

**STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE**

**STUDENT HANBOOK: GUIDANCE FOR PROGRAMME TEAMS AND PANELS**

**Introduction**

This paper provides an update to Teams and Panels participating in Validation and Review on the expectations for the provision of student-facing information. Historically it has been a requirement for each Team to present a single source Student Handbook and for the Panel to provide feedback on this. However, it has become clear that this no longer reflects the ways in which many of our Teams are communicating with students. In 2023-24, the Student Experience Committee undertook a project to explore alternative approaches. The full report of that project, which was undertaken with helpful input from our Student Champions can be viewed on the SEC Intranet site [(paper SEC 12/24).](https://myshare.qmu.ac.uk/governance/committees/student-experience-committee/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%7bBB1C697D-2C19-48E5-99C4-7100BD0EF64C%7d&file=SEC%201224%20Student%20Handbooks.docx&action=default)

**Expectations**

With effect from 2024-25, Teams have the option to prepare a single source Handbook and/or present the relevant content on Canvas (not necessarily in a single Handbook). In all cases, Teams are expected to use the attached checklist as a guide to make sure the key topics are covered. Where possible, student-facing material should include links to QMU policies, procedures, and regulations rather than duplicating these, although some contextualisation may be appropriate.

**Planning for Validation or Review**

In the run up to Validation or Review, the Programme Leader should liaise with TEL to arrange that a link is provided for all Panel members and the GQE Secretary to the relevant CANVAS site(s), including the external and student reviewers. The Programme Leader should provide the link(s) to GQE together with any explanatory notes as to where particular information can be found. This should help the Panel navigate to materials that are of interest.

It is acknowledged that Teams preparing for the validation of a new programme may not have a fully developed CANVAS site, but every effort should be made to include headline information as a minimum. If there is content to be added post-validation, this can be noted in the appropriate place(s).

**Guidance for Panels**

The Validation and Review checklists have been updated as follows:

**Current question**

Do applicants and students receive clear information on the Programme? Note that a Student Handbook (or equivalent alternative resource) is mandatory for all programmes.

**New question**

Do students receive clear information on the Programme? This can be provided either in a single source Handbook or on CANVAS. If the information is primarily on CANVAS, the Panel will be provided with a link and clear guidance on how to navigate the materials.

**Evaluation**

We will evaluate this new approach at the end of A/Y 2024-25 following the first full year of implementation. In the meantime, any feedback can be sent to [Dawn Martin, Assistant Secretary, GQE.](mailto:dmartin1@qmu.ac.uk)

Dawn Martin, Assistant Secretary, Governance and Quality Enhancement

November 2024

**Student Handbook Checklist: approved by the Student Experience Committee March 2024**

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| **Expected content** | **Notes for suggested content** |
| Welcome from the Programme Team | Brief friendly introduction to QMU and the Programme.  Summary information about key members of the Team.  Pictures can be included here. |
| Programme Team contact details and information on how to contact the Team | Advise students to use QMU email addresses.  Possibly include information on likely timescale for response. |
| Other key contact details (as appropriate) | For example:   * Academic Administration * Placement Administration |
| Programme overview | Rationale  Philosophy  Aims and outcomes  Possible graduate destinations/information on types of employment (case studies can be used to good effect) |
| Information on the programme structure | Programme title and subsidiary awards  Timing of modules (semester one, semester two or full year)  Examples of part-time and full-time routes through the programme (diagrams can be useful) |
| Information on professional registration (if applicable) | Link to PSRB website with regulations etc. |
| Overview of learning, teaching, and assessment strategy | Learning experiences  Expectations for attendance and contribution to class  Information on graduate attributes and how different learning experiences and assessments contribute to the development of these. |
| Assessment schedule | Assessment formats and weightings  Timing of submissions (noting that the exact timing might not be known at the point of validation)  Timeline for feedback  Information on formative and summative assessment |
| Assessment Regulations | A link to [QMU Assessment Regulations](https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/committees-regulations-policies-and-procedures/regulations-policies-and-procedures/general-assessment-regulations/)  Programme specific regulations (where applicable).  Arrangements for submitting assessments.  A link to extenuating circumstances procedure  A link to the appeals procedure |
| Information on dissertation management/supervision (if not covered elsewhere, for example a separate Dissertation Handbook) | Dissertation topic  Supervisor allocation  Number of hours of supervision  Ethics  (alternative formats for the dissertation/major project are in place and the content of this section should be relevant to the programme context, e.g. HEP online degrees) |
| Information on the External Examining system | [Summary information for students](https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/resources-for-programme-leaders/external-examining-guidance-notes-for-students/)  Name and position of the current External Examiner  A link to External Examining reports and responses |
| Summary information on placement arrangements (if not covered elsewhere, for example a separate Placement Handbook) | Finding placements/placement allocation  Duration and format  Roles and responsibilities (QMU, placement host, student) |
| QMU IT Systems | Link to [Getting Started | IT Services | Queen Margaret University (qmu.ac.uk)](https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/learning-facilities/it-services/getting-started/) |
| QMU Library Services and Helpdesk | Link to relevant libguide.  Information on Talis.  How to access the Helpdesk and which queries the Helpdesk can resolve. |
| Links to [QMU Essential Information for Students](https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/current-students-general-information/essential-information/) and [Your Student Journey](https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/your-student-journey/) webpage | Where possible, students should be directed to central resources for purposes of version control. However, students have also fed back that brief introductory context is helpful to sit alongside the link. |
| How your programme is managed | Roles and responsibilities (Head of Division, Programme Leader, Module Co-ordinator)  Programme and Student-Staff Consultative Committees  (alternative structures are in place and the content of this section should be relevant to the programme context, e.g. HEP online degrees) |
| Information on representation and feedback channels | Information on the [Students’ Union](https://www.qmusu.org.uk/).  Class Rep System (or equivalent).  Any other arrangements for the Programme (buddying etc.) |
| Information on the PAT system | Making appointments with your PAT.  What to expect from PAT meetings (link to QMU resources) |
| [Links to Student Services website and resources](https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/services-for-students/) | A brief overview of Student Services (in addition to the link) is helpful here, as students have fed back that they welcome summary information as well as links. |
| [Link to the Effective Learning Service](https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/services-for-students/support-for-learning/effective-learning-service-els/) and other resources to support academic writing/skills development. | [Studiosity](https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/services-for-students/support-for-learning/studiosity-academic-writing-feedback-queen-margaret-university/) |
| Local student support mechanisms | Longitudinal induction |
| Navigating difficulties | Raising complaints informally  Link to [QMU Complaints Procedure](https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/committees-regulations-policies-and-procedures/regulations-policies-and-procedures/complaints-procedure/)  Managing placement difficulties (where applicable) |