



## AUM QUALITY HANDBOOK

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## **Introduction**

The *Academic Quality Handbook* serves as a key constituent of the University's quality assurance framework, defining and providing detailed operational guidance on the University's quality assurance procedures. The three main components include:

- **Program/Course Review** – a process whereby all new courses/programs are subject to formal consideration and approval prior to implementation.
- **Annual Review** – a process whereby the delivery of all courses/programs and output standards achieved are monitored.
- **Internal Review** – a process conducted on an annual and 5 yearly basis which consists of two major elements i.e., review of educational programmes and their developments.

Other sections of the *Academic Quality Handbook* refer to:

- **Academic Collaboration**
- **External Reviewers**
- **Internships**
- **Research Degrees**

The *Academic Quality Handbook* is subject to regular annual review, the impetus for which includes:

- Ongoing process to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of QA procedures.
- Feedback from externals engaged with the University's internal procedures
- Changes within the external quality assurance environment, in particular, further revisions to sections of the *Malta Further and Higher Education (Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations* <https://legislation.mt/eli/sl/607.3/eng> and the devolved responsibility for undertaking a review of all subject provision within a five-year cycle.

Fundamental to the effective operation of all the quality assurance procedures are the University's committees. The most senior of these are the *Board of Trustees, Academic Council and University Council*, the latter assuming responsibility on behalf of the Board of Trustees for the overall planning, development, and supervision of the academic work of the University. The Committees have also key roles in overseeing the development and implementation of the University's quality assurance framework and in monitoring quality and standards.

The executive authority is for approving/implementing transactional activity associated with the University's quality assurance procedures. The key postholders in this respect are:

- The President in his role as the Chair of University Council (*Institutional development and Quality*)
- The Provost in his role as Chair of Academic Council (*Academic Development and Quality*)
- Deans of Colleges in their roles as Heads of Colleges and members of the University and Academic Councils

Further details of executive roles and responsibilities are available from the University's *AUM Organizational Chart*.

Operational support to the Colleges of the University is provided by the academic and non-academic units, including the *Registrar, QA Office, Student Affairs Department, Admissions Department, Student Affairs, HR and others*.

The University's focus for quality improvement is the holistic student experience, and effective engagement with students is integral to the University's approach to the

assurance and improvement of the quality of teaching and learning. This student engagement includes, *inter alia*:

- Engagement and collaboration with the Student Union
- Student Survey (Programme Evaluation Questionnaire and Student Experience Questionnaires)
- Staff/student liaison arrangements at educational programme level
- Student representation on Internal Review Panels
- Student representation on all the University's committees
- Annual meetings of the Provost and Deans with Students/or Representatives

The University's *Quality Assurance system* is the key mechanism for monitoring progress towards the University's improvement priorities. The system described in this Handbook is reviewed each year through a combined top-down and bottom-up approach.

## **PART 1: PROGRAMME, COURSE DEVELOPMENTS**

### **1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

All the University's course/programme provision is designed using the *Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF)*, which means its awards are described in terms of MQF levels and MQF credits. A full description of the MQF may be found at its website <https://www.mfhea.mt> and at AUM website and its application to the University's awards is prescribed in policies.

The University defines a *programme* as the approved curriculum followed by an individual student that leads to named award and/or the achievement of academic credit.

This Section of the *Academic Quality Handbook* provides details of the Review Procedure, whether this is for the purpose of approving new provision or substantial amendments to existing provision and offers guidance on each of the stages of the Procedure and other issues to consider during the process.

In addition, it also provides the procedures to be followed to approve and amend Programmes/courses and credit-rated exit courses.

As part of the review and administration of programs, the University requires several elements of core documentation.

#### **1.2 Review Procedure**

The approval of new study programs, or of substantial amendments (more than 25%) to existing courses or programs, involves two stages. Before the Review Procedure is initiated for a new study program, the proposal requires to be discussed by the *Curriculum Development Committee (CDC)*. Thereafter, review is the process through which the University assures itself of the quality and standards of its educational programme provision prior to implementation and delivery or discusses substantial changes to existing educational programme provision.

Key aspects of the Review Procedure include:

- Preparation of a plan for the review event

- Preparation of documentation for the event, drafted in accordance with the University's requirements, e.g., *Detailed Course Descriptors, Programme Descriptors, ECTS, Learning outcomes*, etc.
- Authorization, by the *Dean*, for the release of the documentation for discussion at *Curriculum Development Committee* and *Academic Council* respectively with documentation of approval and decision to be eligible to submit for evaluation and accreditation of Professional and Regulatory Body (PRB)
- The *Quality Assurance Panel* reviews prior to commencement of delivery of the educational programme to Professional and Regulatory Body (PRB)

### 1.3 Amendments to Existing Provision

Approval for changes to existing study programs is undertaken at two levels:

- a) The *Curriculum Development Committee (CDC)* is required to discuss amendments to existing study programs if these amendments involve any or all the following:
  - changes to an existing Educational Programme title
  - additions/changes to mode(s) of delivery
  - changes to named exit awards
  - proposals for re-developments to the educational programme curriculum affecting more than 25% of an award's MQF credit value (e.g., *learning outcomes, Programme content*).
  - educational programme cessations
- b) For reaccreditation:
  - Justification for proposed changes
  - Impact on objective/ rationale, learning outcomes, entry requirements, mode of assessment, distribution of hours, mode of delivery, etc.
- c) Deans of Colleges have devolved authority to approve amendments affecting less than or equal to 25% of an award's MQF credit value. Executive action by *the Dean*, is taken to approve changes and these changes are reported to the *Quality Assurance Panel*. Changes proposed might include:
  - changes affecting assessment (i.e., *Programme assessment plan, assessment weightings*)
  - changes affecting progression
  - inclusion of new and/or revised courses (i.e., *course titles, MQF level/credit*)
  - Internship, etc.

### 1.4 Programme Approval

Courses may be used in the following ways:

- as constituent units of credit-rated award-bearing courses and programs.
- as credit-rated exit awards typically offered as Professional Development (PD) provision or fulfilling the University's commitment to the lifelong learning agenda.
- as credit-rated non-award-bearing short courses offered in collaboration with a third party.

Programmes/Courses delivered as part of a credit-rated award-bearing course or program can only be credit-rated with MQF 30\60 ECTS at the appropriately defined level, or multiples thereof, unless otherwise required by a professional or regulatory body. Programmes offered as credit-rated award-bearing courses can be credit-rated with MQF 30 or 60 ECTS at the appropriately defined level.

Unless Programmes are approved during a review event, new and amended Programmes/courses require approval by the College. The key aspects of this process include:

- the preparation of proposed changes by the Dean and consideration of these changes by an external subject expert, professional expert from industry and Curriculum Development Committee.
- review by *QA Panel* and approval by the Academic Council.
- consultation with the External Reviewers and students if assessments or progression requirements are affected.

### **1.5 Exit Award Approval**

The procedure for approving courses to be delivered as Exit Award Course is the same as for the approval of new courses. Approval allows credit-rating for future delivery only.

Short courses derived from existing courses that have not been amended are not subject to any further formal approval.

### **1.6 Professional and Regulatory Body Visits**

A significant number of the University's study programmes are affiliated to Professional and Regulatory Body and are therefore subject to accreditation/re-accreditation by the relevant bodies. The organization and management of these visits is included within the University's quality assurance procedures to ensure appropriate oversight and monitoring. The format of Professional and regulatory Body visits is dictated by the individual body.

Key aspects of such visits include:

- preparation of documentation for the event, drafted in accordance with the University requirements
- authorization, by the Dean, for the release of the documentation to the Panel, after appropriate internal scrutiny and approval of the documentation by a Curriculum Development Committee.
- preparation by the College of a response, as appropriate, to the event outcomes that is subject to the subsequent approval by the Dean prior to issue to the Regulatory Body.

## **2. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME REVIEW**

### **2.1 Educational Programme Review Procedure**

1. Dean prepares to the *Curriculum Development Committee* a *Course Development Proposal (with reference to Marketing and Research for new programmes)* which is signed and documented. If proposal is for multi-disciplinary course, signatures of all appropriate Deans are required.
2. Dean, prepares *Rationale and Composition of Proposal* and forwards to the Curriculum Development Committee.
3. *Course Development Proposal* considered by the Curriculum Development Committee. Once approved and signed by the Provost, the Academic Council advised to approve accordingly.
4. Dean co-ordinates preparation of appropriate documentation in liaison with QA office.

5. Dean approves documentation as being of satisfactory standard and passes approved documentation by CDC to the Academic Council.
6. QA Panel reviews event outcomes and informs the Academic Council accordingly.

## **2.2. Guidance - Educational Programme Review Procedure**

### **2.2.1 Approval of Programme Titles**

The title of a course must be simple in form, clearly reflect the course content, and accord with the form generally accepted by higher education institutions and by the relevant professional, and regulatory body. The title may not be changed between periodic Internal Reviews without prior discussion at the Curriculum Development Committee and approval of the Academic Council, respectively.

### **2.2.2 Planning and Scheduling of the Review Event**

The event must normally be at least 12 weeks prior to the anticipated date for commencement of the Educational Programme to enable responses and actions arising from a Review event to be addressed prior to delivery. The *Review Planning* serves as a framework for the establishment of timescales and deadlines and is used to monitor progress against these targets.

### **2.2.3 Review Panels**

Panels for Review events comprise a combination of external and internal members appropriate to the nature of the event, including a student, and the membership is derived with the aim of making available as wide a spectrum of external advice and comment as possible. The relevant professional or regulatory body should also be consulted, where appropriate, in respect of program requirements.

Review Panels have a minimum composition as follows:

**Chair:** QA Office representative appointed by the decision of the University Council or an internal member of staff appointed by the Provost, from a central list of nominees submitted by Deans

**One external member:** Who must be an academic with relevant subject experience and who is not from the University.

**Second internal member:** Who must represent the appropriate industry, profession, or commerce.

**Third student member:** a student representative must be included as the voice from students' body

For each external member of the Panel there must be a statement indicating previous involvement with the University/Department(s). Where there has been no involvement this should also be stated.

### **2.2.4 Documentation and QA Approval**

Dean is responsible that the documentation has been produced according to University Regulations, guidelines and Policies.

The Dean ensures the documentation is passed to the Provost Office for approval, together with the *QA Approval*. QA is required to approve the following elements of the documentation in accordance with formal benchmarks requirements:

- Course Objectives (*Detailed Course Descriptor*)



- Course Learning Outcomes
- Mapping of Course Learning Outcomes to educational programme
- Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies/Pedagogy
- Course Assessment

The Dean authorizes the Review documentation prior to it being issued to the Panel.

### **2.2.5 Online and Blended Delivery**

Provost Office is required to submit the style and format of educational programme materials for any provision being developed in online learning mode or for delivery on the blended mode of delivery. The College always remains responsible for ensuring the integrity of the academic content of the online /blended learning materials.

### **2.2.6 Outcomes of Review Event**

The Review Panel is asked to:

- formulate a recommendation for approval of the course subject to regular Internal Review events (*normally every 5 years*).
- impose conditions where these are necessary for the approval of the study programme.
- make such other recommendations where appropriate; or recommend that the course not be reviewed.

It is also University practice that when any conditions are attached to the approval of a study programme, the Panel should set a deadline for meeting these conditions. The Panel will also highlight issues for recommendation.

### **2.2.7 College Response to Outcomes of Review Event**

Following the review event, the College is required to produce a response to any conditions and recommendations, which must be discussed with the Dean and QA before issue to Panel members. Once the Panel confirms acceptance of the response the Educational Programme can commence delivery.

The College Response should be set out in the following way:

- Each condition and recommendation should be re-stated, via track changes. Under each, the College should indicate how it will meet the condition or action the recommendation in as detailed a manner as possible/appropriate.
- If the conditions and recommendations require a re-write of some of the Educational Programme documentation presented at review, then the relevant revised sections should be attached as appendices to the response.

### **2.2.8 Review Report**

A formal report of each review event is prepared by QA officers, who attended the event. After it has been approved by all members of the Panel, the confirmed report is made available from the QA Department.

### **2.2.9 Evaluation of Process**

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement of its quality assurance procedures, the University reviews, on an annual basis, the efficiency and effectiveness of the review process..

## 2.2.10 Documentation Requirements – Educational Programme Review

### 2.3 Structure of Review Documentation

The documentation for a Educational Programme Review comprises:

Part 1: Overview

Part 2: Detailed Course Descriptor

Part 3: Programme Descriptors

The Review is a combined event with a Regulatory Body for accreditation purposes, it is essential the College studies the Regulatory Body requirements to establish its documentation properly.

*Detailed Programme Descriptors* are required for every course. The QA Department is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and currency of these documents and

The QA Department will supply the Review Panel with the following:

- Briefing Note for Members of Review Panels
- *Curriculum Development Committee Course* approval, and/or other appropriate educational programme development proposal documentation
- *Undergraduate and Graduate Syllabi/Handbooks* (external members only)
- *Academic policies* (external members only)
- *MFHEA course benchmarks* (as appropriate)
- electronic link to the relevant *Program Specification*

#### 2.3.1 Production of Review Documentation

The documentation is produced by the College concerned. The Graphics Department uses these originals for photocopying the required number of documents, producing them in a comb-bound format and in the University's corporate style.

#### 2.3.2 Content of Part 1: Overview

**Part 1: Overview and Resource Document should include:**

- the rationale for the development of the Educational Programme (or for revisions, in the case of a re-Review), making reference to the University's Mission.
- the context of the Educational Programme both within the College and the wider University.
- who the Educational Programme Development Team liaised with when developing the Educational Programme and associated documentation?
- external references and guidance, such as the MFHEA Educational Programme *Benchmark Statements*, Regulatory Body requirements and so on
- details of additional staff resources required to deliver the Study Programme.
- details of any external input, e.g., in the case of sub-contracted elements within the Study Programme.
- a list of Programme Coordinators and their summary CVs
- details of staff development required to support Educational Programme implementation
- an overview of the research and scholarly activities that underpin the Study Programme

- details of any specialist support required from the University to support the development or delivery of the Study Programme

### **2.3.3 Content of Part 2: Detailed Course Descriptor**

The *Detailed Course Descriptor* is the MQF-compliant *Program Specification*.

### **2.3.4 Content of Part 3: Programme Descriptors**

The *Programme Descriptors* are the MQF -compliant programme specifications.

### **2.3.5 Preparation of Summary Curriculum Vitae (Academic Staff)**

CVs need to be customized for the specific review event and should focus on the staff member's expertise in relation to the subject nature of the Study Programme. Each summary CV must be no longer than two sides of A4.

The CV should include the following information:

- (i) Name, abbreviated qualifications.
- (ii) Job Title/Post held within the University.
- (iii) Qualifications (Academic, Professional and Current Professional Affiliations). Qualifications should be listed with the most recent last, indicating the year the award was gained and the awarding institution. College qualifications should not be listed.
- (iv) Employment Experience. This should be listed in chronological order with the most recent last, indicating the job title/position held. Only experience directly related to the staff member's current area of expertise should be listed.
- (v) Main Subject/Interest Areas and Related Public Output (preceding 5 years only). State the total number of items of public output staff member has produced in the last five-year period and provide up to six examples of relevant items of public output.
- (vi) Research/Consultancy/Professional Practice (preceding 5 years only). Only list experience directly related to the development under consideration.

## **3. AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING STUDY PROGRAMMES**

### **3.1 Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) Discussion Procedure**

For changes to an existing course title; additions/changes to mode(s) of delivery; changes to named exit awards; proposals for re-developments to the course curriculum affecting more than 25% of an award's MQF credit value (e.g., *learning outcomes, Programme content*); and educational programme cessations.

1. If changes affect progression and/or assessment, external reviewers must be consulted, and written consent received. All students affected by change must be consulted and their views taken into consideration. Consultation with Regulatory Body if appropriate, and QA if online learning or change involves conversion to online learning. Dean prepares a report including justification, needs analysis, confirming extent of all consultation, and signs.
2. If Educational Programme is online learning or change involves conversion to online learning, explanation and justification is attached.

3. *Programme change* is considered by Curriculum Committee.
4. If change or new mode of delivery involves online learning material, Dean scrutinizes online learning to ensure it includes appropriate details of revised management arrangements.
5. In liaison with Provost Office, educational programme documentation updated.
6. QA ensures appropriate amendments to documentation in programme database.

### **3.2 College Level Approval Procedure**

For changes affecting less than or equal to 25% of an award's MQF credit value such as: changes affecting assessment (i.e., *Programme assessment plan, assessment weightings*); changes affecting progression; inclusion of new and/or revised Programmes (i.e., *Programme titles, MQF level/credit*); reInternship of Programmes with other existing Programmes; and alteration to the timing of delivery of existing Programmes.

1. Preparation of amended *Programme Descriptor(s)* for approval.
2. Appropriate consultation with External Reviewers and students.
3. Dean completes programme change request in consultation with College Teaching staff.
4. Amended Programme Descriptor(s) passed to QA. QA scrutinizes amended Programme Descriptor(s) and verifies in accordance with internal and external regulations.
5. Forms and all associated paperwork maintains information on course changes to monitor cumulative course changes.

### **4. PROGRAMME APPROVAL PROCEDURE**

1. Preparation of Programme Descriptor(s) for approval. If new programme is replacing existing programme, Dean must discuss proposed amendments with all Educational Programme staff responsible for courses/programs in which Programme is delivered.
2. New Programme Descriptor(s) passed to QA together with *QA verification and approval*. QA approval required for:
  - Programme objectives
  - Programme Learning Outcomes
  - Programme Assessment
  - MQF level and credit
4. New Programme Descriptor(s) passed to External Subject Expert, who may be External Reviewer, completes Programme Approval - *External Subject Expert Report*.
5. Dean considers *Programme Change Request* with new Programme Descriptor(s) and with Programme Approval - External Subject Expert Report
6. Form and all associated paperwork considered by Dean to confirm paperwork is in order. Dean maintains information on course changes to monitor cumulative course changes
7. QA ensures appropriate amendments to documentation in programme database.

### **5. EXIT AWARD COURSE APPROVAL PROCEDURE**

#### **5.1 Exit Award Course Approval Procedure**

The procedure for approving Programmes to be delivered as credit-rated award/non-award-bearing exit courses is the same as for the approval of new Programmes.

## **5.2 Third Party Collaboration**

The University may wish to evaluate and credit-rate provision that will be developed and delivered by an external organization (e.g., *an employer, a professional body, or a non-degree awarding institution*). Please refer to *Section 6* of this Handbook for further guidance on the approval process.

## **5.3 Quality Assurance of Programmes Delivered as Exit Awards**

The following applies to Programmes delivered as short courses, and not part of an award-bearing course.

**Annual Course Review** Credit-rated short courses are included into the Annual Review Process. A *Programme Review* is completed by the College offering Short Educational Programme. For details of the Annual Review Process, please refer to **Section 2** of this Handbook.

### **Internal Review**

Credit-rated short courses are subject to re-approval during the Internal Review process if they are delivered at least on an annual basis. A report should be prepared by the host College reviewing all credit-rated short courses developed in the College. For details of the Internal Review procedures, please refer to **Section 3** of this Handbook.

### **Evaluation**

All participants on short courses are required to complete the *Programme Evaluation Questionnaire* (refer **Section 2** of this Handbook). Short Educational Programme staff is responsible for the distribution, collection, and analysis of the *Programme Evaluation Questionnaire*. An analysis of the evaluation outcomes should inform the Annual Review Process and Internal Reviews.

## **6. AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING PROGRAMMES AND EXIT COURSES**

### **6.1 College Level Discussion Procedure**

If an existing Programme or short\exit course requires amendment, such amendments require discussion at the College only if they affect:

- Programme Assessment (QA approval also required)
- Programme Learning Outcomes (QA approval also required)
- MQF level or credit (QA approval also required)
- Mapping of Programme Learning Outcomes to the Level Learning Outcomes (only relevant for Programmes that are delivered as part of award-bearing programs) (QA approval also required)
- Programme Title

## **7. PROFESSIONAL AND/OR REGULATORY BODY (PRB) VISITS**

1. Visit date confirmed by QA in consultation with the representative of the regulatory body
2. QA co-ordinates preparation for visit in consultation with relevant Dean of College(s) and university units.
3. PRB advises University of Panel composition
4. Agenda confirmed in discussions with University and PRB
5. QA issues confirmed Agenda and Panel Membership to all units

6. Dean co-ordinates preparation of appropriate documentation in liaison with the Provost office and QA
7. Before documentation is forwarded, Dean should review if it is of a satisfactory standard and confirms documentation as being of satisfactory standard and passes the documentation to QA
8. Dean and QA check documents comply with University Regulations and guidelines (not academic content), receive signed QA confirmation.
9. Dean authorizes issue of event documentation, and documentation sent to Graphics and event documentation issued by College.
10. Panel undertakes visit. Preparation of report is coordinated by PRB.
11. Dean (through discussion with CDC) and QA produce response, as appropriate, to outcomes of visit and submit this to PRB.
12. QA advised of event outcomes and informed Academic Council accordingly. Curriculum Development Committee also considers event outcomes.
13. QA ensures appropriate amendments to documentation in programme database.

## **8. PROCEDURE FOR CESSATION OF A STUDY PROGRAMM**

Proposals for the cessation of an educational programme require the confirmation of Curriculum Development Committee.

1. College agrees to cease delivery of an educational programme, Dean prepares *Educational Programme Cessation Report* and signs.
2. Curriculum Development Committee considers proposal for cessation of the programme. Academic Council advised accordingly.
3. QA ensures appropriate amendments to documentation in *programme database*.

## **PART 2. ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS**

### **1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE**

The Annual Review of teaching and learning is central to the University's quality assurance processes. It enables the University to ensure its quality of programmes, courses and programs will satisfy the criteria for any review by any external body or satisfy quality internally. The process is designed to enhance the monitoring of quality and standards and to encourage the identification and dissemination of improvement issues. Furthermore, it is designed to facilitate the provision of good quality feedback to students on an ongoing basis.

The process is informed by several key sources including feedback from students obtained through the staff/student liaison process and evaluation questionnaires, feedback received from *External Annual Reports*, as well as performance indicator data produced by the University.

Commencing with the completion, by students, of *Student Programme Evaluation Questionnaires* and relevant *Student Experience Questionnaires*, this is followed by the review, at college level, of individual Programmes, and courses/programs. Once all Educational Programme Management Teams have completed this exercise, an *Annual College Review Report* is produced by the Dean. All *Annual College Review Reports* are considered by the Dean of College, which is submitted to the Quality Assurance office and has to be reported and approved by the Academic Council accordingly.

A fundamental principle of the *Annual Review Process* is that both strengths and weaknesses are identified at all levels of the process, the necessary action taken, and confirmation that the matter has been resolved reported to the appropriate Committee/body. Feedback is given throughout the process and, where appropriate, executive action taken.

The evidence gathered during this process is used to inform, incrementally, the program of Internal Reviews and to satisfy the requirements of external bodies such as the Quality Assurance Panels, External Professional Evaluation Agencies or Regulatory Bodies.

## **2. ANNUAL REVIEW PROCEDURE**

### **December, May**

*Student Programme Evaluation Questionnaires* and *Student Experience Questionnaires* completed by students.

### **Summer**

Analysis of Questionnaires completed by QA and distributed to Colleges.

### **May - August**

Reviewers asked to submit *Annual Report* within four weeks after examination session

### **July - September**

Performance Indicator issued by the Provost office on Student including:

- on student achievement/progression at programme level
- Applications/Enrollments
- Target Enrollments
- Entry Grade Point Averages
- Student Achievement Rates
- Non-Progression Analysis
- Graduate Output and Award Classifications
- Destination of Leavers from Higher Education., etc

### **August - September**

Deans reviews Programmes and *Student Programme Evaluation Questionnaire*.  
Completes *Annual Programme Review Report*

### **September - October**

College:

- considers all Annual Educational Programme Review Reports for College
- provides feedback on issues raised which can be dealt with at College level
- confirms responses to External Annual Reports

### **September - October**

QA prepares summary report to Academic Council.

### **October - November**

*Annual College Review Reports* submitted to the Academic Council for consideration and approval in accordance with agreed process.

### **November**

QA considers Annual College Review Reports. Institutional issues identified for action and referred, as appropriate, to Committees/Working Groups/management areas.

QA considers Summary Report on the evaluation of the Student Experience

### **December**

QA reports to the Academic Council on Annual Review on programme/course level and on institutional evaluation and major issues it has considered.

### **3. GUIDANCE - QUESTIONNAIRES**

#### **3.1 Student Programme Evaluation and Student Experience Questionnaires**

The *Student Programme Questionnaire* designed to obtain feedback from students about their learning experience. It consists of a high-level question asking the students to indicate their overall opinion of the Programme and to further indicate the Programme's strengths and areas for improvement from a list of pre-defined categories. Evaluation of the teaching staff on the Programme is also included and there is an opportunity for students to comment on other aspects of the Programme in a free-form comments box. The questionnaire is intended to be diagnostic and provide a basis for further investigation, if required. It provides some of the information required to complete the *Annual Programme Review Report* and forms the basis of high-level statistical information on Programme performance which is available to all Colleges.

The questionnaire is accessed via the web-based online questionnaires system which allows it to be sent to students via their email accounts.

*Student Experience Questionnaires* are designed to obtain feedback from students about their course and learning experience as part of an ongoing quality process. Several other different types of questionnaires have been developed as follows:

*First Year Experience Questionnaire*

*Course Evaluation Questionnaire*

*Graduate Experience Questionnaire*

The development of different questionnaires has enabled the University to tailor the questions to different groups of students – for example the *First Year Experience Questionnaire*, which is aimed at first year students, focuses on the student's transition to university and how well they feel they have coped, whereas the *Course Evaluation Questionnaire*, aimed at 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students, is designed to allow the student to give a reflective analysis of their course study experiences.

At the end of a pre-defined period, all student responses are collected and compiled electronically into analysis reports. Programme Deans are alerted by email, those results are available for the *Student Programme Evaluation Questionnaire* and *Student Experience Questionnaires* respectively, which are accessed via the web-based online questionnaires system.

#### ***Student Programme/Course Evaluation Questionnaires***

The report on the *Student Programme Evaluation Questionnaire* are accessible to the Faculty, and Curriculum Development Committee. Deans have access to all the Programme analysis reports pertaining to the Programmes in their course, and Deans have access to all Programme data available for all courses in their college, including both quantitative and qualitative data. Deans also have access to reports across the College, though this excludes the qualitative data. A high-level summary of student opinion of all Programmes in the College is provided to Deans by the QA Office.

#### ***Student Experience Questionnaires***



Reports arising from *Student Experience Questionnaires* are accessible to Deans, and Deans have access to all the data available for all courses in their college, including both quantitative and qualitative data.

As there are questions in some of the *Student Course Evaluation Questionnaires* relating to Support Departments, separate analysis reports are issued annually by the QA Department to each Support Department (Student Services, IT Services, the Library etc.) collating any relevant data from the questionnaires.

### **3.2 Feedback to Students arising from Questionnaires**

Feedback is provided to students to maintain students' engagement in the evaluation process. This feedback includes not only the results of the survey, but also the actions which are being undertaken as a result.

Once a *Student Programme/Course Evaluation Questionnaire* or a *Student Experience Questionnaire* has been completed, the QA Office releases the results which students may access via the *Student Portal* or the *Student Involvement AUM website*. These results consist of the statistical returns for the survey, but do not include any staff evaluation information or qualitative data.

Once the *Annual Programme Review Reports* and *Educational Programme Review Reports* are approved, Deans are requested to upload their *Annual Programme Review Reports* so they are accessible to students via the *Student Portal* or the *Student Involvement AUM website*.

Likewise, Deans are requested to upload an extract of their *Educational Programme Review Reports*, so they are also accessible to students via the *Student Portal* or the *Student Involvement AUM website*, thereby ensuring students have a full complement of information at their disposal.

Following consideration by QA, information on actions taken by Support Departments is compiled from their reports on the *Review and Improvement of the Student Experience* into a summary report for consideration by QA office, and made accessible to students via the *Student Portal* or the *Student Involvement AUM website*.

The QA Department presents an overall analysis of the results from *Student Programme and Experience Questionnaires* to Academic Council in Semester One of each session.

## **4. ANNUAL REVIEWS AND REPORTS**

### **4.1 Annual Programme Reviews**

An *Annual Programme Review* must be completed for each Programme within the University each academic year. *The Annual Programme Review Report* should be compiled by the relevant Dean.

### **4.2 Educational Programme Review**

#### **4.2.1 Standard Courses/Programs**

Every course and programme within the University, and every collaborative course, must be reviewed for further updates and developments.

Each College should complete an *Annual Programme Review Report* including:

Separate performance indicator information (e.g., *Applications/Enrollments, Target Enrolments, Entry Grade Point Averages, Applications, Student Achievement Rates, Non-*

*Progression Analysis, Graduate Output and Award Classifications, Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Statistics*) is provided for each named award.

#### **4.2.2 Credit-Rated Short Courses/Exit Awards**

A review must be completed in respect of all credit-rated short courses/exit awards. For this purpose, Deans should use the *Annual Programme Review Report*.

Participants on credit-rated short courses/exit awards are required to complete the *Student Programme Evaluation Questionnaire*, the analysis of which should be used to inform the review of a short course(s).

#### **4.3 Guidance for Completion of Annual Programme Review Reports**

The following guidance does not preclude the Dean from including any other information which is relevant.

##### **Section 1 Progress against Proposed Actions and Improvements**

Comment briefly on the outcomes of actions and improvements proposed the previous session

##### **Section 2 Student Achievement/Progression**

This section requires an analysis of the following data

- *Number of students enrolled on Programme*
- *Number of students assessed*
- *Number of students passed*
- *% Pass rate*
- *Students progression analysis*

##### **Section 3 Student Learning Experience**

This section requires an analysis of the responses to the *Student Programme or Course Evaluation Questionnaire* (excluding the staff evaluation section of the Questionnaire, which remains confidential to the College).

##### **Section 4 Other Issues Relating to the Programme**

This section provides the opportunity to highlight any other issues relating to the Programme not previously covered, for example, issues raised through staff/student liaison activity, feedback from Student Representatives, issues raised by External Reviewers etc.

#### **4.4 Guidance for Completion of Annual Educational Programme Review Reports**

The following guidance does not preclude the Educational Programme Management Team from including any other information which it feels is relevant.

*Annual Program Review Report – Undergraduate*

*Annual Program Review Report – Graduate*

The design of the Review report is intended to encourage systematic analysis of courses/programs, reporting by 'exception', the highlighting of any significant trends, and the extraction of key issues for the attention of the Provost Office and, ultimately, QA Office.

Section 1      **Progress against Proposed Actions and Improvements**

Section 2      **Student Enrolment**

Commentary may refer to, for example, poor conversion from application to acceptance, the effects of interviewing candidates, significant differences in intake numbers for home and overseas students, differences across awards in a program, action being taken to widen participation etc.

Section 3      **Student Evaluation of the Study Programme**

This section requires the analysis of responses to the *Student Course Evaluation Questionnaires*, *Annual Programme Review Reports* and *Student Experience Questionnaires*.

Section 4      **Student Achievement**

- *Student Achievement Rates and Non-Progression Analysis*
- *Destination of Graduates* published during the previous session.

Commentary may refer to, for example, factors influencing withdrawal and action being taken to retain students, significant differences in the achievement rates for different groups/types of students e.g. online learning, wider access, students with needs, significant differences in employment of graduates from different awards within a program, above average unemployment, progression to further study etc.

Section 5      **Standards**

This section will draw on an analysis of relevant information/comments regarding standards extracted from *External Annual Reports* and, where indicated (i.e., by answering 'yes' or 'no' to any question as indicated), commentary should be provided, including action to be taken.

Section 6      **Teaching and Learning Development**

Details of planned changes and improvement activity should be provided as appropriate.

Section 7      **Resources**

Section 8      **Educational Programme Organization and Operation**

Section 9      **Positive Developments and Good Practice**

Examples of any positive developments including examples of good practice used to deliver/assess/administer the Study Programme, especially those that might be shared with other Colleges. Possible examples could be:

- New teaching methods
- Introduction of computer-based assessments

## Section 10    **Summary of Proposed Actions and Improvements**

This section should draw on previous sections of the report and summaries all proposed actions and improvements, indicating timescales and the level of responsibility i.e., College or University

### *APPENDIX*

#### *THE REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE*

This note provides guidance to Support Departments on the prescribed format for reporting to the Quality Assurance Office, via the Curriculum Development Committee\College Board, on the review of, and proposed improvements to the student experience.

### **REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE – SESSION 200X/XX**

inserting the current session and identify your department. Thereafter, please follow the following structure.

#### **1. PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN SESSION 200X/0X IN RESPONSE TO ISSUES ARISING FROM THE ANNUAL REVIEW FOR SESSION 200X/0X.**

This should refer to activities undertaken during the previous session in response to issues raised in the session before that, e.g., for reporting in Session 2021/22, the activities should relate to those undertaken in Session 2021/22 for issues raised in Session 2021/22.

Please report each improvement activity with the following structure:

**Issue/Activity:**

Provide a brief description of the issue or activity.

**Source/Origin of Issue:**

Indicate why this was undertaken (e.g., Self-Evaluation, Department initiative designed to enhance the student experience, student evaluation/feedback etc.)

**Progress to Date:** Provide a brief description.

**Evaluation:**

Evaluate how successful each initiative has been and describe the evidence on which this judgement is based.

**Note:** Improvement is defined as “taking deliberate steps to bring about continuous improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experience of students”.

#### **2. ANALYSIS/REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE IN SESSION 200X/0X**

This should refer to activities undertaken during the previous session in response to issues raised in the session before that, e.g., for reporting in Session 20XX/XX, the activities should relate to those undertaken in Session 20XX/XX.

Describe areas of strength and areas for improvement identified from analysis of feedback from the following sources, reporting with the following structure:

**(a) *Student Experience Questionnaires***

**Areas of Strength:**

-  
-

**Areas for Improvement:**

-  
-

**(b) Other sources of feedback (e.g., external review, audit, self-evaluation etc.)**

**Areas of Strength:**

-  
-

**Areas for Improvement:**

-  
-  
-

**3. PLAN OF IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR SESSION 2021/2022**

This should refer to activities planned for the current session in which you are reporting, e.g., for reporting in Session 20xx/xx, the activities should relate to those planned for Session 20XX/XX.

Please report each improvement activity with the following structure:

**3.1 Improvements to be Undertaken During the Current Session**

**3.2 Improvements for the Following Session(s)**

**4. FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS FOR SESSION 200X/XX**

*This should refer to feedback provided to students on actions undertaken in the previous session, e.g., for reporting in Session 2021/22, the activities should relate to those undertaken in Session 2021/22.*

The text within this section should provide summary feedback to students on the above - bullet points/one or two paragraphs would be indicative. This information will be compiled into a 'student friendly' report and fed back to students via the Student Portal.

**PART 3 INTERNAL REVIEW: GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

**1.OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE**

Internal Review is the process adopted by the University to formally review, on a five-year cycle, its major curriculum and programme offerings. Following the formal review, there is an *Annual Internal Review* to monitor progress against actions/issues raised through the review process.

The primary purpose of an *Internal Review* is to assure that there is effective and responsible management of the quality and standards of its programme provision, and there is evidence of a commitment to continuous development and improvement.

*The Internal Review* is organized on a college basis with programme provision as per MQF accreditation requirements, or by programme by a professional body, since there may also be some additional requirements for the University to follow as prescribed by a professional body.

The Internal Review is conducted by a *Review Panel* (minimum 3 members) consisting of both internal and, if the College decides, external members (*industry or academic experts*). The internal membership also includes a representative of the University's student community.

During the Internal Review event, the Review Panel will have the opportunity to view supplementary material, inspect facilities, and meet with staff, present and former students, and employers.

Responsibility for preparing for an Internal Review rest with the appropriate Dean of each College, or the nominee, or the Programme Leader. Normally, approximately six months prior to the event, a preliminary meeting is held with the QA, Academic Affairs, Registrar, relevant Faculty Program \ Course Leader, the Dean of College, and key staff involved in preparing for the event where the Convener of the event is a QA Officer. The purposes of this preliminary meeting are:

- to clarify the review process.
- to confirm the content of the review (i.e., programmes to be reviewed).
- to confirm whether Programme Review will be conducted within the event.
- to ensure that the Dean or nominee checks that the documentation meets the requirements of both the professional and regulatory body, should the Internal Review event be combined with an accreditation event for a professional, or regulatory body.

## **2. INTERNAL REVIEW PROCEDURE**

1. QA confirms date of Internal Review in consultation with Deans and Provost, and co-ordinates preparation of *Internal Review*.
2. Two months prior to event, QA sets up a meeting with the key staff from College level, administrative units and the Provost.
3. The Provost approves the Composition of Review Panel and forwards it to Academic Council for approval 3 months prior to the IQA event
4. College prepares *Analytical Data*, and course documentation in accordance with University and Regulatory Body requirements, as appropriate, in liaison with QA. Consultation takes place as appropriate with students and Support Departments.
7. Dean ensures copies of *Educational Programme Portfolio* – Submission of all Program descriptors and Programme Descriptors to the Review Panel.
9. The Review Panel undertakes the event and prepares Internal Review Report in 1 weeks' time after the event
10. College prepares response to conditions and recommendations arising from the Report and submits it to Review Panel members not later than 3 days
11. Chair of Review Panel advises of event outcomes and reports to the Academic Council accordingly
12. Confirmed Report uploaded on QA's webpage (intranet only).
13. The response of the College will include a detailed improvement plan on how to deal with actions that need to be taken following the recommendations of the review
14. Dean, or the nominee, ensures completion of final documentation in *Programme Database*.
15. Students, graduates and employers who participated in event receive copy of the report.

## **3. GUIDANCE**

### **3.1. Planning and Scheduling of the Internal Review Event**

The Program of Internal Review is overseen by the University's Quality Assurance Department who ensures that all the proper procedures are applied in a timely manner. The *Internal Review Planning* serves as an agreed framework of timescales to be adhered to.

The Internal Review event normally spans approximately two and a half days.

The program for the Internal Review event and the composition of the Review Panel are considered and approved at the meeting of the Academic Council, where the President and the Provost decide the composition of Internal Quality Review Panel/

### **3.2 Review Panels**

Panels for Internal Review events should consist of external and internal members appropriate to the nature of the programme under review, and the membership is selected ensuring wide spectrum of external advice and comments as possible.

An Internal Review Panel has the following minimum composition:

**Chair:** Appointed by the President. The role is to manage the event, ensure it is conducted in accordance with the University's requirements.

**Three to four internal members:** Internal members of staff appointed by the Provost and approved by the Academic Council.

**Student member:** An enrolled student at the University appointed in liaison with the Student Union. The student will be a full-time learner and will normally have experience of representing students' interests at college or institutional level.

**One or two external members (if applicable):** External member must be an academic, or represent the appropriate industry, profession, or commerce.

Three Review Panel members is the minimum, maximum 5 or 7 members is the composition for a Panel. It may be preferable to include more external academic/professional representation depending on the discipline(s) covered by the review.

### **3.3 Programme/Course Documentation and Approval**

Deans checks and approves the documentation has been produced according to University Regulations and guidelines and passes to QA for verification.

QA is required to approve the following elements of the updated course documentation for all courses being submitted for review:

- **Course Aims (Detailed Course Descriptor (DCD))**
- **Course Learning Outcomes (DCD).**
- **Mapping of Course Learning Outcomes to Programmes (DCD).**
- **Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies (DCD).**
- **Course Assessment (DCD).**
- **All Programme Descriptors**
- **Reading List**

Supplementary items of documentation are made available to Panel members, where possible, in advance. Data and supplementary documentation for each programme/course is likely to include:

- **Academic staff**
- **Programme management** and a description of their integration within the overall College management structure
- **Summary of External Annual Reports** over the last three years, prepared by the Course\Program Leader.
- **Responses to recommendations**

- **Annual Review documentation** covering the last two sessions (if applicable).
- Data relating to **Student Course and Programme Evaluation Questionnaires**
- **Annual Student Experience Survey, Student Survey, Graduate Survey:** data on achievement and employability
- **Data on student enrolment, retention, and achievement:** for example, entry qualifications, student achievement rates, course completion rates (including research)
- **Graduate First Destination Statistics** (graduate, employment statistics) etc.
- **Reports of accreditation visits by regulatory body** and an indication of how outcomes have been addressed.
- **Teaching evaluation** survey results
- **Employer's survey** (if applicable)

Documentation on collaborative arrangements:

- **Notes of University - Industry meetings (two sessions per year)** (if applicable)
- **Notes of College Board meetings**
- **Notes of Curriculum Development Committee meetings**
- **Summary staff CVs and publication lists**
- **Schedule of Visiting Lecturers** (*where appropriate*)
- **Examples of Student Handbooks, Programme and Course Handbooks and any other course materials.**
- **Samples of student work/artefacts (for the purpose of demonstrating the range, and not for the purpose of confirming standards).**
- **Programme Review Reports** (*published*)

### 3.4 Outcomes of Internal Review

The Review Panel will make one of the following judgments in respect of the assurance of quality and standards and of evidence of commitment to continuous development and improvement for each of the courses reviewed:

- Confidence, fulfils minimum standards
- No confidence, does not fulfil minimum standards

In reaching a judgment of "confidence" the Panel will have the opportunity to make recommendations. In reaching a judgment of 'no' confidence the Panel should clearly indicate the basis whereby this judgment has been reached and indicate to the University what steps could be taken to address this outcome.

In terms of the review of courses, the Panel can make the judgment either to approve a course with recommendations, or to not approve a course. In reaching the latter judgement, the Panel should clearly indicate the basis whereby this judgement has been reached.

### 3.5 College Response to Outcomes of Internal Review

The College is required to produce a response to the conditions and recommendations arising from the Internal Review event. This must be sent to the Review Panel members for their consideration and/or approval.

### 3.6 Review Report

A formal report of each Internal Review event is prepared by the Review Panel. After it has been approved by all members of the Panel the Confirmed Report is made available on the QA's webpage.



A copy of the Confirmed Report is also forwarded to students, graduates and employers who participated in the event.

#### **4. GUIDELINES TO INTERNAL REVIEW REPORT**

##### **SECTION 1 - OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT**

The purpose of this section is to provide a brief overview of programme/course provision and relevant background information, before engaging with the more detailed content.

Typical content will include:

**Part 1.1** The programmes/course(s) being reviewed and their location within the academic structure of the University, i.e., College, Curriculum Development Committee etc.

**Part 1.2** Main issues arising from previous Reviews (programme/College/PRB) and subsequent actions taken.

**Part 1.3** A brief description of significant developments/issues since the last review relating to the context of the subject and pertinent to the current review. This should be restricted to institutional and College developments, e.g., relocation to a new building, change in organizational structures, etc. Guidance on developments at an institutional level will be provided in the preliminary meeting.

*Programme/course developments should not be included in this section as these will be addressed in Section 2.*

**Part 1.4** Overview of the main source of evidence and benchmarks which will be used to inform the subsequent sections of the Analytical Account, e.g., Annual Educational Programme Review, External Reviewer Annual Reports, MQF requirements, etc.

##### **SECTION 2 - CRITICAL REVIEW OF PROGRAMME/COURSE PROVISION**

In addition to including reference to the portfolio of evidence, cross reference should be made within the following subsections to supplementary documentation which will be available to the Panel. Where more than one programme/course is being addressed within the Analytical Account, content common to all courses should be presented first, followed by course specific details.

*Subsections 2.2 – 2.9 inclusive should conclude with a brief evaluation of the current situation and an indication of planned further developments and improvements.*

###### **Part 2.1 Aims of programme/course area**

This should provide:

- A brief statement of the aims of the programme/course area.
- Demonstration of the relevance of programme/course aims to the University's Mission and Vision.
- A brief description of how the subject engages with industry/professions to ensure the relevance and achievement of its aims.

###### **Part 2.2 Programme/course developments**

Highlight the key developments (and associated rationale) in the programme/course provision since the last review. Address changes/developments in respect of the following:

- capability, i.e., areas of expertise.
- capacity, i.e., faculty/staff complement.
- course provision, i.e., new course developments, course cessations and major subject content changes in continuing courses.
- research

The influence of relevant national/international developments/best practice underpinning these developments and/or proposed improvements should be highlighted where appropriate.

Each programme/course for which review is sought should be considered the following information provided:

(a) A summary of the main issues arising at the last approval and actions taken in the light of these.

(b) A critical review of other developments to the Educational Programme over the period since the previous review, *e.g.*, *new awards, course structures etc.* This should include a rationale for the developments, *e.g.*, student feedback, compliance with the Malta Qualifications Frameworks (MQF) etc., and an evaluation of the success of these developments.

(c) A summary evaluation of the performance of the programme/course drawing on the data and content.

(d) Discussion of, and rationale for, any changes incorporated within the programme/course now being submitted for review. Where appropriate, there should be reference to any resourcing/development requirements.

### **Part 2.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

This subsection should provide a critical review of current teaching, learning and assessment practices, highlighting key developments, evidence of effectiveness and proposed future improvements. Reference should be made, where relevant, to the influence on practice at course/subject level of university-wide strategies/initiatives for the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. Topics for inclusion include:

- pedagogy and assessment practices/policies.
- modes of delivery, *e.g.*, online, face-to-face, blended, online learning
- work-based learning, where relevant.
- equity and diversity, and wider access.

### **Part 2.4 Programme/Course Standards**

This subsection should contain a critical review of key practices and developments designed to secure appropriate intended and output standards.

Intended standards for taught courses relate to *curriculum design and content* and so emphasis should be placed on highlighting the mechanisms for ensuring their appropriateness, along with supporting evidence to confirm the achievement of this. This would, therefore, relate to adherence to MFHEA requirements, Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF), PRB requirements, where relevant, influence of employers and features of and relevant outcomes from course Review.

For research degree provision, a brief explanation should be provided of how research programmes are developed and approved.

Output standards relate to student achievement. Reference should be made to any developments designed to enhance consistency/security of standards. This could involve some cross-referencing to relevant aspects of Section 2.3.

### **Part 2.5 Student Enrolment, Retention and Achievement**

This subsection should provide a critical review of key performance data relating to the taught course portfolio over the period since the last review. This should include appropriate cross reference to changes in the course portfolio, *i.e.*, where analysis has led to course cessations, new course developments or significant course changes. Associated tabulated data for the programme/course provision should include reference to entry profiles, Student Achievement Rates, application to enrolment ratios, award profiles, first destination statistics, and comparability against national

benchmarks (e.g., award of honors). Relevant data relating to wider access and equity and diversity should also be included.

### **Part 2.6 Learning Infrastructure**

This subsection should provide a critical review and evaluation of the effectiveness of key developments and improvements in respect of the learning infrastructure. The content of this section could be considered under two categories:

- resources and facilities at college and institutional level. This in turn would include reference to accommodation, equipment, library services and provision, IT facilities and e-learning platforms.
- student support at college and institutional level. This would include reference to developments in the personal tutorial system, College learning resources, developments to central services, e.g., academic support services, tutoring, careers services, etc.

Appropriate liaison/consultation should take place with relevant staff in Support Departments in producing this subsection.

### **Part 2.7 Student Evaluation of the Learning Experience**

This subsection should deal with two aspects of student evaluation:

- a critical review and evaluation of the key developments in enhancing the mechanisms for obtaining and responding to student feedback, e.g., development of evaluation questionnaires, Educational Programme management, staff/student liaison mechanisms, student representative training, etc.
- the key issues arising from student evaluation, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. An indication should be given of key changes which are taking place because of this feedback and may well involve cross referencing to previous sections of the document.

Appropriate liaison/consultation should take place with students/student representatives in producing this subsection.

### **Part 2.8 Research**

This subsection should provide, for each programme/course within the Review, a critical review of research activity, including how the research underpins taught provision. In each case, this should conclude with the proposed research strategy for the next Review Period. Cross referencing should be made to the quantitative data. Associated tabulated data should be provided including e.g., number of research staff, research students, annual publications, research income etc.

### **Part 2.9 Scholarly Activity and Staff Development**

This subsection should provide a critical review of scholarly activity and staff development pertinent to each programme/course area. The underlying rationale for the strategies adopted should be discussed, along with proposed future strategies.

## **PART 4. EXTERNAL REVIEWER ARRANGEMENTS**

### **1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE**

The appointment of External Reviewer is one of the most important features of the University's system of quality assurance. The function of the External Reviewer is crucial to all aspects of the assessment process and his/her presence ensures the objectivity of an Assessment Board, comparability of awards and standards in the national context, the fair and equitable treatment of students, and correct application of the Academic Regulations.

The remit of the External Reviewer extends to all assessments that contribute to the award of academic credit.

## APPENDIX

### GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE EXTERNAL REVIEWER ROLE AND EXPECTATIONS

#### 1.1 Authority and Responsibilities of External Reviewers

- To ensure that students are assessed fairly and impartially, and that the standard of a particular University award is comparable with those of other awarding bodies.
- To approve, as appropriate, the form and content of draft examination papers, coursework and/or other forms of assessment that contribute to the assessment in award-bearing stages.
- To approve proposed changes to assessment regulations where these affect students currently registered for the course.
- To approve, as appropriate, proposed course/Programme changes.
- To attend meetings of the Assessment Board, as appropriate, and have right of access to the work of students where such work is subject to assessment for academic awards within the Board's jurisdiction.
- To have access to the work of those students recommended for the highest category of the award(s) and of those deemed to have failed the assessment for the award. External Reviewers shall also have authority to request representative samples of work for each category of the award to ensure that the relative placing of the students in order of merit is fair and impartial.
- To moderate the grades awarded by the internal Reviewers.
- To conduct a viva voce examination in the case of any student.
- To participate, as required, in the review of any decision relating to an individual student award.
- Every recommendation for the conferment of an award of the University by an Assessment Board shall be subject to the written consent of at least one of the External Reviewers for the award.
- Where an External Reviewer(s) declares the subject of any contention to be a matter of principle, the Assessment Board shall either accept the view of the External Reviewer(s) or refer the matter to the Academic Council for a decision. Similarly, any unresolved disagreement between the External Reviewers shall be referred to the Academic Council for resolution.
- About Programmes that are shared between colleges:
  - To ensure comparability of awards (national) and standards (University).
  - To ensure fair and equitable treatment of students who share Programmes across courses.
  - Duties of moderation of assessment, reading of scripts as appropriate.
  - Receives *Programme Results Listing*, immediately following assessment periods in Semester 1 and Semester 2, from Programme Coordinator.
  - Analysis's profile of grades (all students in host and guest Colleges).
  - Prepares *Programme Feedback Report* and submits to Programme Coordinator.

- To undertake their responsibilities in accordance with the Academic Regulations and AUM Organizational Regulations.

## **1.2 Administrative Responsibilities**

- Each External Reviewer shall complete a standard written Annual Report to the University on the conduct of the assessments concluded during the year and on issues relating to those assessments.
- The Educational Programme Management Team, under the direction of the Dean and Educational Programme Leader, is required to address each of the points raised in the External Reviewer's report; the Dean shall subsequently respond formally, in writing, to the External Reviewer(s) to advise him/her of the course of action adopted in respect of each of the comments raised in the report.
- Where an External Reviewer considers that any aspect of an assessment erodes or jeopardizes the standard of the University's awards, he/she shall report such concern, at the earliest opportunity, in writing to the Provost of the University.

## **SECTION 5 WORK-BASED LEARNING: INTERNSHIP PROVISION**

### **1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE**

This Section of the Handbook covers the University policy and procedures for the quality assurance of student internships.

Many courses/programs within the University are regulated by the requirements of professional and regulatory bodies. Where this is the case, any additional requirements should also be met for student Internships.

The following terminology is used throughout this Section of the Handbook:

<i>Internship Coordinator</i>	- overall Internship organizer for the College
<i>Academic Internship Tutor</i>	- tutor based within the College
<i>Internship Provider</i>	- the organization providing the Internship
<i>Mentor</i>	- tutor employed by the Internship Provider

The University is responsible for ensuring that, where Internship learning is an intended part of a Study Programme:

- the responsibilities for Internship learning are clearly defined.
- the intended Learning Outcomes contribute to the overall aims of the Study Programme.
- any assessment of Internship learning is part of a coherent assessment strategy.

These aspects are also currently covered by the following Sections of this Handbook:

*Section 1: Programme, Course and Program Developments*

*Section 2: Annual Review Process*

*Section 3: Internal Review.*

### **2. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

## **2.1 Internship Arrangements**

It is important students are aware of the basic requirements of their internship. The University requires that all students undertaking an internship period be issued, well before the start of the Internship, with a document clarifying:

- Who is responsible for securing the Internship? If the College is primarily responsible, it should be stated whether the student is permitted, or encouraged, to find his/her own Internship opportunity. If the student is primarily responsible, details of any assistance available should be given.
- The procedure for approving Internships.
- The consequences of failing to secure an internship or failing to satisfactorily complete an internship.

An exemplar document depicting the organization of Internships is given in *Appendix 5.1*, and should be modified to fit the requirements of each Study Programme.

## **2.2 Internship Provision**

The University wishes to be assured of the ability of the Internship Provider to:

- provide learning opportunities to enable the specified Learning Outcomes to be achieved.
- support students on Internship
- fulfil responsibilities under health and safety legislation in the workplace, having regard to the level of skill and experience of Internship students.

### **2.1.1 Academic and Support Issues**

Documentation provided to the Internship Provider should include:

- a synopsis of the learning and skills possessed by the students prior to commencing Internship.
- a statement of the Programme Learning Outcomes to be achieved.
- if a learning contract is to be developed, some guidance on the process, including examples.
- a statement of any key targets to be met, e.g., interim report dates.
- if the Internship Supervisor is to be involved in assessment, an explanation of how this is to be carried out, preferably with proformas to be completed which include detailed definitions of grades.

When approving a new Internship Provider, the Internship Coordinator should assure him/herself the above issues are well understood by the Internship Provider and adequate learning opportunities and support in terms of staff and facilities are available.

Where a learning contract is to be developed, this process should be completed at an early stage of the Internship; for a year-long Internship, it should be completed by the end of the first four weeks. In all cases, final approval of the learning contract is the responsibility of the College, and this should include a check that all the stated Programme Learning Outcomes are adequately covered.

### **2.2.2 Health and Safety**

Whilst the primary responsibility for the health and safety of the student rests with the Internship Provider during the Internship period, the University has responsibilities to both the Internship Provider and to the students on Internship. The University's Students Affairs has developed Student Internship Risk Management Policy and Procedure. Colleges should ensure all the procedures detailed in the current version of this are

implemented. Copies of the Student Internship Risk Management Policy and Procedure are also available at the website.

For all Internships, Colleges should pay special attention if a student has specific needs. Additional checks on the suitability of the premises in which the student will work and the support to be provided by the Internship Provider must be made about the specific needs, and a report lodged with the Internship Coordinator. The University's *Adviser for Students with Disabilities* may be consulted or involved in the process, as necessary.

### **2.2.3 Internship Providers**

Visits by Academic Internship Tutors should be used to reinforce, as necessary, the awareness of Internship Providers of their responsibilities relating to the provision of learning opportunities and support, the health and safety of students and, where appropriate, assessment.

## **3. STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Colleges should address issues regarding students' rights and responsibilities by conducting student briefings ahead of the Internship. It is essential students also receive guidance in written form. Whilst the items to be covered will depend on the College and the Internships involved, the list given in *Appendix 5.2* provides an indication of items which might be covered.

## **4. STUDENT SUPPORT AND INFORMATION**

Colleges should ensure adequate support and information is provided for all Internship students by conducting student briefings ahead of the Internship, covering what the student may expect leading up to, during and after the Internship. It is essential students also receive guidance in written form. The Internship Provider should be sent a copy of any written guidance provided. Whilst the items to be covered will depend on the College and the Internships involved, the list given in *Appendix 5.3* provides an indication of items which might be covered.

## **5. STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

The University is responsible for ensuring the staff who are involved in Internship learning are competent to fulfil their role. The following procedures should be adopted and documented:

### **5.1 College Responsibilities**

- (i) Wherever possible, Internship Coordinators should be members of groups comprising staff with similar responsibilities in other institutions.
- (ii) Internship Coordinators should brief new members of staff on what is expected of an Academic Internship Tutor, and this should be accompanied by the issue of written guidance.
- (iii) Guidelines and checklists/forms covering progress towards Learning Outcomes, any problems and remedial actions taken should be drawn up by each College for Academic Internship Tutor visits to students on Internships. The checklists/forms should be completed and returned to the Internship Coordinator to form a permanent record of each Internship.
- (iv) An annual meeting of all staff involved in Internships should be held to discuss the operation of Internships during the previous session and possible modifications for the forthcoming session. Ideally, this meeting should include staff from Internship Providers as this will raise the awareness of Internship Supervisors and involve them in developments.

- (v) Where applicable, College staff development policies should ensure the provision of arrangements to train academic staff involved in Internship activity.
- (vi) Provision should be made so an efficient immediate transfer of all Internship duties is possible in the event the Internship Coordinator is absent for a prolonged period.

## **5.2 University Responsibilities**

- (i) The University will organize a meeting of Internship Coordinators at least once per session to review University-wide issues relating to the provision of student Internships.
- (ii) The University will provide training opportunities as required and in consultation with Internship Coordinators.

## **6. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS**

The University's Academic Regulation A3: Student Conduct, Appeals and Complaints applies equally to the Internship period as to any other activity in connection with study at the University.

Colleges must ensure students, University staff and Internship Providers are aware how to access *Academic Regulation A3: Student Conduct, Appeals and Complaints*.

## **7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF INTERNSHIP LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

The following procedures should be followed and documented:

### **7.1 During Internships**

Colleges should:

- (i) Encourage Internship Supervisors and students to communicate any concerns over any aspect of the Internship timeously.
- (ii) Ensure progress is monitored at regular intervals, with appropriate recording of information gathered.
- (iii) Ensure continuous communication is maintained between the Academic Internship Tutor and the Internship Supervisor

### **7.2 After Conclusion of Internships**

Colleges should:

- (i) Collect information on the effectiveness of the learning during Internship. This may be achieved by the issue of questionnaires to, and/or by reports from, students and Internship Supervisors. External Reviewers may make an input, where appropriate, at Assessment Boards and in *External Reviewer Annual Reports*. Informal input from students and Internship Supervisors may be obtained through meetings either in groups or individually
- (ii) Process and evaluate the information, including ensuring the quality and standards of achievement of all the Internships are reviewed. The University's quality system provides several mechanisms by which this may be achieved and recorded: through Assessment Boards, with External Reviewer participation where appropriate, and the Annual Review Process
- (iii) Ensure participation of Internship Providers in the review of procedures to facilitate effective learning opportunities during Internship. The many informal



opportunities for this process should be supplemented by more formal occasions. The proceedings of these formal occasions should be recorded and may include, for example, group meetings between representatives from the staff of Internship Providers and the College

## APPENDIX

### EXEMPLAR DOCUMENT FOR INTERNSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

#### COLLEGE OF .....

Students undertaking the BSc ..... are required to undertake a ..... week period of work experience (Internship) within an approved organization. The Internship will normally be undertaken after successful completion of semester 3 of the course.

#### 1. Procedures for securing and allocating Internships.

Staff in the College will generate Internship opportunities, this will be coordinated by the College's Internship Coordinator. All Internship opportunities will be advertised to students.

Students may apply for any position of interest to them. Internship Providers will receive all applications and will draw up a shortlist for interview with no assistance from the Internship Coordinator. The successful candidate will be selected after progressing through the Internship Provider's own recruitment process.

#### 2. Procedure for approving Internships

Organizations interested in employing a Internship student are required to produce a description of the tasks to be undertaken (task description) during the proposed Internship. Before advertising any Internship opportunity, this task description will be judged against the Learning Outcomes for the Internship element of the course to ascertain its suitability.

Any student identifying a potential Internship using his or her own connections is required to submit a task description to the Internship Coordinator. This will be subject to the same approval procedure as above.

#### 3. Consequences of failure to secure a Internship or failing a Internship.

Any student failing to secure an internship by the end of September will be required to undertake a research project in the College. Any student failing the Internship, or alternative project, should be aware that only one further attempt to achieve success in this element is possible. Any student who ultimately fails the Internship, or alternative project, will not be eligible for an award.

*SUGGESTED LIST - STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS***Student Responsibilities**

Students are expected to:

1. Act as good representatives both of themselves and of the University. The work Internship will form an important part of a student's CV, particularly in the early stages of his/her career. For the student, a good impression is important to get the most out of the Internship and possibly a useful referee for future applications; for the University, future Internship opportunities for future students are at stake.
2. Pay due attention to all health and safety issues, attend briefings before the commencement of the Internship and carefully read the contents of the *University Health and Safety Pack*.
3. Return the *Health and Safety Induction Checklist* promptly by the end of week 1 of the Internship.
4. Be professional, this includes respect for any ethical, legal, confidential, or other considerations as appropriate.
5. Manage inter-personal relationships with the employer, its clients, and employees.
6. Wear appropriate dress and present a good personal appearance.
7. Report for work punctually and work as specified by the Internship Provider.
8. Work efficiently, alone or with others as required.
9. Record progress and achievements.
10. Produce material for assessments and/or as required for other purposes by your employer to meet given deadlines.
11. Alert the employer at the start of the day in the event of illness preventing attendance. If the illness persists for 5 days or more, the Internship Coordinator at the College should also be alerted.
12. Negotiate any days off with the Internship Supervisor.
13. Be enthusiastic, set out to gain as much from the opportunity as possible.
14. Avoid openly criticizing the Internship Provider or individuals within the organization.
15. Report all accidents to the Internship Supervisor and to the Internship Coordinator.
16. Promptly inform the appropriate person in the event of any problem developing which inhibits progress towards achieving the Learning Outcomes on the Internship.

**Student Rights**

Students may expect:

1. The Internship Provider to provide a safe Internship environment.
2. The Internship Provider to provide work and support that allows the student to develop appropriate skills. The University has systems and procedures in place to check if this is the case. Students should be aware that, exceptionally, (e.g., equipment breakdown, loss of contract) projects may need to be changed or re-negotiated.
3. To be treated in accordance with applicable legislation.

*SUGGESTED LIST - STUDENT SUPPORT AND INFORMATION***Before the start of the Internship**

Students should be informed of:

1. Details of the Internship process including:

- How details of Internships will be made available to students.
- The channels for applying for specific Internships and for responding to any interest expressed by Internship Provider (whether directly or through the Internship Coordinator).
- Guidance on preparation of a CV, if appropriate.
- Guidance on preparation for Internship interviews, if appropriate.
- The provision which is made for the development of additional skills if appropriate (e.g., General/specific foreign language support, cultural orientation).
- The need for personal insurance cover, if appropriate.
- Reinforcement of the student's obligations in respect of health and safety, particularly in the new environment, and that they should pay particular attention to the health and safety briefing that the Internship Provider will give. Also, the need for any vaccinations if relevant.
- Reinforcement of any special obligations which may apply relating to, for example, legal, ethical or confidentiality issues.
- The stage at which a student is obliged to accept a Internship, and the consequences of a refusal at this stage.

2. The length of the Internship.

3. Any arrangements for time off during the Internship.

4. The Programme Learning Outcomes.

5. Any specific Learning Outcomes or how and when these will be determined in the case of a learning contract or learning plan which is yet to be finalized.

6. What they are expected to produce as evidence of meeting Learning Outcomes or how and when these will be determined.

7. Assessment details and criteria or how and when these will be determined.

8. When/if they may expect a visit from the Academic Internship Tutor.

9. What to do in the case of a problem arising which has the potential to seriously affect their work on the Internship.

10. Telephone number and e-mail contact details for university staff.

11. Their position during Internship in respect of:

- Any grant or funding they may receive, and how receipt of salary may affect this.
- Holidays during the Internship.
- Matriculation at the University, fees and University services that remain available to students during the Internship (e.g., Library access).

12. Students should also receive from the Internship Provider a letter:

- Confirming their internship, and dates.
- Stating the time, place, and person to whom to report on the first day.
- Stating any salary to be paid.
- Giving details of any specific clothing requirements if these are to be met by the student.

### **During the Internship**

Internship Providers should:

1. Provide a health and safety induction and participate in the completion and return of the relevant checklist in week 1.
2. Provide the support and facilities agreed with the Internship Coordinator and Academic Internship Tutor.
3. Respond to any problems brought to their attention by the student or Academic Internship Tutor.

The College should:

1. Ensure regular contact is maintained via telephone and/or e-mail.
2. Maintain regular contact with the student.
3. Respond to any problems brought to their attention by the student or Internship Supervisor.
4. Provide any regular monitoring of progress detailed in the Programme Descriptor or in documentation provided to the student/Internship Provider.
5. Visit the student at the stage(s) in the Internship, unless this proved impracticable for staff in the College itself to undertake such a visit, in which case alternative appropriate arrangements should be agreed prior to the Internship commencing, detailed in the Programme Descriptor or in documentation provided to the student/Internship Provider.

### **After the Internship**

The College should assist student re-orientation. Examples of how this may be achieved are:

1. The provision of an individual debriefing session for each student.
2. By conducting group seminar(s) at which learning from Internship may be discussed. It is desirable that upcoming prospective Internship students attend this seminar.