



Queen Margaret University  
EDINBURGH

**VISITING LECTURER SUPPORT HANDBOOK**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Who is this Handbook for?

This Handbook is for Visiting Lecturer (VL) staff with a substantive input to module and/or programme delivery at QMU. It is also useful for staff who support substantive VLS. It is important that external VLS are supported by experienced QMU staff. It is the responsibility of the appropriate professional lead or Divisional Head to ensure appropriate liaison is identified from within QMU (this would normally be a Module Co-ordinator or Programme Leader).

You should expect some local induction and that a checklist will be provided, although this may be amended as appropriate for your role (see Appendix 2).

### What does the Handbook cover?

The Handbook covers the basic points you need to know to contribute substantially to a QMU module or programme. If you need to know more about procedures and regulations, detailed information can be found on our website: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/pr/>

### What does a Programme Leader do?

The Programme Leader has overall responsibility for ensuring that procedures and regulations are followed and should be consulted for advice if you have questions about processes (e.g. in relation to marking or students asking for extenuating circumstances). The Programme Leader can advise on attendance at meetings or other programme level issues.

### What does a Module Co-ordinator do?

The Module Co-ordinator is responsible for making sure the module is delivered and assessed in the way it should be, as laid out in the module descriptor.

The Module Co-ordinator will normally do at least some of the teaching and assessment on the module. Sometimes he or she will need to co-ordinate the inputs of other people (such as VLS), making sure they know what they are doing, where they are supposed to be and how their contribution fits in with the overarching aims of the module as described in the module descriptor.

In delivering all or part of the module **it is important that information contained within the module descriptor is adhered to.** (See Appendix 1 – Working with Module Descriptors).

The Module Co-ordinator is also responsible for reflecting on how well the module has gone – this is done by end of module evaluation. If need be, the Module Co-ordinator will propose improvements for the next time the module is delivered. Informal feedback from the module team, including VLS is always welcome.

## What information will you receive from QMU?

For each module that you have a substantive input to, we will supply:

- Access to the module Hub site and, if relevant, the programme Hub site (the Hub is the QMU virtual learning environment – Blackboard)
- Module descriptor
- Suggested week-by-week breakdown of teaching with your input identified, with clear timings.
- Any relevant materials that are available
- Draft exam papers and assignment specifications\*, when appropriate
- Model answers and marking criteria for the above\*, when appropriate
- Guidelines to be provided for students regarding the assignments\*, when appropriate

*\* i.e. if you are involved in this aspect of module delivery*

## CONTRIBUTING TO YOUR MODULE

Your QMU Module Co-ordinator will provide you with information on what should be covered in the module, including a suggested breakdown of what should be taught each week and any available supporting materials. You may vary the order in which things are taught to suit your needs. However, you must cover all the material that is set out in the module descriptor.

## SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

### Learning Resource Centre (LRC), IT and Virtual Learning Environment

Your students will have access to various online tools from QMU. These are:

- The 'QMU Remote Desktop' (also known as Citrix). This allows students remote access to all the standard software available to on-campus students, such as Microsoft Office, Mind Manager or SPSS (if needed), as well as access to their data and files. Students receive a QMU user account which is used to access all resources including QM Desktop/Remote Desktop, email, the Hub, library catalogue and Student Portal.
- Blackboard (The Hub). This is a virtual learning environment that allows you to post specific module content and guide students in online learning activities.
- LRC resources. These include a substantial number of online databases, electronic journals and e-books.

Students are encouraged to use these resources. You may set pre- or post-class tasks such as reading - the library website has a number of electronic journals and e-books which can be accessed. <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/lb/>. Most modules have electronic links to reading lists - this is normally identified on the module Hub site. Please contact the relevant Liaison Librarian for your subject area before setting reading lists – the Librarians can be found through the library website: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/lb/Contacts.htm#LL>

You may also wish to refer students to the following study skills information on the QMU website: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/ELS/Guides%20and%20resources.htm> In addition you may want to refer students to guides to avoiding plagiarism and collusion <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/plagiarism/>

If you have substantive input to modules / programmes in order to access The Hub you will require a QMU IT account. This will have been set up for you at the start of your association with QMU. You will need this username and password to access the Remote Desktop, QMU email, the Hub etc.

Sometimes it can be difficult to use the Remote Desktop if your Internet connection is not good. If you cannot access the Remote Desktop, it is still possible to access most library resources. Just go straight to the library website: [http://www.qmu.ac.uk/lb/IFDL\\_Home.htm](http://www.qmu.ac.uk/lb/IFDL_Home.htm) When you try to access a resource, you will be asked for your username and password (via the 'Shibboleth' log-in). This is the same QMU username and password as for Remote Access.

You can also access most other services, but not the software applications, by using the drop-down menu on the QMU homepage. For audio-visual materials such as videos or sound files, you should always avoid using Thin Client or Remote desktop to access them. Instead, go through the QMU homepage and choose the Hub from the drop down menu – this allows you to view the materials without loss of quality.

### **Staff development**

As a VL with substantial input to modules, you will have access to the QMU programme of workshops – run by the Centre for Academic Practice (CAP). You may also be able to attend formal training and development programmes. See the CAP website: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/cap>

### **The QMU CPD Scheme**

The QMU CPD Scheme provides a route to professional recognition for your role in teaching and supporting student learning. The Programme is accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and leads to professional recognition by the HEA at one of three categories of fellowship: Associate Fellow, Fellow or Senior Fellow. There are routes to recognition for members of academic staff, Visiting Lecturers, collaborative partner staff, or professional service staff supporting student learning.

Applying for professional recognition is an opportunity for you to reflect on your teaching and support of student learning against the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in HE ([UKPSE](#)). Because the HEA has accredited the whole QMU CPD Scheme, QMU's own Recognition Panel can assess and make recognition decisions on individuals' submissions. The names of successful candidates are then submitted to the HEA for certification. See the CAP intranet page for further details: <http://intranet.qmu.ac.uk/sites/cap/qmucpd/>

### **Support for Students with Additional Support for Learning Needs**

A number of undergraduate and postgraduate students at QMU have Additional Support for Learning Needs (ASLN). An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for each student with ASLN drawn up with the QMU Disability Adviser should be in place.

Information from the ILP is shared with staff only with permission of the student. Any reasonable adjustments e.g. making PowerPoint slides available prior to a class, or providing hand-outs on coloured paper should be advised to you by the Module Co-ordinator or the subject area Academic Disabled Student Co-ordinator.

## **ASSESSMENT OF MODULES**

Unless you have been employed as a Module Co-ordinator, you will not be expected to set assessments, however you may be involved in administering and marking assessments and providing constructive feedback to students.

For written assignments, you will have access to the assignment guidelines and your Module Co-ordinator will provide details of what students should be asked to do and the guidance they should be provided with when the assignment task is given out. For example, some modules will have a Q&A session about midway through the module for students to ask questions – this allows all students to hear the questions and the answers. No students should be given individual advice about assignments as this may disadvantage other students. Many Module Co-ordinators also have a Hub module Q&A board where, for a set time period, students can post questions and tutors will respond – this then allows all students to see the same material

If you are involved in practical exams, you should expect an orientation to the process and an opportunity to practise mark to allow you familiarisation with the process and calibration of grading with a member of QM staff experienced in the area.

### **Marking and moderation**

If you are involved in marking, you should adhere to the marking timescale indicated (normally 20 working days for marking and cross marking). Sample cross marking of square root of the sample and all fails is standard practice at QMU. Your Module Co-ordinator or Programme Leader will ensure you know where to collect assessment material to be marked in a timely manner.

For any written assignment or exam you must follow the defined marking criteria that will guide you as you are grading the assignments. The marking criteria will be linked to the learning outcomes of the module and to the QMU grade descriptors. Mark each assignment or exam according to the pre-set marking criteria. You should provide a final mark in the form of a percentage.

For each piece of written work, you must supply typed feedback to the student (usually electronic). A standardised feedback form will be used and is provided to students at the time that the assignment is given to them. The feedback should state what was good about the work and how the student could improve it to get a better mark. You must ensure feedback matches marking criteria – e.g. do not provide feedback that a component is excellent (an A grade criteria) if you award it a C.

You do not need to supply written feedback on exams, although an overall generic exam feedback may be provided on module Hub sites after the Exam Board.

A sample of student work for each module will be 'moderated' by another marker from the programme team. This means that a second marker will look over the sample of scripts to confirm that marking is consistent and aligns with the criteria set for the assignment. Your Module Co-ordinator or Programme Leader will advise you on the moderation procedures.

On completion of marking and moderation, marks and feedback are returned to the Module Co-ordinator. The Module Co-ordinator will provide marks to School Office staff to enter into the Student Record System. School Office staff are responsible for return of marks and feedback to individual students at a time agreed with the Module Co-ordinator.

For modules at SCQF Level 9 and above, QMU also appoints an External Examiner. This is normally an academic from another university who is an expert in the subject. He or she will also view the sample of work to confirm whether the standards expected of a UK degree have been met. External Examiners are independent and provide an annual report on the quality of the programme.

Marks are not confirmed until the work has been checked by both the QMU markers and the External Examiner and the official results have been confirmed by the Exam Board. For this reason, provisional results are often given out to students by School Office staff until the full marking and ratification process is complete.

### **Pass mark**

In order to pass a module, a student must achieve:

	Undergraduate	Postgraduate
Overall module mark	40%	50%
Mark in each individual component	30%	40%

If a student does not meet both the above minimum levels, he or she fails the module and has to resit. This means that students cannot afford to be casual about any component of assessment, even if it is worth only a small percentage of the overall mark. They must reach the minimum level (30% for undergraduate, 40% for postgraduate) in each component.

Normally, the student will resit only those components they fail.

For more information on assessment, see the quick guides available here:

<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/pr/usefuldocs.htm>

For the full regulations, see:

<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/gr/default.htm#regs>

### **Reading, referencing and plagiarism**

Students should be encouraged to read a range of resources in order to research their assignments.

Note that web resources should only be used with care. Students should NOT use Wikipedia or similar sites.

Students are introduced to a plagiarism detection tool TurnitinUK. If you are concerned about plagiarism, discuss this with the Module Co-ordinator who will be able to help you access the 'Turnitin' tool

If students are unused to writing academic essays they may make the following common mistakes:

1. Cutting and pasting text from a source (a book or website). This is plagiarism, and it is not acceptable, even if the student acknowledges where the text came from. Students must write essays in their own words and support their statements with references to the sources they have read.

2. Forgetting to acknowledge the source from which an idea comes from, even though they have used their own words. This is bad academic practice and students must be marked down for it.

For full information on preventing plagiarism, see: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/plagiarism/>

For full information on how to cite references within the text of an essay, see: [http://www.qmu.ac.uk/lb/IFS\\_Harvard.htm](http://www.qmu.ac.uk/lb/IFS_Harvard.htm)

### **Extenuating Circumstances (EC)**

Students sometimes have problems that stop them from being able to attend the module or submit work on time, for reasons beyond their control. If a student makes you aware of extenuating circumstances you should direct them to the Module Co-ordinator and/or Programme Leader.

Further guidance re: QMU policies and procedures for Extenuating Circumstances is available here: <http://www.qmuc.ac.uk/quality/gr/default.htm#regs>

If a student misses an exam through illness or some other justifiable reason, they will normally be allowed to take the exam again as a first attempt.

In all cases, the student must supply evidence to support their claim for extenuating circumstances.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR PROGRAMME DELIVERY**

QMU has a number of procedures that allow programme teams to check that everything is running as well as it should. You will be unlikely to be involved in all these processes but it is important you are aware of them:

- Module evaluation. Towards the end of the module, each time it runs, feedback is collected from students. The students' feedback is used to help plan any adjustments to the module for the future.
- Programme Committee meetings. It is important that staff on the team get together to share their experiences, act on any institutional initiatives and address any issues that arise. The Programme Committee meetings normally occur once per semester and the Committee has staff and student representation.
- Student-Staff Consultative Committees (SSCC). The SSCC meets once per semester and allows students to feed back to Programme Leaders and staff representatives what is going well on the programme, and when appropriate, whether there are issues that may need addressing (e.g. access to texts; timetable issues)
- Exam Boards. The Exam Board is a meeting of staff involved in assessment to confirm the marks and make sure all students have been treated equitably. Only the Exam Board can decide whether students can progress to the next level, can resit or have to withdraw.

### **Personal Academic Tutoring (the PAT system)**

QM has a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) system and all students are assigned a named PAT. As a VL you will advise students about your own particular module. You will not be expected to help students with their general personal issues. The PAT role is an additional role which does not necessarily relate to the module you are teaching on.

You can see the QMU procedures and guidance relating to Personal Academic Tutoring here: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/gr/default.htm#pol>

### Key contacts at QMU

People that you may come into contact with include:

- Your Programme Leader - the key contact for programme organisation
- Module Co-ordinator
- Programme Administrator - can help with student records and assessment arrangements

Role	Name	Contact email
Programme Leader		
Module Co-ordinator		
Programme Administrator		

### SOURCES OF IMPORTANT INFORMATION

#### QMU regulations and procedures

Quick Guides: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/pr/usefuldocs.htm>

QMU regulations and policies: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/gr/default.htm>

Useful forms: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/pr/forms.htm>

Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement A-Z:

<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/qm/AZindex.htm>

QMU IT Acceptable Use Policy: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/it/policies.htm>

#### Good academic practice

QMU Write and Cite Guide to Harvard Referencing:

[http://www.qmu.ac.uk/lb/IFS\\_Harvard.htm](http://www.qmu.ac.uk/lb/IFS_Harvard.htm)

Effective Learning Service: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/ELS/default.htm>

Plagiarism prevention and detection: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/plagiarism/>

Centre for Academic Practice (for academic staff development): <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/cap>

## APPENDIX 1: WORKING WITH MODULE DESCRIPTORS

### Module descriptors – what each section means

Code This is the code used by the QMU information management system

SHE Level / SCQF Level The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework covers all qualifications in Scotland and allows for comparison between different types of award. The University levels are:

SHE level	SCQF level	Description
1	7	First year of a standard undergraduate degree; HECert
2	8	Second year of a standard undergraduate degree; year 2 of an HEDip
3	9	Third year of a standard undergraduate degree (Ordinary degree level)
4	10	Final year of a standard undergraduate degree (Honours degree level)
M	11	Masters level
D	12	Doctorate level

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**Credit Rating** 1 credit is equivalent to 10 hours of student effort. QMU degrees are built up of credits as set out below:

<i>Certificate of Higher Education</i>	<i>120 credit points at SCQF Level 7</i>
<i>Diploma of Higher Education</i>	<i>+120 credit points at SCQF Level 8</i>
<i>Degree</i>	<i>+120 credit points at SCQF Level 9</i>
<i>Degree with Honours</i>	<i>+120 credit points at SCQF Level 10</i>
<i>Graduate Diploma</i>	<i>120 credit points at SCQF Level 9/10</i>
<i>Postgraduate Certificate</i>	<i>60 credit points at SCQF Level 11</i>
<i>Postgraduate Diploma</i>	<i>120 credit points at SCQF Level 11</i>
<i>Masters Degree</i>	<i>180 credit points at SCQF Level 11</i>

Most undergraduate modules are 10 or 20 credits. Most postgraduate modules are 15 or 30 credits. More credits will be awarded for bigger modules which cover more content or require students to undertake substantial pieces of work.

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Pre-requisites Any modules the student must pass before they can start this module. For instance, a student might require to pass level 1 Biochemistry before they can attempt level 2 Biochemistry.

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Co-requisites Any modules which must be taken at the same time as this module.

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Aims This tells you what the purpose of the module is. This section lets you know whether the module is intended to be introductory, intermediate or advanced. It also summarises what the module is about.

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Learning outcomes This is a very important section. This tells you what the student should learn by the end of the module. When you are delivering the module you must include lessons and activities that will enable the student to learn

these things.

Most or all learning outcomes will be assessed – this is indicated in the column 'Assessed in this module'. This means that assessments must be designed to measure whether or not the student has met the outcomes. The general principle behind assessment is that a student should pass if and only if they have met the learning outcomes of the module.

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Learning experiences	This section provides a breakdown of the different types of activities the student should engage in during the module. This tells you how many hours of lectures, tutorials and practical classes you are expected to deliver. In exception circumstances, and with agreement of the programme leader or module coordinator, it might be okay for you to add additional classes if you feel they are needed, but you must provide the minimum amount set out here.
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Note that QMU normally allows between 18 and 24 hours of contact time per 10 credit module (less contact time the higher the SCQF Level). We expect most learning to take place outside of the classroom through students' own reading and the work they do on their assessments.

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**Some definitions:**

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Lectures	The traditional class where the lecturer speaks; students listen and take notes, although many lectures involve some aspects of active student participation.
Tutorials	A smaller class (usually no more than 20 students) which provides an opportunity for discussion and feedback. The tutor will normally ask questions to check that students have understood the material and to encourage debate. Tutorials are often based on pre-reading or previously covered material
Seminars	A smaller class (usually no more than 20 , but can be up to 30 students) built around discussion and exploration of the module content. Sometimes students will be asked to prepare a short paper or presentation.
Laboratory work	Sessions in which students are guided to undertake practical experiments
Practicals /workshops	These are sessions in which students practise their practical / clinical skills
IT workshops	These take place in a classroom with computers and are dedicated to teaching students how to use the software they need.
Directed reading	This is where students are set tasks and asked to read material in between classes.
Self-directed learning	The reading, writing and research students do in their own time.
Problem-based learning	A method of teaching whereby students are set a problem and work (usually) in groups to research and solve it.
Work-based learning	Learning that is based wholly or predominantly in a work setting, normally under the supervision of a work based mentor from the same organisation but supported by a lecturer.

**Assessment pattern** This section tells you what assessments the students must do. The assessment pattern will have been approved as part of the validation process as an appropriate method of assessing the learning outcomes. It cannot be changed without approval from the relevant programme committee and School Academic Board at QMU.

Some assessments are described as 'formative'. This means the students do them in order to receive feedback from you as to how well they are doing. The mark does NOT count towards the final mark for the module. Other assessments are described as 'summative'. They DO count towards the final mark for the module.

Sometimes module co-ordinators are tempted to add additional formative assessments such as class tests. You should not do this without checking with your QMU counterpart. If students have too much assessment they won't have time to absorb the material and think about it in any depth.

Assessment weightings tell you how the overall mark for the module will be calculated when two or more marks are put together. If there are two components of assessment, weighted at 70% and 30% respectively, the mark is calculated by adding 70% of the first mark to 30% of the second mark. The QMU computer system does all this automatically. All you need to do is to provide the mark for each component and the computer will calculate the overall mark.

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**Anonymous marking** At QMU all assessments are marked anonymously wherever possible. Students are asked to identify themselves only with their student number and never to put their name on their work. This helps to demonstrate that the assessment process is fair and unbiased. Some types of assessment cannot be anonymously marked, however, such as oral presentations, performances or OSCEs.

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**Content** This section summarises the material you must cover in your classes.

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**Main texts** These are a selection of the most important texts. Students do not need to read all of them and it is best if they go and look for other texts and journal articles in addition to those listed. The purpose of listing the key texts is to help your library to identify what books to buy.

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## APPENDIX 2: CHECKLIST FOR VL INDUCTION

	Actioned by	Date actioned
<b>Introductions</b>		
Other teaching colleagues and support staff (as appropriate)		
Nominated mentor / support (if required) Name .....		
<b>Orientation to building</b>		
Tour of campus / relevant teaching spaces : -Lecture rooms, Practical rooms; Seminar rooms,		
Guide to staff side of campus – HR (if required)		
Desk space / hot desk area (if required)		
Guide to LRC - Library procedures – meet Liaison Librarian		
<b>Teaching roles &amp; Responsibilities</b>		
Go through module descriptor, assessment outline & criteria & course outline		
Guidelines on staff & student rules of conduct, student privacy & data protection		
Guidance on remit of job – i.e. pastoral issues refer to PAT or PL		
Info about programme meetings		
<b>Job Specific Information/Administration</b> <i>(usually module coordinator, programme leader or divisional head will take responsibility for this role)</i>		
Staff smart card (if required)		
Introduction to School Office staff		
General office procedures e.g. photocopying, internal and external mail	-	
School Office – assessment submissions,		
room bookings		
Information on IT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- key information e.g. Hub site; email; remote access (if required)</li> <li>- Organise Hub induction orientation if necessary</li> <li>- Data projectors</li> <li>- Smartboard and AV equipment orientation</li> <li>- Phone induction (if phone required)</li> </ul>		
Information about ERC & booking equipment		
Information about print room & photocopying		
Local Health & Safety - such as First Aid, Fire Alarms/Exits, Accident Reporting, Risk Assessments		
Quality Assurance procedures – verification and moderation, External Examiners, SQA if required		
<b>Support</b>		
Staff development opportunities		