

CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

QUALITY AND STANDARDS OFFICE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

1. Context and purpose

Quality policies and procedures are a key part of the mechanism by which the University manages quality and standards. As noted by the *Quality Manual*, 'Quality Assurance is a shared activity, owned and carried out at the closest possible point to the process of learning and teaching. It is a professional exercise rather than a management function. All academic staff are involved in the achievement and maintenance of standards and the enhancement of quality.' There is an important need, therefore, for such staff:

- To know the importance and role of quality policies and procedures
- To have a sufficient knowledge of the detail of such policies and procedures
- To have a sense of 'ownership' of such policies and procedures
- To know where to get help in the case of uncertainty.

In order to facilitate this, it is important that QSO communicates the detail of its policies and procedures accurately and fully, and in a way that is understandable to academic staff, including those teaching in partner institutions. This is the purpose behind the QSO Communications Strategy, which is set out below.

2. QSO will consult faculties, departments and individuals as appropriate on new and revised procedures and policies

In order that quality assurance policies and procedures are clear, can be applied in different subject contexts, and in order to create a sense of ownership for them, QSO will undertake consultation prior to submitting documents for approval. It will endeavour to ensure that all documents submitted for approval provide some evidence of consultation. Such consultations will be appropriate to the scope and subject matter of the policy or procedure concerned, but methods may include: 'open' consultations where any member of staff may submit a written response; targeted 'round table' discussion groups; discussion at Faculty Quality Committees; and email consultation with relevant stakeholders. In addition, the Director of Quality and Standards will continue informal discussions with key staff, notably the Faculty Directors of Quality.

3. QSO will provide a range of quality-related documentation that will be clear and easy to use

QSO already provides a range of documentation to help staff and students understand the quality processes and procedures adopted by the University. Such documentation includes the *Quality Manual*, the *External Examiner's Handbook*, and the *Handbook for Chairs and Members of Validation Panels*. QSO also provides a range of templates to help academic staff meet University expectations, for example those related to the validation process. Key resources for academic staff are the University's *Regulation and Credit Framework for the Conferment of Awards* and *Assessment Procedures Manual*, which are subject to careful scrutiny by the University's committees. QSO will continue to help ensure that such documentation is as clear and easy to use as possible.

QSO will indicate the provenance of its documentation, for example by indicating the definitive sources of information on particular topics, by indicating implementation dates, and by providing appended document histories, as well as by noting the consultation undertaken in their preparation. In order to ensure that quality documents are kept up to date and that old material is not available, QSO will also develop a retention and supersession strategy.

In addition to this documentation, in certain circumstances QSO provides briefings for staff participating in some quality assurance procedures. This currently includes briefing for Validation Panel Members and Chairs. In future, QSO will consider making these briefings a more regular feature, as a way of improving consistency, and sharing experience.

4. QSO will maintain a clear and up-to-date set of web pages describing the quality assurance procedures of the University

Work will continue to ensure that the QSO web pages are easily understandable, follow a logical pattern and are regularly updated.

5. QSO will provide regular updates to academic and related staff on the development of its policies and procedures

QSO will develop and distribute a regular email/newsletter update of changes to its regulations, policies and procedures, with links to original documents. This will give a clear indication of the nature of new or revised policies or procedures, and clear implementation dates. The email will be sent to members of the Senior Management Team, Directors of Quality, Heads of Department and Programme Directors, including equivalent staff at collaborative partners.

In addition, members of the Quality and Standards Office will make use of attendance at Faculty Quality Committees, to disseminate relevant information and to consult on new developments.

6. QSO will ensure that the outcomes of quality assurance processes and deliberations by University committees are promptly and fully reported

QSO will ensure that the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are promptly communicated, for example by publishing a list of commendations, conditions, recommendations and special notes within 48 hours of a validation event, and by publishing the full report within two weeks of the event. Periodic Departmental Review reports will be published within the timescales set out in the *Quality Manual*.

QSO will also ensure that the outcomes of consideration by University-level committees, for example Academic Board and relevant committees are promptly communicated to interested parties. This will include informing Faculty Directors of Quality when Academic Board rejects a proposal, or requires revisions. A subsequent announcement to relevant Heads of Department will be made when revisions are complete and have been approved. QSO will also publish an indicative schedule of validations and an indicative schedule of Periodic Departmental Reviews to aid departments in planning for such events.

7. QSO will respond to queries from faculties and departments promptly and accurately

QSO will respond to queries from faculties and departments promptly and accurately. The Director of Quality and Standards, the two Assistant Directors and the QSO team will continue to make themselves available to meet with staff from faculties and departments in order to provide help and advice in operating the University's quality assurance procedures.

8. Special consideration for collaborative partners

It is essential that QSO communicates University policies and procedures as effectively to partner organisations as it does to its internal departments. The spirit of this document applies fully to collaborative partners, although some of the mechanisms for consultation and communication will differ slightly. For example, consultation will primarily be undertaken via formal meetings such as Partner Review, in addition to that undertaken by nominated departmental liaison staff and the University committee structure.

Changes to policy and procedure will be communicated via the email distribution method indicated above. Opportunities to discuss policy and procedural change will be considered at the Partner Forum and partner review meetings, as well as through routine departmental/partner contact.

9. Monitoring the Strategy

The QSO Communications Strategy will be monitored periodically.

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| Version 1 | Approved by Quality and Standards Committee | 3 November 2010 |
| Version 2 | Reviewed and amendments made | 16 September 2015 |