

# **CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY**

## **QUALITY AND STANDARDS OFFICE**

### **SERVICE LEVEL STATEMENT**

#### **1 Overview and context**

The Quality and Standards Office (QSO) plays a central role in ensuring that the University can be confident that the student experience is of high-quality and that its programmes meet national expectations for standards. It ensures that the University academic infrastructure is appropriately-structured and that the regulations that underpin that infrastructure are fit-for-practice and adhered to. The Quality and Standards Office is therefore central to the delivery of the University's Strategic Framework, 2015-20, which emphasises the continuous improvement of the student experience.

The QSO is also responsible for ensuring that the University meets many of its external reporting responsibilities, especially relating to QAA Higher Education Review (HER). It should be noted that the demands of HER are no less resource-intensive than during previous QAA regimes. In addition, the QSO has acquired some responsibility relating to Key Information Sets.

#### **2 Summary of Activities**

##### **2.1 Programme Validation**

The University's programme design and approval process encapsulates three stages – programme planning, programme development and programme validation. The Quality and Standards Office is responsible for the programme validation process, which involves an examination of the fitness for purpose of a programme and the appropriateness of its standard, its academic quality and the resources underpinning it.

As part of the programme validation process, the QSO will:

1. Validate the University's programmes in line with the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* to ensure that the University that it can have confidence in the standards of its programmes.
2. In liaison with Faculty Directors of Quality, provide high quality advice and written and verbal guidance to departments on programme quality, design and delivery.
3. Provide a responsive and flexible service that enables validation to take place as swiftly and robustly as possible.
4. In liaison with the Programme Directors, convene an appropriate Validation Panel which includes External Assessors who ensure comparability of the programmes with others being offered nationally.
5. Organise and service the validation event in a timely and efficient manner.
6. Complete the programme approval process by reporting new programmes or programme alterations to the relevant University Committee.

## **2.2 Periodic Departmental Review**

The function of the six-yearly Periodic Departmental Review is to provide a means by which departmental and programme groups, and the units responsible for support services, in collaboration with representative members of the wider University community, review the quality of their provision and their progress towards the achievement of their published statements of purpose.

As part of the Periodic Departmental Review process, the QSO will:

1. Ensure that the University is able to audit the implementation of its policies and strategies for achieving its Mission, in the context of the work of academic departments and service units.
2. Provide extensive guidance to the support and academic departments undergoing review, particularly on the production of the Departmental Evaluative Profile which will form the basis of the review.
3. Invite any staff member or student in the University to provide written input into the review of each department.
4. Organise and service the review event and stakeholder meetings in a timely and efficient manner.

## **2.3 Annual Departmental Review**

The Annual Departmental Review of all departments, both academic and support, enables the University, and in the case of academic departments, the Faculty to reflect on the extent to which annual departmental objectives are being met and whether, in the light of the review, those objectives should be reconsidered. This activity should be viewed as a health check rather than a full review.

As part of the Annual Departmental Review Process, the QSO will:

1. Advise and provide detailed guidance to departments on the process and content of the review.
2. Support the Head of Department and departmental staff in undertaking their annual review and writing their departmental review report, action plan and six-month progress report.
3. Support the Faculty Director of Quality in producing their summary reports, faculty progress report, and selective audit of the review process in their faculty.
4. Offer direct support to support departments in undertaking their annual departmental reviews.
5. Make periodic audits of the process in consultation with the relevant SMT leads.
6. Report any University-wide issues and actions arising from the process to the relevant University Committee.

## **2.4 Collaborative Provision**

Working in partnership is central to the academic mission of the University. Collaborative provision is a type of partnership in which the University works with a partner organisation to provide a programme that leads to an award of the University, but is delivered in whole or in part by the partner.

The QSO will provide the following services related to collaborative provision:

1. Ensure the quality of the University's collaborative provision with reference to the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, Chapter B10.
2. Develop and approve new partnerships, liaising with internal and external programme and resource staff, the Director of Finance, and the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Student Experience), who maintains strategic oversight of collaborative provision.
3. Provide advice, guidance and staff development to internal staff on the development and maintenance of collaborative partnerships, including their management, key roles and quality procedures.
4. Carry out and complete due diligence procedures, venue and resource checks, periodic review of partnership arrangements and annual programme review.
5. Establish, maintain and review written agreements and contractual arrangements outlining the arrangements for communication, admission, registration, enrolment, assessment and moderation, student issues, quality assurance and enhancement.
6. Oversee University committees and working groups designed to aid the management of collaborative provision (Collaborative Provision-Sub Committee)

## 2.5 External Examination

External Examiners are appointed for all award bearing programmes offered by the University. The external examiner system is the principal external means, on a continuous basis, for ensuring the maintenance of quality, academic standards and comparability across the HE sector. The contribution of the External Examiners is integral to these procedures for monitoring, maintaining and developing academic standards.

As part of the external examination service, the QSO will:

1. Ensure the quality of the University's external examination with reference to the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, Chapter B7.
2. Provide support, guidance, information and staff development to internal staff on all external examiner processes, including role, nomination, appointment, expenses and reports.
3. Provide support, written guidance, contractual information and role clarification to the University's external examiners and respond to their queries helpfully and efficiently.
4. Administer the nomination, appointment, renewal, payment and report submission of the University's external examiners, and maintain accurate records of these.
5. In liaison with relevant University staff, update the policies and procedures relating to external examiner arrangements to ensure high quality and robust provision.

Document History		
Date	Author(s)	Circulation
September 2014	Dr Christopher Stevens	QSO Departmental meeting
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## References

Quality Manual  
 External Examiners' Handbook  
*UK Quality Code for Higher Education*