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REGULATIONS FOR PROGRAMME AND MODULE APPROVAL, MONITORING AND INTERNAL REVIEW

Regulation 4 – Regulations for Programme and Module Approval, Monitoring and Internal Review

4 Regulations for Programme and Module Approval, Monitoring & Internal Review

4.1 Framework for Approval of Programmes, Titles and Modules, Monitoring and Review, Collaborative Agreements and Professional Accreditation

4.1.1 a) The University Senate, through its Education Advisory Committee (EAC) has established approval processes whereby a judgement is reached as to whether a particular programme or title or module designed to lead to, or contribute to, an academic award and collaborative programme, meets the University's requirements for the standard of that award.

b) Processes are also in place for annual monitoring and enhancement and approval and review. These processes are described in detail in the Quality Handbook available from the Quality Enhancement Support Team (QuEST) or via the QuEST Intranet site.

d) The processes of approving, monitoring and reviewing programmes and modules and Internal Review (IR) shall be undertaken in accordance with the University's Regulations and Quality Handbook and with such procedures and guidelines as the EAC, shall from time to time deem necessary.

4.1.2 *Aims*

a) The overall aims of approval, monitoring and review shall be the enhancement of the programme and enhancement of overall student experience

i) promote and maintain high academic standards;

ii) secure for each student a high-quality educational experience through the consideration of the quality and academic standard of each programme, title or module;

iii) stimulate curriculum development by requiring staff to evaluate existing and proposed programmes and modules and to expose them to the thinking and practices of external peers;

iv) facilitate the enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment;

v) facilitate the enhancement of inclusive learning and teaching practice;

b) The specific aims of approval, monitoring and review shall be to:

i) maintain the standards of the University's academic awards and to ensure that no programme, title or module, shall continue to be run without adequate human and other resources;

ii) ensure that each programme, title or module is designed and operated in accordance with the University's requirements at levels in concordance with the Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF) the appropriate Subject Benchmark Statements, the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education and all relevant University procedures and policies;

iii) appraise School processes for the regular monitoring of programmes, titles and modules with a view to the quality enhancement of the programme and enhancement of overall student experience;

iv) ensure that once a programme has been approved, any conditions for approval are satisfied and that any recommendations made during the programme approval process are fully considered by the appropriate School(s) and that appropriate action is taken;

v) ensure that all External Examiners' reports are received and formally considered, a formal response made and that where necessary appropriate action is taken.

4.2 Approval Process

4.2.1 The authority to approve new programmes and titles has been vested by Senate in the approval panel. Approval mechanisms are designed to incorporate the good practice of the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education.

Period of Approval

a) A programme/title leading to an award of the University shall normally be approved for a period not exceeding six years and shall be subject to University monitoring requirements, Internal Review (IR) or other requirements as may be recommended to EAC.

b) In certain circumstances, initial approval shall be for a shorter period: for example, when the programme is in a new or rapidly developing field of study; in one that is new to the University; or where it is likely that major changes may prove necessary shortly after initial approval. Where a programme is approved jointly with a Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body (PSRB) a limited period of approval may be recommended to match the re-approval cycle of the PSRB. At the end of any such specified period, approval must be renewed, with or without a further time-limit.

c) Where a programme is validated as a collaborative award with an external partner the period of approval is normally not more than five years and subject to review of the collaborative agreement within this period.

4.2.2 *Conditional Approval*

a) Approval may be made conditional upon the fulfilment of specific requirements by a specified date.

b) The responsibility for ensuring that conditional requirements have been fulfilled within the timescales specified and that progress has been properly monitored must be specified at the time of approval or re-approval.

4.2.3 *Withdrawal of Approval*

In the event of conditions of approval not being met, approval of the programme may be withdrawn on the recommendation of EAC.

4.2.4 *Advertisement of Programmes*

In the event of a programme or module, which is awaiting final approval of conditions, being advertised, this must be stated in all references to it in public advertisement(s) of any kind.

4.2.5 *Amendment to Approved Programmes*

a) When a School wishes to amend an approved programme including its title, campus, mode of delivery or schedule of delivery it must follow the procedures in the Quality Handbook. Guidance is available from QuEST. (See Regulation 5.1.3 on changes to programme title.)

b) In order to safeguard the integrity of the level outcomes and associated awards of the University, no more than one core module at each level of the programme may be amended or replaced via the programme amendment process. The impact on programme specifications must be addressed when modules are amended or replaced. Any greater volume of change to modules, level outcomes or programmes will require a full re-approval event.

4.2.6 *Appeals against Approval Decisions*

a) Any appeal against a decision shall be referred to EAC. The decision of EAC shall be final.

b) If a drafting team contests a decision made by an Approval Panel it should seek reasons for the decision and it should first seek to resolve the issue at the level at which the decision was originally made by contacting the Head of Quality Enhancement Support Team (QuEST). An appeal to EAC should be regarded as a last resort.

4.2.7 *Programme Closure/Withdrawal from the Portfolio*

When a School wishes to close a programme for whatever reason the following procedure will normally apply:

a) The School Board prepares a report outlining the following:

- Rationale for closure;

- Proposed date for closure;
- Arrangements for students currently on the programme – at all levels of the award and campuses/sites of delivery/students on suspension/students enrolled as resit only;
- Consideration of part-time/direct entry students;
- Impact of closure on other provision within the School/other Schools;
- Any potential Equality Impact should be considered through the agreed procedures;
- Implications on staffing resources;
- Professional Body Associations that may need to be informed of the closure;
- External examiner appointments which may need to be terminated early (or may need extended for resits of last cohort);
- Explanation of transitional arrangements, particularly for part time students and proposals for ongoing resit/reassessment needs;

b) The School will then seek approval from the University Leadership Team (ULT) which will report its recommendation to Senate.

c) Once the University Leadership Team has approved the closure of the programme, the School should undertake a formal consultation with all affected applicants and current students highlighting the options they have in terms of completing the programme or transferring to other awards if they desire. Transitional arrangements for part-time students or students who receive a resit decision in the final year of operation should be discussed. The written agreement of students wishing to transfer to another programme should be obtained. All affected applicants students currently enrolled on the programme should have the opportunity to exit with the award. The School should inform the Admissions Office that the award is being withdrawn and they will inform UCAS. The Admissions Office will also provide guidance and UCAS form for affected applicants offering alternative programmes.

d) The School should then inform Recruitment and Participation Services, Strategic Planning & Development, Information Technology & Digital Service, Student Administration, and QuEST that the programme is being withdrawn from the Portfolio and that there will be no new recruitment to the award. The School should outline when the programme will finally be withdrawn from the portfolio and programmes having taken into account part-time student completion times and any resit/reassessment issues.

4.3 Quality Handbook

4.3.1 The procedures, required documentation and timescales for the approval of new programmes, new and amended modules or changes to existing programmes are described in full in the Quality Handbook. These procedures are overseen by EAC and take full cognisance of the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education.

4.3.2 No new programme can be approved outwith the University's published procedures and the involvement of external peers.

4.4 Approval Reports

A report will be prepared following any new programme approved or review for confirmation by the panel and submission to the School Board.

4.5 Annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Enhancement

4.5.1 Module review will be undertaken annually for each module and considered by the Programme Board. The operation of each programme shall be monitored by the Programme Leader who shall provide information as requested to the designated person in the School for annual monitoring reports. Programme Boards have responsibilities for oversight of the quality of modules and programmes.

4.5.2 Schools will be responsible for overseeing annual monitoring and enhancement activities in accordance with the requirements of EAC.

4.5.3 Full information on the annual monitoring and enhancement requirements and documentation is available in the Quality Handbook.

4.6 Internal Review

4.6.1 *Cycle of Reviews*

All University credit bearing provision will be subject to periodic internal review in line with Scottish Funding Council (SFC) guidance and within a cycle of not more than six years.

4.6.2 *Themes for Review*

Internal Review shall consider and review the total taught and research activity of academic programmes in a subject across the following six themes:

Provision
Teaching, Learning and Enhancement
Research
Student Support and Guidance
Student Achievement and Assessment
Strategic Development of the Subject

4.6.3 *Aims of Internal Review*

The aims of Internal Review are to provide an opportunity to review quality and enhancement, teaching and learning, the wider research and scholarship in the subject area and inter-relations between subjects together with their future development. The review takes place with the firm intention to enhance the student experience balanced with a review of quality and standards.

Full details can be found in the Quality Handbook.

4.7 Student Involvement in Quality Enhancement

The collection and use of the views of students shall be in accordance with the procedures and methods outlined in the Quality Handbook which details student engagement, feedback and representation opportunities.

4.8 Collaborative Provision

4.8.1 Where Schools are considering collaborative provision, either with another HEI or an appropriate organisation, they should consult the International Centre at an early stage to ensure the proposal is in line with the University's International Strategy. Collaborative arrangements should widen learning opportunities without prejudice to the standard of the award or the quality of what is offered to the students.

4.8.2 A visit will be made to all institutions where collaborative delivery of a UWS award is being considered in line with guidance in the Quality Handbook

4.8.3 Collaborative agreements are drafted by QuEST in consultation with the School. School staff are not authorised to draft or sign collaborative agreements. Collaborative agreements are normally signed by the Director of Corporate Support.

4.8.4 University requirements are set out in Regulation 11. Guidance is available from QuEST providing information to support Schools on collaborative provision.

4.9 Professional Accreditation of University of Awards

4.9.1 Professional accreditation is the official recognition awarded by a Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body (PSRB) as a result of the University meeting specific standards or criteria. The development and drafting of documents for submission to PSRBs (both before and after accreditation visits) is the responsibility of the School. The School is responsible for maintaining a schedule of accreditation status for all relevant awards and for providing this information to EAC as required.

Where there is potential conflict between a PSRB's admission or other requirements and the University's Equality policy or legislation, this should be noted in the schedule.