MODULE CO-ORDINATOR HANDBOOK

Collaborative Partners

January 2012

GENERAL INFORMATION

Who is this handbook for?

This handbook is for staff working at collaborative partner organisations, who are responsible for running a QMU module. It is assumed that the module has been designed by QMU and is either a direct copy of a module delivered at QMU or adapted from a similar module.

What does the handbook cover?

The handbook covers the basic points you need to know to run a QMU module. More detailed information on procedures and regulations can be found on our website: http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/pr/

As module co-ordinator it is your responsibility to ensure that your module follows the correct procedures and regulations. Your Programme Leader has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of the programme and should be consulted for advice if you are in doubt.

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. The Co-ordinator makes sure that everyone teaching on the module knows what they are doing, where they are supposed to be and how their contribution fits in with other people's. The Module Co-ordinator is also responsible for reflecting on how well the module has gone and, if need be, proposing improvements for the next time it is delivered.

The duties of the Module Co-ordinator are as follows :

- to advise the Programme Leader on the staffing and other resources needed for the module;
- to ensure that the teaching and assessment of the module complies with the approved module descriptor and that all required sessions are timetabled;
- to maintain the currency of the curriculum content;
- in the first week, to provide students with the curriculum, reading lists and assessment schedules;
- to be responsible for the assessment of the module including the co-ordination of marking and moderation and the preparation of examination papers;
- to provide the Programme Leader, well in advance of the Board of Examiners, with the marks and grades of students who have studied that module;
- to evaluate the operation of the module and contribute to the evaluation of the programmes of which the module forms a part.

What information will you receive from QMU?

For each module, we will supply:

- Module descriptor
- Suggested week-by-week breakdown of teaching.
- Draft exam papers and assignment specifications
- Model answers and marking criteria for the above
- Guidelines to be provided for students regarding the assignments

The module descriptor provides the contract with the students. All students studying the module and all staff teaching on the module should be given access to the module descriptor. The learning outcomes, content, delivery pattern and assessment as laid down in the descriptor must be followed exactly. You are not allowed to make changes to what is set out in the descriptor. For example, you may not use a multiple-choice exam to grade the students, if the module descriptor says that the assessment is by essay or presentation.

If you do feel that you need to make changes, for example in response to student feedback, then those proposed changes must be discussed with the programme leader before implementation. If such proposed changes don't conflict with the current module descriptor, then they may be implemented after agreement with the programme leader. However, if any proposed changes imply a change to the module descriptor, then this can only be implemented after approval by the relevant Academic Board. They can therefore usually only be implemented in the next delivery of the module.

For more information see the section on *Working with the module descriptor*

Key contacts:

- Your Programme Leader is the key contact for course organisation at your own institution.
- Your programme administrator can help with student records and assessment arrangements.
- The Academic Link Person can help with any queries about QMU processes and regulations.
- The QMU module co-ordinator who is responsible for the same module at QMU (your QMU module counterpart) can advise you on specific questions about your module.

Role	Name	Contact email
Programme Leader		
Programme Administrator		
Academic Link Person		
Module Counterpart		

Sources of important information:

QMU regulations and procedures:

QMU Collaborations Manual   http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/pr/manual/index.htm
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

Good academic practice:

QMU Write and Cite Guide to Harvard Referencing: 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/

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

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

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[1] These are notional hours, not actual hours of face-to-face teaching. Student effort includes reading in their own time and work done on assessments.

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.

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. It is okay for you to add additional classes if you feel they are needed but you must provide the minimum amount set out here.

Note that QMU normally allows between 18 and 24 hours of contact time per 10 credit module. We provide less contact time the higher the SCQF Level. In other words, we expect students to become more autonomous in the course of their studies. We expect most learning to take place outside of the classroom through students' own reading and the work they do on their assessments.

Some definitions:

Lectures	The traditional class where the tutor speaks; students listen and take notes. These days lectures can be very interactive, allowing students to ask questions, providing time for students to discuss ideas with each other and so on. It is good practice to alternate delivery of content with more active student participation every 20 minutes or so.
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. Students may also be required to use this time to work in groups on set tasks and then feedback to the whole class.
Seminars	Similar to a tutorial. A smaller class (usually no more than 20 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. They may also be used to engage students with electronic resources that help them learn more about their subject, such as through simulations, online quizzes and so on.
Directed reading	This is where students are set tasks and asked to read material in between classes, in their own time.
Self-directed learning	This refers to time that students study either by themselves, in pairs or in groups. They will usually be set a task, but they will need their own initiative to give shape to the task, for example by selecting and assessing journal articles, or by profiling contemporary or topical issues in their field.
Problem-based learning	A method of teaching whereby students are set a problem and work in groups to research and solve it.
Work-based learning	Learning that is based wholly or mostly 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 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 percentage mark for each component and the computer will calculate the overall mark.

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 can't be anonymously marked, however, such as oral presentations, performances or clinical exams.

Content

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

Main texts

These are a selection of the most important texts. Students don't 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. If you become aware of any new texts that would be relevant, especially texts published in your own country which our staff might not know about, please inform your QMU module counterpart.

RUNNING YOUR MODULE

Preparation

Your QMU module co-ordinator counterpart will provide you with information on what should be covered in the module, including a suggested breakdown of what should be taught each week. 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.

It is very helpful if you can think of examples and case studies that relate to your own local context. This will make the material much more relevant to your students.

Setting assessments

It is important to design the assessments early in the semester. Before giving any assessments to students you must ask your QMU module counterpart to confirm that they are suitable for the learning outcomes and the level of the module.

For exams, your QMU module counterpart will provide you with a sample question paper. You will need a different question paper for the main exams and for resits. You will also need to change the questions every year. It is okay to recycle questions from a bank of previous questions.

For written assignments, your QMU module counterpart will provide details of what students should be asked to do and the guidance they should receive when the assignment task is given out. In some cases it will be possible to agree a topic that is relevant to your own country or relates to contemporary issues. For example, you might ask students to apply a theory to a recent story in the newspaper. This will make the assignment more interesting, more relevant and will reduce the likelihood that students plagiarise.

In all cases, the marking criteria must be defined in advance. Normally, your QMU module counterpart will tell you the criteria you should use to guide you as you are grading the assignments. The marking criteria must be linked to the learning outcomes of the module and to the QMU grade descriptors (these are usually found in the programme handbook). If it has been agreed that you can set the assignment task yourself, you must check the marking criteria with your QMU module counterpart.

It is good practice to tell students at the start of the module what the module is about, what the learning outcomes are and how they will be assessed. Students should normally be given at least six weeks to research and prepare a written assignment. So if it is due at the end of November you must give students all the information and guidance on the assignment by the middle of October at the latest.

Extenuating circumstances

Students sometimes have problems that stop them from being able to submit work on time, for reasons beyond their control. It is not unusual to allow students up to three weeks' extension to the deadline for submission of coursework for problems such as illness, bereavement or a family crisis. All extensions must be authorised through the proper procedure. Check with your Programme Leader regarding the procedure to be followed in your institution.

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.

Sometimes a student will need to take a longer break from study. There is no problem with this in the regulations[2] but it can pose practical problems. Students in this position should meet with the Programme Leader to discuss how long they need to take out and how they can complete their programme once they come back.

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

Marking and moderation

You will normally be the first marker for the module you run. Mark each assignment according to the marking criteria you have agreed with your QMU counterpart. You should provide a final mark in the form of a percentage. You should always do this by referring to the Undergraduate Grade descriptors in the assessment regulations, as well as, of course, the module's learning outcomes.

For each piece of written work, you must write feedback for the student. The feedback should state what was good about the work and how the student could improve it to get a better mark. It is better to give two or three key points for improvement than to write a lot of feedback. In other words, quality of feedback is more important than quantity. Make sure students can read your comments. However, you don't need to supply written feedback on exams.

A sample of student work for each module must be 'moderated' by another marker from the programme team. This person is the called the moderator. This sample must include all fails and borderline graded pieces of work, as well as a sample of work from across the pass grades. The moderator will look over the sample of marked scripts with the feedback provided. The moderator's role is to check that marking and feedback are consistent and align with the criteria set for the assignment. Your Programme Leader will advise you on the moderation procedures used by your institution.

In most cases, work will then be sent to QMU for our staff to look at. This enables the University to be sure that marking is fair and reliable and allows for detailed conversations with staff at the partner organisation about how to interpret QMU's marking requirements. If the QMU markers think that you haven't marked the work in the way they recommend, they will ask you to look again at the marks.

The pack for moderation should include:

- Sample of work for each component of assessment. If a module has three assessments – a case study, an essay and an exam – there should be a sample of case studies, a sample of essays and a sample of exam scripts. The same students need not be in each sample.
- For each piece of written work, include a copy of the feedback written by the original marker for the student.

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[2] However, it should be noted that there is a maximum number of years within which students must complete their course. Normally, a student cannot take more than two years out.

- The size of the sample moderated must be at least the square root of the total number of students (rounded to the nearest whole number) plus all **borderline** fails. The sample should include a range of performance and the minimum size should be six pieces of assessed work.
- Complete list of marks, broken down by component. Each mark should be recorded as a percentage. For example, if a piece of work was marked as 30 out of 60 this should be recorded as 50%.
- Percentage weighting of each component of assessment. This must match the module descriptor.
- Copy of the assignment guidelines that were issued to students. This tells the moderator what exactly the students were asked to do. For an exam, supply the exam paper.
- Copy of the marking criteria used by the marker. This tells the moderator how marks were allocated.

For modules at SCQF Level 9 and above, QMU also appoints an External Examiner. This is 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 ratified by the exam board. It is usually best to give students their feedback and provisional mark as soon as internal marking is complete, to avoid unnecessary anxiety. Internal marking is complete when all scripts have been first marked, moderated, and, where applicable, moderated by QMU. However, it must be made very clear that the mark isn't final until it has been ratified by the Board of Examiners.

To summarise, the steps of the marking process are:

1. Module co-ordinator marks scripts
2. Another member of staff at the partner organisation moderates a sample of scripts
3. A member of QMU staff moderates a sample of scripts
4. If the QMU moderator is content with the marking, **provisional** grades and feedback can be issued to students. If the QMU moderator is not content, the entire cohort may need to be re-marked first.
5. External examiner moderates a sample of scripts
6. Board of Examiners confirms marks
7. Final marks issues to students. Any students who have failed are informed of what they need to do to resit.

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 can't 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 www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/documents/AssessmentRegulations.doc

Quality assurance

QMU has a number of procedures that allow us and you to check that everything is running as well as it should. You will be involved in some of them:

- Module evaluation. Towards the end of the module, each time it runs, you must collect feedback from students. QMU supplies a standard form to use but your Programme Leader will advise you as to whether your institution has its own form. You can then use the students' feedback to help you plan any adjustments to the module for the future. It is very important to collate the student feedback into a module report as student feedback is an important driver for changes to how a module is delivered.
- Programme Committee meetings and Joint Boards of Study. It is important that staff on the team get together to share their experiences and address any issues that arise. Sometimes you will meet without QMU staff being present but once a year there will be a meeting with representatives from QMU. This is called the Joint Board of Studies and you will be asked to attend.
- 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. All module co-ordinators are expected to attend.

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Library, IT and WebCT

Your students will have access to various electronic resources from QMU. These are:

- The 'QMU Remote Desktop' (also known as Citrix). This allows students to use all the standard software available to on-campus students, such as Microsoft Office, Mind Manager or SPSS (if needed). Students receive a QMU email account.
- WebCT. This is a virtual learning environment that allows you to post specific module content and guide students in online learning activities. WebCT can best be accessed directly through the QMU home page, rather than through the 'remote desktop'.
- Library resources. These include a number of journals databases, electronic journals and e-books.

Please encourage your students to use these resources. In particular, encourage them to visit the library website as there are a number of electronic journals and e-books which they can access through their QMU account. You may also wish to refer them to the following study skills information on the QMU website: http://www.qmu.ac.uk/ELS/Guides%20and%20resources.htm

All of these resources can be accessed if students log on to the 'QMU Remote Desktop' using the username and password supplied when they registered with us. Information on the Remote Desktop can be found here:
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/it/quickStart.htm

Note that students MUST register officially with QMU in order to activate their account. This means going through the online matriculation process. Your Programme Leader should have made sure that students do this, usually in September of each year. In order for *you* to get access, you will need to be set up as an associate lecturer on our system. Speak to your programme leader who will advise you what to do.

Sometimes it can be difficult to use the Remote Desktop if your internet connection isn't good. 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
When you try to access a resource you will be asked for your username and password. This is the same QMU username and password as for Remote Access.

Reading, referencing and plagiarism

Your students should be encouraged to read a range of resources in order to research their assignments. The table below gives an approximate indication of the minimum number of sources students should use at different levels of their programme. Please note that this is only a rough guide. Students should always be encouraged to read as much and as widely as possible.

SCQF Level	Number of sources	Type of sources
7-8	6 - 10	textbooks, government reports, lecture notes
9-10	10-15	journals, book chapters, government reports, policy papers, 'grey literature'
11	12-20	mainly journals, plus government reports, policy papers, 'grey literature'

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

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

Personal tutoring

As well as advising students about your own particular module, you will be expected to help students with their general personal and academic issues. This is an additional role which does not necessarily relate to the module you are teaching on. Ask your Programme Leader about your institution's policy and procedures for supporting students.

You can see the QMU procedures and guidance relating to personal academic tutoring here:
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/gr/default.htm#pol