

INTRODUCTION TO THE QUALITY FRAMEWORK 2015/16

CONTENTS

Overview and purpose	2
External reference points.....	2
The principles which underpin our quality activities.....	3
Overarching University-level responsibilities for academic quality and standards	3
Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee	3
Collaborative Provision Committee	4
Quality & Standards Committee	4
The University Approvals Board.....	4
The Head of Academic Quality.....	4
Monitoring the effectiveness of the Quality Framework	5

Overview and purpose

1. The Quality Framework is the definitive source of information on the University's approach to academic quality assurance and enhancement. It is the authoritative reference point for all academic quality activities University-wide and provides advice and guidance which must be followed on the application of the University's academic regulations.
2. The Quality Framework draws together a series of inter-linked activities, which support the design, development, delivery, monitoring and review of the University's taught award or credit-bearing provision. The Quality Framework also serves to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the assurance and enhancement of the student learning experience by defining key activities and responsibilities.
3. The Quality Framework is applied under devolved arrangements University-wide. From August 2015 responsibility for implementing operational procedures affecting the quality and standard of taught award or credit-bearing provision is devolved to school-level. See School-level responsibilities for academic quality and standards for detailed information on individual and group responsibilities relating to the implementation of the Quality Framework. Joint membership of University and school-level committees provides a mechanism to help to ensure consistent and full implementation of the Quality Framework.

[Back to Contents](#)

External reference points

4. [The UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) sets out the formal expectations that all UK higher education providers reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency are required to meet. It is the nationally agreed, definitive point of reference for all those who deliver or support UK higher education programmes.
5. The [Scottish Funding Council published guidance](#) to higher education institutions on quality which came into effect from August 2012. Within this guidance the Funding Council expects institutions to have a clearly articulated, strategic approach to quality assurance and enhancement. The guidance indicates that the primary mechanism by which institutions assure and enhance the quality of provision is through processes of institution-led evaluation and review which include the following seven defined characteristics:
 - a) all provision should be reviewed on a cycle of not more than six years
 - b) institution-led reviews should take full account of benchmarks and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
 - c) institution-led reviews should continue to embed and develop the use of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
 - d) institution-led reviews should provide an objective review of provision based on an understanding of national and international good practice. Each review team should include at least one external member with a relevant background
 - e) institution-led processes should fully engage students in quality arrangements
 - f) institution-led reviews should consider the effectiveness of annual monitoring arrangements and follow-up action for programmes covered by the review
 - g) assurance and enhancement.

6. The Quality Framework has been developed and designed to:
- a) enable the University to be confident that the expectations of the above external reference points have been met
 - b) facilitate the implementation of the University's academic regulations, Strategy 2020: Building on Success and Academic Strategy
 - c) set out a set of appropriate and tried and tested procedures for the assurance of academic standards and quality.

[Back to Contents](#)

The principles which underpin our quality activities

7. The principles which define our academic quality and standards and which underpin our quality activities are:
- a) national benchmarks (the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, subject and qualification benchmark statements and professional, statutory and regulatory body accreditation)
 - b) internal and external scrutiny (peer involvement in all approval, monitoring and review activities to quality enhance and assure)
 - c) internal and external calibration (external examining system and quantitative analysis of internal and external student progression and achievement data)
 - d) the quality of learning, teaching and assessment as demonstrated through annual, regular monitoring and evaluation at module, programme and subject-levels
 - e) to have an institutional quality system where the programme provides the focus for enhancing the quality of learning, teaching and assessment
 - f) to have an institutional quality system where academic and business matters related to programme development, delivery and review are clearly separated.

[Back to Contents](#)

Overarching University-level responsibilities for academic quality and standards

8. **Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee** is responsible to Academic Board for overseeing all learning, teaching and assessment activities associated with award or credit-bearing provision including the strategic management of the taught academic portfolio and of quality assurance and enhancement activities managed and led by Collaborative Provision Committee and Quality & Standards Committee. Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee approves annually academic regulations and Quality Framework procedures for implementation in the following academic session.

[Back to Contents](#)

9. **Collaborative Provision Committee** is responsible to Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee for overseeing all award or credit-bearing provision delivered in partnership ensuring that the design, delivery, approval, monitoring and review of all provision delivered in partnership meets University and sector quality and standards expectations in accordance with Quality Framework Section 4: Managing provision delivered in partnership.

[Back to Contents](#)

10. **Quality & Standards Committee** is responsible to Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee for overseeing the quality and standard of all taught award or credit-bearing provision through maintaining, monitoring and reviewing academic regulations and a coherent framework of internal quality assurance and enhancement procedures which take account of and meet external expectations.

[Back to Contents](#)

11. **The University Approvals Board** is responsible to Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee for considering all proposals to approve taught award or credit-bearing programmes in accordance with Quality Framework Section 1c: Academic approval of taught award or credit-bearing provision.

[Back to Contents](#)

12. **The Head of Academic Quality** is responsible to Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee for:

- a) maintaining, monitoring and reviewing academic regulations and the Quality Framework to ensure that external expectations relating to internal quality assurance and enhancement procedures for taught award or credit-bearing provision are met
- b) ensuring that each school is provided with a named point of contact to help to ensure that each school's approach to academic quality assurance and enhancement takes full account of academic regulations and Quality Framework expectations
- c) providing an annual summary report to Quality & Standards Committee on the outcomes of internal quality assurance and enhancement activities associated with taught award or credit-bearing provision which:
 - i) confirms or otherwise that the quality and standard of all taught award or credit-bearing provision is being designed, developed, approved, monitored and reviewed in accordance with academic regulations and Quality Framework expectations
 - ii) identifies clearly any potential risks to the quality and standard of taught award or credit-bearing provision and the action taken or proposed to address matters raised
 - iii) shares identified features of good or innovative practice, strengths and achievements and areas for further enhancement
 - iv) comments on any matters relating to the effectiveness of the implementation of academic regulations and the Quality Framework and provides suggestions for its continuing development where appropriate.

[Back to Contents](#)

Monitoring the effectiveness of the Quality Framework

13. Monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of the Quality Framework will be undertaken by Academic Quality on behalf of Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee.

14. Academic Quality will gather feedback and comment on the effectiveness of the implementation of the Quality Framework from appropriate School Academic Leads, School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committees and appropriate school support officers.

15. The process will take place annually in February or March. This will enable the Quality Framework to be considered for approval for implementation in the following academic session at the final meeting of Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee, typically May in each academic session. The reporting period will therefore include all academic quality activities undertaken in Trimesters 2 and 3 of the preceding academic session and Trimester 1 of the academic session in which feedback is gathered.

16. Academic Quality will use the feedback and comment to produce an annual summary report on the effectiveness of the Quality Framework. The report will comment on any matters relating to the effectiveness of our processes and procedures and provide suggestions for the continuing development of the Quality Framework where appropriate. The report will be made available to School Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committees for comment.

17. The report will confirm or otherwise that the quality and standard of taught provision is being enhanced and maintained in accordance with University expectations. Any potential risks to the quality and standard of taught award or credit-bearing provision resulting from the implementation of the Quality Framework and the action taken or proposed to address matters raised will be highlighted. The report also provides a further opportunity to share identified features of good or innovative practice, strengths and achievements and areas for further enhancement.

18. Quality & Standards Committee will be asked to consider the report and approve any recommendations made. Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee will be asked to endorse decisions made by Quality & Standards Committee at which point the Quality Framework for the following academic session will be deemed to be formally approved. Academic Board will note through receipt of minutes that taught award or credit-bearing provision is being assured and enhanced in accordance with sector expectations.

[Back to Contents](#)