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This document is part of the Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures which govern the University's academic provision. Each document has a unique document number to indicate which section of the series it belongs to.

1B – Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework: Policy

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1.1 The University quality assurance and enhancement framework is comprised of a range of policies and procedures that allow the routine monitoring and regular review of all its programmes in order to assure and enhance the quality of the student experience and to set, maintain and manage academic standards. This document provides the overarching principles and summarises the key features which define the quality assurance and enhancement framework operated within the University.

2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 **Senate** is responsible for the academic affairs of the University, including the academic standards and quality of the University's awards and programmes. Ultimate responsibility for assuring the educational quality and academic standards of all the University's provision, whether delivered at the University or elsewhere, rests with Senate.

2.2 **Education Committee** advises Senate on matters affecting the educational quality of programmes, formulates policy and oversees and reviews the processes for programme development. The Committee is also responsible on behalf of Senate for monitoring and enhancing the overall student experience, including the quality of learning opportunities, education enhancement, pastoral, personal development and extra-curricular opportunities available to students.

2.3 **Faculty Education Committee** are responsible for the monitoring process and for ensuring that effective action is taken to maintain standards and to enhance quality.

2.4 **Academic Quality** is responsible for the maintenance and development of the system of academic quality assurance throughout the University and its partners.

2.5 **The Vice-Chancellor's** responsibilities include the determination, after consultation with Senate, of the University's academic activities and the organisation, direction and management of the University and leadership of the staff.

2.6 **Executive Deans of Faculties** are responsible to the University Board for the leadership and overall management of their respective Faculty in accordance with their job descriptions and the policies and Financial Regulations of the University. They may delegate responsibility for specific aspects of management as appropriate to other individuals or bodies of the Faculty, but retain ultimate responsibility for the management of their Faculty.

3. ACCESSING OTHER RELEVANT BU DOCUMENTS

3.1 All documents can be accessed [here](#)

This policy should be read in conjunction with all documents within the Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures (ARPP) series

Policy

4.   DEFINITIONS

4.1   The University is responsible for the academic standards and quality of all its programmes and awards and for the quality assurance mechanisms which help to maintain standards and enhance the learning opportunities available to students.

4.2   The University uses the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) definitions of academic standards and quality:

Academic standards 'describe the level of achievement that a student has to reach to gain an academic award'. For equivalent awards, the threshold level of achievement should be the same across the UK. To ensure the University awards are at a similar level to those across the UK, the University draws on key reference points provided by the QAA, including subject benchmark statements, qualification and credit frameworks and characteristics statements (please see *2A Awards of the University: Policy)*.

Academic quality is a way of describing 'how well the learning opportunities available to students enable them to achieve their award'. It is about ensuring that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment, learning opportunities and resources are provided for students.

4.3   The University has developed robust **quality assurance** policies and procedures to evidence how academic standards are set, maintained and reviewed and how academic quality is monitored and reviewed within a culture of continuous **quality enhancement.** Enhancement of quality requires the systematic consideration of key data at programme and institutional level to identify areas for improvement and to capitalise on good practice.

5   DELIVERY OF AWARDS

5.1   The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework applies to all taught and research degree programmes and awards delivered by the University, including the award of credit. University provision is mainly delivered on University campuses (including branch campuses[1]) or at partner institutions through formally agreed partnership arrangements.

5.2   The majority of University programmes are delivered on a traditional attendance basis with an emphasis on blended learning. Blended learning is a term used to describe arrangements where online learning methods are used in combination with face-to-face learning. The University also encourages flexible and distributed learning (FDL). FDL is defined as educational provision which is wholly or substantially delivered, supported or assessed without involving attendance at the University's campuses, or those of its partner institutions. Some programmes or units may also be delivered entirely by distance learning and/or e-learning.

5.3   In some instances, the academic provision leading to the University's academic awards may also contribute to qualifications and accreditation awarded by external bodies e.g. the Institute for Apprenticeships and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). For this kind of provision, the University works closely with a range of relevant stakeholder groups to ensure alignment with the requirements of these external bodies.

6   KEY FEATURES AND CHARACTERISTICS

6.1   The University's quality assurance and enhancement framework features the following:

- Initial programme approval;
- Continuous monitoring and annual reporting at programme level;
- External examining of programmes;

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[1] A branch campus is a delivery location where BU is not the owner or sole tenant but where it has day-to-day management responsibility for the facilities, staffing and learning resources specifically linked to the delivery of BU programmes by BU staff. Current branch campuses are: The Education Centre, St Mary's Community Health Campus, Portsmouth and the University Centre Yeovil.

- Internal student surveys and other feedback mechanisms;
- Periodic programme review and closure review;
- Formal approval of programme modifications;
- Involvement of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB) where appropriate;
- Annual and periodic institution-led monitoring, review and audit.

6.2   The quality assurance and enhancement framework is characterised by:

- External and internal independent scrutiny by peers;
- Equality of opportunity and fairness to students;
- Active involvement of key stakeholders, notably students, employers and the academic community;
- Responsiveness to feedback and a commitment to continuous improvement and enhancement;
- Regular reflective practice by academic teams;
- Clear deliberative channels of responsibility for the oversight of quality and standards;
- Internal and external accountability;
- Transparent and accessible information to stakeholders;
- Alignment with the University strategic direction;
- Openness to challenge and scrutiny by stakeholders;
- Regular review of all components of the quality assurance and enhancement framework.

7   STAKEHOLDERS

7.1   Successful implementation of the framework relies upon the effective and critical engagement of the key stakeholders, namely:

- current students;
- graduates of the University;
- employers;
- professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;
- the staff of the University;
- the wider academic community;
- funding bodies and other external agencies.

7.2   Students are the key stakeholders for programmes and accordingly student involvement and contribution is encouraged through the quality assurance and enhancement framework at all levels, including committee representation, internal review and audit mechanisms.

7.3   Employers and PSRBs have a vested interest in the quality of graduates and are the custodians of professional standards. They are normally consulted by staff in the process of programme development. For some programmes the employer or PSRB may commission the development of a programme. It is normal University practice to draw upon individuals with industrial, commercial and professional experience for the purpose of establishing panels which evaluate programmes. It uses them as advisers to programme teams and Faculties and includes individuals with such experience in teams of external examiners.

7.4   Faculty staff, in collaboration with professional services staff, design and deliver programmes based upon knowledge of students' needs. They are familiar with the needs of specific employment markets and use their subject and professional expertise to analyse in detail the needs of employers, and to design and deliver programmes to meet these needs. This expertise is drawn upon to design and evaluate programmes.

7.5   Academic and professional communities have a generic interest in the advancement of their academic area or profession. Members of the University, as part of those communities, are aware of new developments and make them part of the process of quality assurance and enhancement within the University.

7.6   Funding bodies and other external agencies have a statutory interest in obtaining value for money from the public funds invested in Higher Education, and therefore in the quality of the University's educational provision.

General

8 REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

8.1 Office for Students

8.2 The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

8.3 The UK Quality Code for Higher Education

8.4 Advanced HE

8.5 The University's Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures (ARPP)

8.6 This policy was reviewed according to the University's Equality Analysis Procedure in June 2019.