty committees consider issues related to academic development, quality assurance and learning enhancement of taught programmes, and the quality assurance and enhancement of research degree provision. The precise structure and constitution of the committees vary from faculty to faculty in order to best meet local circumstances; nonetheless the overall committee structure and functions at faculty level must fulfill all AB requirements.
18. The key faculty level committees are:
 - Faculty Board – [see Terms of Reference](#)
 - Faculty Forum – see section L
 - Boards of Study (BoS) – see section F
 - Student Staff Consultation Committees (SSCC) - see section L
19. Faculty boards have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the University's requirements for quality assurance are fulfilled at faculty level. In practice, faculties delegate most of this responsibility to a faculty quality assurance committee (or equivalent). The key agenda items for the faculty quality assurance committee when considering new fields are set out in section C, guidance CG(ii).
20. Faculties have quality assurance responsibilities through their formal structures in the following areas:

Validation of new fields	section C and B
Review of existing fields	section D and B
Changes to validated fields	section G
Annual review and development	section F
External examining: appointment and reporting/responses	section I
Student feedback	section L

Field Leader or Director of Studies/Board of Study

21. Specified sets of modules are validated as being available to contribute to a named field which may be a full, major, half or minor field. Each field must have a designated Field Leader/Director of Studies whose primary responsibility is to safeguard the academic coherence of the field and the interests of cohorts of students taking a programme of study drawn from the field.
22. Field Leaders/Directors of Study will be responsible for admissions to the field (unless delegated to the admissions tutor) and for the quality assurance of the award.

Introduction

23. Field Leaders/Directors of Study will be supported by Boards of Study responsible for the academic coherence of the field. The Board is responsible for tracking the experience of students following programmes of study chosen from the modules in the fields concerned. Boards will include all module leaders for modules contributing to the field, the Field Leader(s) and appropriate Head(s) of School.

Management of modules

24. All modules should have a designated module leader responsible for the delivery and quality of the module. The module leader is supported by a module teaching team.

Revisions to the quality and regulatory framework

25. The academic quality and standards and regulatory policies and procedures are determined centrally in consultation with faculties, and revised on a regular basis (annually in the case of the procedures and regulations) to reflect changing demands and to improve efficacy. Any such changes are approved at University level by QEC in the case of the AQSH via AQSRG, by ARC in the case of the academic regulations and by the University Research Degrees Committee (URDC) in the case of research degree regulations. QEC also considers matters in relation to learning and teaching to ensure that full synergy is achieved between quality assurance and enhancement activities. Responsibility for fulfilling procedural requirements is devolved to Faculties. This devolution is coupled with associated central monitoring and evaluation by the University's deliberative structure.