QUALITY ASSURANCE APPROACH TO MANAGING COURSES GOVERNED BY PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES (PSRBs)

This document provides guidance for the management of courses governed by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The University offers a number of courses which are accredited or recognised by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), a diverse group of organisations covering a group of professions or having a statutory authority over a profession.

1.2. PSRBs responsibilities cover accreditation, approval and recognition of courses that lead to a professional or vocational qualification. The PSRB involvement exists to ensure that national standards within the professions are met. PSRB accreditation/ recognition may also include recognition of professional membership or exemption from professional examinations.

1.3. The University recognises the importance of the role PSRBs play in adding value to the educational experience and employability of our students. In order for the value of the PSRBs to be fully realised, it is important that there is a transparent support structure that works across the University, effective communication and governance.

1.4. This document provides guidance for support for all PSRB activities across the University. This document will outline the expectations with respect to; annual monitoring, approval/reapproval, course change, accreditation/reaccreditation visits and reporting, to ensure that the PSRB standards are met, and requirements are continually adhered to.

2. PRINCIPLES

2.1. In general, PSRB approved/accredited courses lead to University awards or are offered in the University's name. Therefore, it is essential to have a shared understanding and a central point of monitoring of all the PSRB activities.

2.2. In supporting the PSRB activities, it is essential to balance the tensions with respect to value added to students, and financial and strategic imperatives.

2.3. PSRB requirements often focus on the same areas as the OfS minimum standards, such as course coherence, course performance, attainment gaps, NSS, TEF, EDI etc. However, the PSRB standards and expectations need to be viewed as being over and above the OfS minimum standards.

2.4. It must be recognised that expertise in the requirements of particular PSRBs is usually held by subject academics. Therefore, the role of those outside the course teams is to be critical reviewers, providing guidance and oversight at appropriate levels.

2.5. Each PSRB will have a designated academic (Course Director or the faculty/school PSRB representative) responsible for all requirements. The academic will have expertise in the PSRB and hold current professional membership of the PSRB (where this is appropriate).

2.6. The designated academic, (Course Director, school/faculty PSRB representative) will ensure contact with the PSRB aligns with agreed arrangements within the Faculty.

2.7. The designated academic, (Course Director, school/faculty PSRB representative) will will have primary responsibility for the PSRB standards and all the quality assurance and enhancement activities. The designated academic will also be responsible for training of academic staff colleagues responsible the relevant PSRB course.

2.8.　At faculty level, the quality monitoring will be the responsibility of the Faculty Director of Quality (FDQ) working in collaboration with the respective Course Director and Head of School and liaising with the QSO lead, who will oversee the central University support.

2.9.　Activities supporting PSRBs will be based on transparency and clear communication across all levels.

3. CATEGORIES OF PSRBs

3.1.　As the PSRB activities are diverse, the levels of risk to the courses, school(s), students and the University also vary. Therefore, it is important to place the PSRBs into types to ensure an appropriate level of support and monitoring.

3.2.　It should be noted that in some cases the professional organisation linked to a course is a Professional Body which does not hold Statutory or Regulatory authority but recognition by that Professional Body is still valued and/or essential. In some cases, a course may have separate PSRB and Professional Body associations. For the sake of simplicity all associations are referred to in this document as PSRBs. In the categories below, where a course has both a PSRB and Professional Body the categorisation will be the same as the Statutory and Regulatory category. For example, allied health courses are regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) but also by individual professional bodies. Maintaining recognition by the Professional Body in these cases is normally equally important.

Type A PSRBs

3.3.　This is where the PSRB accreditation of the University course is vital for a student to graduate, qualify or have eligibility to apply to register as a qualified professional or enter vocational practice.

3.4.　Examples of type A PSRBs include Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), General Medical Council (GMC), Ofsted, Engineering Councils, Social Work England etc.

3.5.　Depending on the PSRB, the course might require regular monitoring, reporting and or reaccreditation at specified intervals.

3.6.　Some of these PSRBs prefer to utilise the University course approval/ reapproval events as part of their accreditation/reaccreditation. Therefore, the PSRB requirements will need to be accommodated in the course approval process (see section 6 below).

3.7.　Some of these PSRBs complete accreditation when the course is already being offered or a cohort of students has graduated, as detail in section 8 below.

Type B PSRBs

3.8.　This is where the PSRB endorses or approves a course/module enabling graduates from such courses to gain some recognition or exemption from external professional qualification examinations, leading to professional/ vocational certificates.

3.9.   Examples of type B PSRBs include Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), Chartered Management Institute (CMI), Chartered Institute of Management (CMI) etc.

3.10.   PSRBs of this type approve/reapprove/accredit courses or institutions as a learning partner.

3.11.   In general, the approval process for these PSRBs takes place at a mutually agreed time after the University course approvals/reapprovals.

3.12.   For both categories, it is the faculty's responsibility to inform QSO of the respective PSRB preference with respect to course approval/reapproval, accreditation/reaccreditation.

4. CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1.   Curriculum design and development is the basis for the planning for quality; therefore, it is important that the whole course team is involved in the activity. The course team contributes to the development which is evidenced in the course documents (including specifications).

4.2.   Support for course teams for development, will be provided by FDQ, FDLT and QSO lead.

4.3.   As the PSRBs' standards are above the minimum standards expected for other courses offered at the University, the course design and development for a new course should be more planned and deliberate in its focus on the relevant PSRB requirements and standards. For all courses governed by PSRBs a core part of the documentation will be a mapping to demonstrate how the requirements of the relevant PSRB standards are met.

4.4.   For courses which might consider future application for PSRB accreditation/ approval, the course still needs to be developed according to the relevant PSRB standards from the outset.

4.5.   Course teams should ensure that there is constructive alignment of the course philosophy, teaching delivery and assessment, support for students, and resources including staffing (student/staff ratio) and resources for placement practice.

4.6.   The course documents should include evidence of planning for course-specific student support, including student placements (where relevant) and the Course Performance Plan.

5. PRACTICE LEARNING/WORK-BASED LEARNING

5.1.   Work-based, Placement, and Practice Learning is an important component of some PSRB expectations and needs to be planned and managed in a deliberate and timely manner. Reference should also be made to the University policy documents (Enterprise and Employability, Work Related Experience Policy), which can be found at https://cccu.canterbury.ac.uk/policy-listing/policy-listing-a-z.aspx.

5.2.   Work-based, Placement and Practice Learning requirements (referenced to PSRB standards) should be included in the course design and development, with the planning evidenced in the course documents, including

5.2.1.   At an early stage in the course design and development, evidence that resources, for placing and monitoring students, have been considered and agreed upon.

5.2.2. A plan for a clear working relationship and communication between Practice/ Placement Partners and University teams (course teams) to support students and enhance the student learning experience.

5.2.3. How collaboration with Practice/Placement Partners will be promoted and maintained on an ongoing basis, throughout the lifetime of the course.

5.2.4. Training of Practice/Placement Learning facilitator/educator on an ongoing basis to ensure the expected outcomes for students, and opportunities for sharing of learning experience between the practice mentors and the University staff.

5.2.5. Clarity of oversight and quality assurance of the Practice/Placement Learning provision, including early identification, appropriate reporting, and where required escalation of any issues.

5.2.6. Responsibilities for finding practice/placement opportunities for students, onboarding/ induction of students at Practice/Placement Learning sites and monitoring of students, as well as managing safeguarding, to ensure that the students are able to meet the requirements of their course as well as receiving positive learning experience.

5.2.7. Adequate numbers of suitably qualified staff to support, educate and assess students in Practice/Placement Learning.

5.2.8. Clear outcomes for Practice/Placement Learning opportunities and how these will be assessed, as per the respective PSRB requirements.

6. COURSE APPROVAL/RE-APPROVAL

6.1. Some type A PSRBS utilise the University approval process to approve/accredit courses. In such cases, a University approval panel will convene to approve/accredit courses and the respective PSRB will be part of the panel. Therefore, the PSRB requirement must be taken into consideration, especially during preparations for the approval events.

6.2. When scheduling course approval events that involve PSRBs, QSO will work with faculties and ensure that approvals are completed well in advance of the due date of offering (in general not later than nine months prior to offering).

6.3. Selection of the approval panel membership, including the chair will need to take into consideration the PSRB context and the required expertise. For Type A, the approval panel chair will normally be a Dean/PVC, and the panel will also include academic and administrative staff with the PSRB expertise to facilitate appropriate understanding of any PSRB expectations and requirements.

6.4. The PSRB-specific documents/standards/quality assurance approach will be provided to the SAP panel.

6.5. QSO lead, FDLT and the FDQ will support faculty scrutiny activities. This support will entail supporting the development of course documents, reading documents and holding discussions

with course teams to ensure that the documents and course teams are effectively prepared prior to the approval panel event.

6.6. In preparation for the approval event and in liaison with the PSRB, the faculty/school PSRB representative will liaise with QSO to draw up an agenda and coordinate a list of people to be invited to attend the various events required.

6.7. QSO in collaboration with the faculty/school PSRB representative will develop a briefing pack, to include key PSRB expectations.

6.8. Prior to the approval event, all event participants will be comprehensively briefed (and de-briefed after the event) by QSO in collaboration with the faculty/school PSRB representative.

6.9. Type B PSRBs and some type A PSRBS do not attend approval events but complete accreditation soon after approval or after the first cohort of students graduate. In such cases, there will be ongoing support in preparation for accreditation/ reaccreditation as covered below (see section 8).

7. COURSE PERFORMANCE PLANS

7.1. For all the PSRBs, the annual course monitoring as part of the Course Performance Plans (CPP) will focus on the PSRB-specific standards and requirements.

7.2. When the Board of Studies is constituted, membership will include the designated academic with PSRB expertise.

7.3. The CPP will be used to monitor the University KPIs, and where appropriate the PSRB standards and requirements.

   7.3.1. For type A PSRBs where accreditation is part of course approval, this process will be for monitoring risks, annual progress (including core PSRB requirements such as SSR) and any changes to PSRB standards.

   7.3.2. For type A PSRBs where accreditation takes place after course approval, this process will be used for monitoring and preparation for accreditations.

   7.3.3. For type B PSRBs the process will be used for monitoring activities and preparation for annual reports where this is required.

7.4. The faculty/school PSRB representative /Course Director will work in collaboration with the course team to reflect on all the relevant data and produce the CPP. As far as possible the discussions should include:

   7.4.1. Reflections to include Practice Learning mentors and students' voice/views.

   7.4.2. Reflection on areas including resources (staffing and practice mentors), Practice Learning places, training, and communication with mentors.

7.4.3. Identification of any risks and how these will be addressed, especially for type A PSRBs preparing for accreditation.

7.5. The respective Board of Studies will consider the CPP KPI targets and work with the course team to monitor progress with a focus on PSRB annual reports or preparation for accreditations.

7.6. For type A PSRBs where CPPs also forms accreditation/reaccreditation preparation, any identified risks will be reported to Quality Monitoring and Review-Sub-Committee (QMRSC).

8. ACCREDITATIONS/REACCREDITATIONS/INSPECTION/REPORTING

8.1. This section covers the following:

- Type A PSRBs which do not participate in University Course approval events and conduct accreditation/reaccreditation processes after course approval events or after a cohort of students graduate.
- Type B PSRBs will also accredit courses or approve a school/department to offer courses for exemption towards its qualifications. Additionally, some PSRBs complete annual quality checks.

8.2. When considering PSRB accreditation and prior to engagement with any PSRB, the responsible course team will provide a motivation to the school, Faculty Quality Committee and FPPE.

8.3. The faculty/school PSRB representative will inform the FDQ and QSO lead of the PSRB-specific requirements. QSO lead will support the faculty in planning the accreditation/reaccreditation events.

8.4. When dates for the accreditation events are provided by the PSRB, the faculty/school representative, in collaboration with the respective FDQ and QSO lead, will develop a project plan. The project plan will need to be developed well in advance (normally 9-12 months) to ensure effective preparation.

8.5. There should normally be an oversight group monitoring preparation and progress towards any accreditation, approvals or inspections. The membership of that group should include QSO members and appropriate University staff.

8.6. In preparation for PSRB accreditation or application for course approval, the course team is expected to engage in a coherent and holistic self-reflection exercise leading to evidence-based self-assessment.

8.7. The support for the reflection exercise will be provided by FDQ, QSO and the faculty/school PSRB representative.

8.8. The gathering of the evidence for the self-assessment will be supported by the faculty/school professional services team.

8.9. The self-reflection exercise will, as far as possible, include all staff involved in the course – teaching staff and professional staff involved in supporting any aspect of the course or student support, and Practice Learning mentors. (This is also the start of preparation for interview by the PSRB panel).

8.10. Following the reflection, the faculty/school PSRB representative will use the rich information and evidence to compile any required reports and documentation. FDQ and QSO lead will provide support with reflection, reading and feedback.

8.11. Prior to submission to the PSRB of any reports or documentation, these must be presented and signed off at school, faculty and University level. These sign offs will need to be built into the project plan.

8.12. In preparation for a PSRB accreditation visit, QSO, FDQ and the faculty/school PSRB representative will, in liaison with the PSRB, draw up an agenda and a list of groups of people to be interviewed. The agenda will be provided to the school/faculty, FDQ and QSO.

8.13. Groups of people to be invited to participate will include, faculty/school PSRB representative, Head of School/Faculty Dean, a cross section of academic staff, professional services staff, students, stakeholders, Placement Learning mentors and alumni (where appropriate).

8.14. Prior to any accreditation/reaccreditation visit event, all participants will have to be comprehensively briefed (and after the event de-briefed) by the team coordinating the accreditation event.

8.15. Some type B PSRBs conduct annual quality checks (not accreditation visits). For these PSRBs, the school/faculty PSRB representative will conduct these activities, which will be included in the report (see 9.2) annually submitted to the QMRSC.
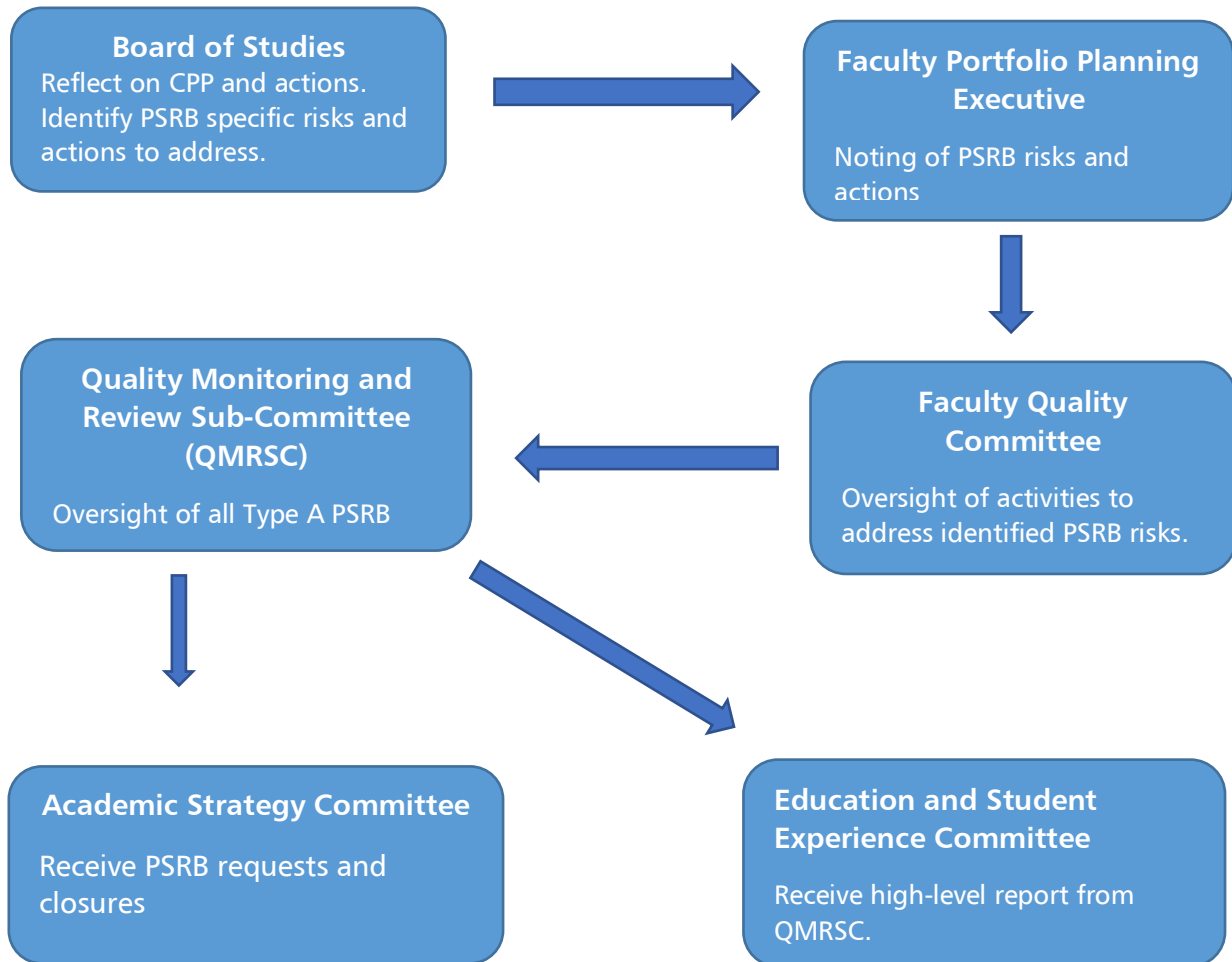
9. GOVERNANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1. There needs to be a clear and transparent structure to oversee the PSRBs across the University. The school/faculty where the PSRB is housed, will have primary responsibility and will report to and communicate with the Faculty and University committees. For some type A PSRBs sign-off of reporting to PSRBs must be done in coordination with QSO and include approval from designated SMT members.

9.2. The Faculty Director of Quality in liaison with the school/faculty PSRB representative will support PSRB processes at faculty level.

9.3. The faculty monitoring of PSRB activities will be overseen by the Board of Studies, Faculty FPPE (Course Performance Plan) and Faculty Quality Committee. Normally reports to PSRBs should be signed off by the Faculty Quality Committee.

9.4. Annually, the Faculty Director of Quality in liaison with the school/faculty PSRB representative will produce a risk report on the faculty PSRB activities and a spreadsheet containing an updated status of all PSRBs in the faculty, to be signed off by Faculty Quality Committee prior to being tabled at QMRSC in October.

9.5. The risk report will cover any perceived risks and how these will be addressed, as well as planned activities for the following year. The report should draw on information from the CPP, as well as any type B quality checks.

9.6.   There will be a PSRB register held centrally by QSO – as a shared file available to the FDQ and the school/faculty PSRB representative. The register will be updated regularly using information provided in the annual report and spreadsheet.

10.   CANCELLATION AND WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION

10.1.   In the unlikely event that an accreditation is cancelled or withdrawn, the situation will need immediate attention and management. The school/faculty PSRB representative/Course Director must report this immediately to the relevant SMT, Faculty, FDQ and QSO. The faculty, in liaison with the SMT lead and relevant departments, will then put in place a process for teaching out the course, completing withdrawal forms and actioning information flow to students.

11. COMMITTEE STRUCTURES MONITORING PSRB ACTIVITY

Board of Studies
Reflect on CPP and actions. Identify PSRB specific risks and actions to address.

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Faculty Portfolio Planning Executive

Noting of PSRB risks and actions

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Quality Monitoring and Review Sub-Committee (QMRSC)

Oversight of all Type A PSRB

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Faculty Quality Committee

Oversight of activities to address identified PSRB risks.

Academic Strategy Committee

Receive PSRB requests and closures

Education and Student Experience Committee

Receive high-level report from QMRSC.

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