

OUR APPROACH TO QUALITY

The University's approach to and procedures for maintaining baseline quality and standards and enhancing the student experience are summarised in the Quality Manual.

1.0 An Introduction to Quality and Standards – What Is It?

1.1.1 The term Quality and Standards covers two distinct but inter-related areas.

1.1.2 **Standards** is ensuring that the University's academic provision meets the standards that are prescribed both by external frameworks and by the University's own commitments as an autonomous body with degree-awarding powers.

1.1.3 The concept of threshold academic standards has been extended by the Office for Students [OfS] in recent years to include the academic standards of degree classifications. The objectives that relate to standards are as follows:

- ensure that awareness and compliance with standards is embedded across the University;
- ensure the University's portfolio of courses meets the requirements of the University's framework for the delivery of standards and enables standards to be met;
- ensure that the University's academic regulations are clear, explicit, unambiguous and accessible, and support academic standards;
- operate a robust external examiner system;
- engage with external regulatory bodies, and especially the OfS as appropriate.

1.1.4 **Quality** is ensuring that students receive an excellent student experience in general and one that enables a student to meet the academic standards of the University in particular. Quality is a shared activity delivered by the whole University. The partnership between the Quality and Standards Office [QSO] and Learning and Teaching Enhancement [LTE] is fundamental to the delivery of high-quality academic education. Specific objectives related to quality are as follows:

- work with colleagues across the University, including staff in Faculties LTE, Registry and the Education and Students Experience Directorate to create an effective quality community;
- ensure that quality is not seen as a central activity emanating from QSO and that all colleagues understand the expectations and procedures of Quality and Standards are empowered to contribute to the strategic delivery of quality;
- make an appropriate contribution to the design, approval and review of the academic portfolio and its component courses, including that delivered through academic partnerships;
- ensure that partnership work is undertaken with all due diligence.

1.1.5 In pursuing the effective governance of quality and standards, the Quality and Standards Office will:

- maintain a strategic focus on outcomes, including their measurement and progress;

- ensure that quality structures enable LTE to be the main driver of high-quality academic education;
- seek to deliver the continuous improvement of student outcomes and the elimination of any critical attainment gaps;
- enable staff to focus on outcomes when they design and review the academic portfolio;
- ensure processes are fit-for-purpose and designed to enable staff to maximise the time they spend on student learning.

2.0 An Overview of the Key Governance for Quality and Standards

- 2.1.1 The academic activities of the University are overseen by the Academic Board and its sub-committees. You can find out more about Academic Board and its committees [here](#).
- 2.1.2 As noted above, quality and standards is a shared responsibility and so all committees of Academic Board have responsibility for quality and standards. Three committees with specific responsibility are highlighted here:
- 2.1.3 **Academic Board's** role is to plan the University's academic activities including the structure, nature and content of study courses, schemes and academic infrastructure. The Academic Board retains overall responsibility for the standards of the University's awards and the quality of its courses and determines where authority lies and the overall expectations of the different roles involved regarding the maintenance of standards and the management and enhancement of the quality of the student experience.
- 2.1.4 **The Education and Student Experience Committee** has oversight of and is responsible for assuring the Academic Board that standards are being maintained and the quality of the student experience is being managed and enhanced.
- 2.1.5 **The Quality Monitoring and Review Sub Committee** is responsible for keeping the University's academic infrastructure under review and making appropriate recommendations for modification which, following consideration by the Education and Student Experience Committee, will be considered for approval by the Academic Board.

3.0 An Introduction to the University's Approach to Quality and Standards - Continuous Improvement

- 3.1.1 The Academic Board, through its Education and Student Experience Committee, the Academic Strategy Committee and the Portfolio Performance Committee, oversees the continuous improvement approach to quality and standards. This includes the monitoring and evaluation of key elements of quality management, including:
- continuous monitoring of courses through Course Performance Plans (CPP);
 - an annual summary report on the conduct of quality matters where authority is delegated to Faculties;
 - the annual quality monitoring of professional service departments;
 - an annual report on the External Examiner system;
 - regular review of key aspects of the quality assurance system, including the operation of:
 - University Regulations;
 - the Course Planning Process;
 - the Course Approval Process;
 - Collaborative Provision;
 - the Periodic Course Review process;

- research courses;
- complaints and appeals procedures.

- 3.1.2 The University's approach to the annual monitoring of courses is one of continuous improvement. This shifts the process of course development from one of static, once a year planning, to one which constantly evaluates, reflects and makes improvements in light of course performance and feedback from both students and staff throughout the academic year and the course approval cycle. Monitoring takes place through regular Board of Study meetings.
- 3.1.3 Evaluation of activities is integrated and reported to the Academic Board through a number of mechanisms. This includes an Annual Report to Academic Board and the Governing Body on the *Maintenance of Academic Standards and the Management and Enhancement of the Quality of the Student Learning Experience*.