01.1

QUALITY AND STANDARDS ASSURANCE OVERVIEW AND POLICY

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Vol 2 - 01.1 - Quality and Standards Assurance Overview and Policy – modified 22.09.08, 17.08.09, 25.10.11, 01.11.11, 27.09.19, 22.01.24

1

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

QUALITY ASSURANCE OVERVIEW

1 Introduction

1.1 The University committed to the development, implementation and operation of systems to assure the quality of its programmes.

1.2 The systems currently in use have been developed over a number of years and are centred around the three main mechanisms of:

- validation of programmes

- annual programme monitoring

- periodic programme review

1.3 Each of these mechanisms is described elsewhere, so the purpose of this overview is to indicate how they link together and how they interface with other university systems to provide comprehensive monitoring, reporting and action.

1.4 Interlinked systems are the University's committee structure - including the Programme Committees, School Committees, Academic Board and its Sub-Boards - the normal minimum entry and exceptional entry system, the External Examiner system, the student feedback system and the various systems of external observation.

2 Validation

2.1 Validation attempts to ensure that programmes introduced into the University's portfolio meet threshold requirements in terms of quality and standards. It investigates staffing, resources, content, assessment, etc., and the inclusion of external panel members gives a degree of confidence that standards achieved on the programme are likely to be comparable with those elsewhere.

2.2 Validation may take one of three forms:

(i) Where Cardiff Metropolitan University holds full responsibility by virtue of being the validating body, or having a relationship with the validating body such that the validation is undertaken on behalf of that body (e.g., Pearson programmes).

(ii) Where Cardiff Metropolitan University does not hold responsibility as above, in which case the validation event is an internal event, prior to final validation by the validating body.

(iii) Where a version of the programme already exists in one particular mode of study, and (an) additional mode(s) of study are to be introduced.

2.3 Details of each of the above are given elsewhere.

2.4 The outcomes of a validation event might include the imposition of conditions to be fulfilled within a stated timescale.

2.5 There are also various approved mechanisms for making changes to existing programmes.

3 Academic Quality and Standards Committee Approval

3.1 Confirmed reports of validation events are presented to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, which subsequently makes recommendation to the Academic Board with regard to approval of the programme and thus permission for it to run.

3.2 In most instances, such approval is subject to the imposed conditions being met within a stated timescale.

4 Validating Body Approval

4.1 Following or in parallel with seeking Academic Quality and Standards Committee approval, relevant material is sent to the Validating or Awarding Body, where appropriate, for its final approval. (In some instances, 'notification' might be a more appropriate word than approval).

5 Programme Enhancement Planning

5.1 Every programme for which the University offers a formal, recognised qualification must complete a Programme Enhancement Plan (PEP) report for submission to the Quality Enhancement Directorate. The report refers to the health of the programme in all aspects, and includes performance indicator information such as student outcomes, retention rates, student survey and module performance information. It also requires the programme team to highlight issues raised from validation, review and previous reports, issues raised by students, External Examiners and external assessment, and it requires them to indicate what action has been taken or is proposed; the effectiveness of such proposed action is reported in the following year's report.

5.2 Reports are scrutinised by Schools where action is monitored, and where action required to be taken by the School is considered. The School is also required to produce a Student Engagement Plan, taking account of the contents of the school PEPs.

5.3 An analysis of the themes and issues from the reports, produced by the Quality Enhancement Directorate, is used to inform meetings with each school Chaired by the Director of Learning Enhancement.

5.4 Outcomes of those meetings, along with key elements of the thematic analysis, are presented to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

5.5 In monitoring the health of programmes through this process, the University's committee structure, as referred to above, plays a crucial part. Programme teams and Committees, School Committees, and the Academic Quality and Standards Committee are each charged with the responsibilities of monitoring, reporting and taking action in regard to issues raised.

6 Periodic Programme Review

6.1 Periodic Programme Review normally takes place every five years, the first review being scheduled for the fifth year of operation after initial validation. It provides a mechanism for a comprehensive scrutiny of how the programme has operated over the review period and involves the use of external academics as panel members.

6.2 The outcomes of a review might involve the imposition of conditions and/or recommendations, as with initial validation outcomes. Details of the review process are given elsewhere.

6.3 Whilst the normal period between reviews is five years, situations may arise such that a review is brought forward or postponed. Requests for such elective review events, and requests for the postponement of review events, are therefore made by the School Planning and Management Team (through the Deputy/Associate Dean) to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, following which a schedule of events is established by the Quality Enhancement Directorate.

6.4 Confirmed reports of review events are submitted to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, which subsequently makes recommendation for approval (or otherwise) to continue the programme to the Academic Board; such approval may be subject to the fulfilment of imposed conditions.

7   Modifications to Programmes

7.1   From time to time, programmes require to be changed as a result of issues raised by students, examiners, etc., or because of changes to professional body requirements, or to bring programme content more up-to-date or, indeed, as a result of University policy.

7.2   A mechanism exists to facilitate such change, whilst at the same time maintaining the programme integrity and the associated validation process. Detail of the modification procedure can be found in '*Modifications to Programmes'*.

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC STANDARDS POLICY

1   Preamble:

The University is committed to the provision of learning, teaching, assessment and research activities of the highest quality and consistent with agreed standards. This applies to all such activities, whether provided directly by the University (including those provided electronically) or through collaborative agreements with appropriate partners. In support of this commitment, the University has developed an academic policy framework within which all relevant activities will be delivered. The primary aim of this policy framework is to improve learning, teaching, assessment and research activities through a continuous process of quality enhancement. This Academic Standards Policy, which forms part of the framework, is designed to ensure robust systems for the assurance of quality and the maintenance of standards.

2   The Policy:

- All quality systems and procedures will be designed to ensure conformity to, at least, agreed national standards as defined, for instance, by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
- All such systems, and in particular those relating to the development and review of programmes will, where appropriate, take due cognisance of these standards.
- A process of regular monitoring will be undertaken to ensure the effectiveness of systems and procedures and, where necessary, any required modifications will be taken forward.
- In the analysis of all learning and teaching activities, a range of agreed performance indicators will be used in order to assure the appropriate standards of these activities.
- All External Examiners will be required to comment specifically on standards.
- All members of staff will be expected to take personal responsibility for the quality of their contribution to learning and teaching opportunities and to strive to maintain appropriate standards.

- Other stakeholders, including students and employers, will be encouraged to participate fully in activities designed to maintain appropriate standards.
- The University will have systems to collect and analyse evidence related to standards at a variety of levels.
- Where such evidence suggests that appropriate standards are not being maintained, the University will ensure action to rectify the situation.

3 Monitoring:

- The Academic Quality and Standards Committee will carry operational responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the Academic Standards Policy, on behalf of the Academic Board and the Board of Governors.

Academic Handbook 2023/24 – Vol 2 - 01.1 - Quality and Standards Assurance Overview and Policy – modified 22.09.08, 17.08.09, 25.10.11, 01.11.11, 27.09.19, 22.01.24

6