



Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

PROGRAMME LEADERS' HANDBOOK 2019-20

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INTRODUCTION

Programme Leaders have key responsibilities for the development and management of academic programmes, and work with their Teams to ensure their programmes are viable, current and relevant to the needs of stakeholders. Importantly, Programme Leaders are positioned to lead and support their Teams on issues of quality and academic standards, and to ensure the welfare and support of students. For the new Programme Leader, the role provides an opportunity to develop high level skills of leadership, collaboration, management and academic administration, to lead quality assurance processes and to enhance students' learning through creativity and innovation.

It therefore provides an excellent opportunity for developing your practice towards recognition as a Fellow or Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. See Descriptor 3 of the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in Higher Education:

https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/uk_professional_standards_framework.pdf

The purpose of this Handbook is to offer guidance for new Programme Leaders, which is broadly applicable to all programmes. The information provided here is meant to give new Programme Leaders a helping hand as they begin a new role. It is important to state, however, that there are differences in Divisions and between undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) programmes, which will determine the particularities of individual Programme Leaders' roles and tasks. Where professional bodies are involved, for example, Programme Leaders have specific responsibilities related to professional standards and (in some cases) organisation of student placements. Because of the individual nature of programmes, new Programme Leaders may wish to be mentored by an experienced member of staff in the discipline.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure this guidance is based on current QMU regulations and procedures and upon established practice, readers should refer to the relevant sections of QMU regulations available on the Quality website:

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/> Internal communication systems can also help ensure that you remain informed about changes to regulations, policy and procedures. Any such changes are processed through the Student Experience Committee. SEC decisions are circulated by Moderator email. You can also discuss SEC projects and outcomes with your Divisional representative. Full details of membership are available on the SEC Intranet site, where you can also find all papers and minutes from SEC meetings:

<http://intranet.qmu.ac.uk/sites/SEC/default.aspx>

This Handbook is organised according to the major roles and responsibilities held by Programme Leaders: leadership, management, administration and quality. All new Programme Leaders should read the section titled 'Management of Programmes' on the Quality website: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/pm/default.htm> This contains useful general information, but also specifically lists the responsibilities of Programme Leaders. They are:

- to ensure the effective organisation and conduct of the programme within agreed policies and regulations;
- to lead the academic development of the programme;

- to monitor the operation of the programme on an ongoing basis, and to co-ordinate its annual evaluation;
- to negotiate with the Head(s) of Division(s) the allocation of appropriate staff for teaching and other duties required by the programme;
- to co-ordinate any necessary interaction with professional and external validating bodies through the appropriate internal mechanisms;
- to keep in close touch with the academic welfare and progress of students in the programme, and to be closely aware of students' views about the programme;
- in consultation with the Module Co-ordinators to agree an assessment schedule;
- to take executive action, as agreed by the Programme Committee.

Appendices to this Handbook include information that is likely to be useful to Programme Leaders and links to useful relevant resources, such as the academic timetable and academic regulations.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A Leadership

1) Programme

Possibly the most important of all roles is that of leadership - guiding, supporting and working with the Programme Team to ensure the 'overall health and well-being of the programme'. This means that the programme should have vitality and viability - that it is recruiting well, students are performing satisfactorily, student-staff relationships are positive and productive, learning and teaching experiences are dynamic, and administration runs smoothly. The Programme Leader may need to deal with student issues, which cannot be dealt with by Module Co-ordinators, placement supervisors or Personal Academic Tutors (PATs).

2) Academic

The Programme Leader often stimulates and leads education-related and subject-specific developments, such as new curriculum developments to enhance student learning, improving the relevance and currency of the programme and responding to the needs of students and/or the profession. This is an ongoing activity, which may be located at module level or at programme level. For example, it may be necessary to divide a large module into two smaller modules in order to increase appeal and flexibility for part-time students.

Similarly, the Programme Leader may promote, contribute to and support innovation, such as the introduction and enhancement of learning through the Hub, inter-professional education (IPE) or placement developments. The Programme Leader could also help to keep the Programme Team updated on external enhancement initiatives, e.g. from the sector programme of Enhancement Themes - <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk> - and Advance HE (formerly the Higher Education Academy): <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/about-us>

A helpful tool for discussing and guiding quality enhancement is the UK Professional Standards Framework - [UKPSF](#) - which provides a route to professional recognition for anyone involved in teaching and supporting student learning in Higher Education. QMU supports staff in applying for one of four categories of Fellowship, according to role and responsibilities: Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow, and Principal Fellow (by direct application to the Higher Education Academy).

QMU requires all programmes to be formally validated before the programme can run or students can be recruited. It is the Programme Leader who guides the Team through the validation process, including planning and development, document preparation, the validation event and post-event processes. Additionally, all programmes are subject to periodic review and re-validation (normally every five years), for which the Programme Leader is expected to take the lead (See Section D).

3) Team

The Programme Leader will have regular contact with the teaching Team, and will normally:

- convene Team meetings, including drafting of agendas;
- discuss with members of the teaching Team any programme-related issues or problems;
- ensure coordination of marking/assessment.

Some Programme Leaders endeavour to support the professional development of Team members, e.g. by acting as mentor or suggesting staff development opportunities.

The Overseas Module Co-ordinator's Handbook serves as a useful resource for Programme Teams: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/partnerships/useful-documents-and-quick-guides/>

Although it was written for collaborative partner staff, most of the content takes the form of generic information, which Programme Team members might find helpful as a point of reference.

4) Professional/industry links

Liaison with professional bodies/industry partners and other professional groups and individuals is usually an important responsibility and may be a priority for the Programme Leader, whose links with professional bodies/industry partners are essential or strongly desirable. Where programmes are accredited by professional bodies, the Programme Leader must stay abreast of professional developments in standards, benchmarks and education-related policies so that the teaching Team is in a position to respond accordingly.

Other networks may prove useful to inform curriculum developments and innovation in learning and teaching. Liaising with teaching Teams from other universities and colleges or with practitioners in the workplace may lead to collaborations or exchange of ideas.

5) Monitoring

All programmes are subject to regular monitoring as part of quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms within the University. This facilitates systematic scrutiny of the 'health and well-being' of the programme to inform action planning and enhancement activity. The primary tool for monitoring is the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR, See Section C), although Programme Committees also play an important role in tracking actions and student progress, deferrals and withdrawals. It

is the responsibility of the Programme Leader, or their delegate, to manage the tracking processes.

6) Ambassadorship

The viability of a programme is dependent on healthy recruitment of students. Recruitment is dependent on a number of factors, such as publicity; schools liaison; recommendations; and reputation. Programme Leaders can be important ambassadors for the institution and their curriculum and should attend to these matters seriously. Opportunities for ambassadorship might occur during:

- Conferences;
- External meetings of committees, agencies, interest groups;
- Visits to or from other organisations.

7) Collaborations

Many opportunities for new developments and innovations have arisen through collaborative arrangements between individuals, groups and organisations. Programme Leaders should be sensitive to and welcome discussions with staff of (potential) partner organisations and should engage in regular liaison with collaborative partners. Suggestions for new collaborations should be discussed with line managers before making any commitments. See the Collaborations Manual: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/partnerships/qmu-collaborations-manual/>

The Collaborations Officers based in the School Office have responsibility for liaising with collaborative partners (both UK and overseas) and supporting Academic Link People in relation to academic administration for collaborations. The role includes support for assessment arrangements, Boards of Examiners, and travel plans. The Officers can be contacted using the generic email address: Collaborations@qmu.ac.uk

B Programme management

Programme Leaders carry a number of management responsibilities, although some of these may be delegated to other members of the Team, with the Leader keeping a 'watching brief'.

1) Recruitment and admissions

Although the Programme Leader may not be directly involved in all aspects of recruitment and admissions, they should have an overview of the processes since they may well be asked for advice.

Telephone and email enquiries can occur at any time of the year, and the Programme Leader should work with the Programme Team to establish a system for dealing with these. For some programmes, it is the Admissions Tutor who deals with all pre-entry enquiries. Staff may refer enquirers to additional information through the:

- QMU prospectus;
- QMU website;
- Undergraduate open days (usually held in September or October); the postgraduate open evening and online open-day (usually held in November);

- Admissions Office.

Potential applicants should be advised that they apply directly via UCAS for undergraduate study and can apply online directly to QMU for postgraduate study. Information on how to apply is available on the QMU website at: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/>

Generally postgraduate applicants will be required to supply a copy of their degree certificate and academic transcript, in support of their application, along with one/two letters of reference. If an applicant has finished their previous study within the past three years, this should be an academic reference. References need to be signed, dated and written on headed paper, or sent from a professional email address. It is helpful if applicants submit the relevant documents when they make their application, wherever possible.

Some programmes include an interview as part of the selection process and the Programme Leader will be involved. Some programmes may also operate a waiting list system. This is usually co-ordinated between the Admissions Officer responsible for the programme, and the Programme Team.

The Admissions Office processes all applications, offers and admissions to programmes, including applications for PhD level study, but excluding some collaborative programmes. Admissions staff members are allocated specific undergraduate and postgraduate courses so the Programme Leader has one main point of contact for questions and enquirers. Where the decision is made by the Programme Leader, Admissions staff will notify the Programme Leader of applications, but it is also useful to periodically check with them. To keep track of applications, Admissions Tutors can monitor the MIS Reports for information. The reports can be accessed through the Intranet by going to “Services” then choosing “Management Information Reports” (which is under the “Management Information” title). From that page choose “Management Information Web Reports”. The direct link is here: <http://apps.qmu.ac.uk/reports/>.

There are a number of different reports available, depending on permissions. Admissions recommend you access “ISIS Reports (Admissions)” and “R0014 - Admissions: Live Lists by Course or Name” for a [live applicant list by name and status](#). Tutors can also access “R0018 - Admissions: Live Counts by Course or Route” for [overall course numbers](#).

In late summer, Programme Leaders should liaise with the Head of Admissions and Recruitment to determine the number of offers and acceptances against target and whether there is a need to go to into clearing for an undergraduate programme.

After a student accepts an offer, Admissions will send ‘joining information’ which includes information about joining QMU. It is the Programme Leader’s (or a delegate’s) responsibility to send to Admissions in good time, any information to be included in the joining information, e.g. programme timetable, reading list, or welcome information.

For programmes which require a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) clearance, this process is managed by Admissions and the School Office. In addition, the Head of Admissions and Recruitment is responsible for the risk assessment process for applicants that declare a criminal conviction, while the School Manager – Health Sciences or Arts, Social Sciences and Management, as appropriate - undertakes the necessary Risk Assessment process for those declaring a criminal conviction at the

matriculation stage. The Head of Admissions and Recruitment/School Manager will liaise with the Head of Division or Dean, as appropriate during this process. All completed risk assessments are considered by the University Secretary, before the outcome is communicated to the student.

Information about fees may be obtained from the QMU website

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/current-students-general-information/fees-and-charges/>

The International Office can advise about specific issues related to international admissions, such as visa requirements. If a student is being sponsored by the University to study on a Tier 4 visa, there may be restrictions on their mode of study and required attendance. Programme Leaders should notify the International Office if they are contacted by a student studying on a Tier 4 visa, who wishes to change, defer, or take a leave of absence from their programme of studies. You should also speak to the International Office should there be any changes to a student's studies that may result in a gap in their studies, for example due to re-sits. Academic staff should not give visa advice to students, but should refer students to the International Office.

2) Student induction

Induction meetings with students during their first few days at University, are extremely important in enabling students' understanding of the programme and their adjustment to University life. This will be the point at which students form their impressions of the programme, teaching and professional services staff and their learning and social environment. Careful thought about what students really want – and need – to know is necessary to avoid information overload. Some of the key ingredients of good induction are activities which foster:

- Supportive peer relations;
- Meaningful interaction between staff and students;
- The development of knowledge, confidence and identity as successful HE learners;
- An HE experience which is relevant to interests and future goals (Thomas, 2014).

A typical induction experience will include procedural elements, such as:

- Introduction of staff (and students);
- Programme aims and philosophy;
- Teaching and learning approaches;
- Reminder about library and IT online induction;
- Introduction to the Hub and PebblePad (e-portfolio);
- Certificate checking (if relevant);
- Attention to academic regulations and, if applicable, programme specific regulations;
- Discussion of professional issues;
- Programme timetable;
- Personal Academic Tutor lists;
- Tour of facilities.

However, in covering all this, it is easy to overlook the activities which can lead to students feeling a sense of belonging to their academic community. Simple examples of how to promote that belonging are through:

- Ice-breaker activities;
- Discussion of student expectations (e.g. 'Hopes and Fears').

For further ideas on how to implement an effective induction process, including longitudinal induction, see <http://intranet.qmu.ac.uk/sites/cap/LongInduct/default.aspx> Longitudinal induction refers to the process of extending 'induction' activities across the full academic year to reinforce and develop key messages and topics introduced during the first few weeks of the programme. The key to longitudinal induction is providing study support and advice at the time where it is most likely to be useful. This might be at the start of a new semester, to support the transition between years, or to help students prepare for the transition from campus based to placement learning. Longitudinal induction also helps students prepare for assessment. It presents an opportunity to revisit study skills techniques and remind students of the resources and services that they can access to develop their academic writing and other skills.

3) Delivery

Teaching

The Programme Leader should ensure all modules have a Module Co-ordinator whose responsibilities are to organise all teaching and assessment of the module. The section on Management of Programmes on the Quality website - <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/pm/default.htm> - outlines the roles and duties of Module Co-ordinators.

If cover is necessary for specialist teaching or leave periods, requests for Visiting Lecturers may be negotiated with the appropriate line manager. The QMU Visiting Lecturers' Handbook is available from: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/pm/default.htm>

Placements

Many programmes incorporate placement or workplace learning as an integral element of the curriculum. Management of placements varies across Divisions. Usually, placements are handled by a placement co-ordinator or Module Co-ordinator. However, the Programme Leader will need to liaise regularly with the placement co-ordinator as part of programme management. Activities that might be associated with management of placements are:

- Negotiation and/or arrangements for placement;
- Communication with placement supervisors;
- Provision of documentation and forms for placement supervisors;
- Organisation of training/study days for placement supervisors.

Supervision

Many students, particularly those who study at Honours level or above, will be required to engage in extensive independent study through a project or dissertation. All project/dissertation students must be allocated a supervisor by the Programme Leader or a delegate – often the delegate will be the dissertation Module Co-ordinator (or equivalent). There should be a recognised system for tracking supervision sessions, including a summary of the discussion, work done in

preparation, and targets for the next meeting, using a pro forma agreed by the teaching Team.

Library

There should be regular discussion with librarians about resources and support for students. It is advisable that the relevant Liaison Librarian attends Team meetings to maintain good communication and keep staff updated regarding new resources and services. The supply of books and e-resources will be arranged by the relevant Liaison Librarian in consultation with academic colleagues. The Liaison Librarian can help with the setting up of course reading lists, using the University's "Resource Lists" software. Librarians also contribute to the teaching of topics such as referencing, information handling, library orientation, web searching, web site evaluations and using social media in an academic context. Details of Liaison Librarians can be found here:

<http://libguides.qmu.ac.uk/subjectresources/Liaisoncontact>

C Administration

1) Marketing

QMU publishes UG and PG prospectuses annually, which contain summary information about all programmes, inclusive of admissions requirements, delivery mode and subsidiary awards. Marketing will request text for inclusion in the prospectus well in advance of production. Text should be carefully checked for accuracy and clarity, mindful of any changes which will occur prior to publication.

You can find information on the student recruitment marketing cycle, including outline information on prospectus production schedules, on the Marketing and Communications intranet site, at

https://myshare.qmu.ac.uk/services/marketing/_layouts/15/WopiFrame2.aspx?source doc={7EB7F298-A5A7-4162-93EE-17FF41922603}&file=new%20course%20marketing%20timelines.xlsx&action=default

Also on the Marketing and Communications section of the intranet, you will find a guide to recruitment marketing support, at

[https://myshare.qmu.ac.uk/services/marketing/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourced oc={5566E205-B3D5-45E6-8678-429DA0A2C844}&file=MARKETING%20AND%20RECRUITMENT%20SUPPORT%20FOR%20PLS%20AND%20ADMISSIONS%20TUTORS%20\(updated%20autumn%202018\).docx&action=default](https://myshare.qmu.ac.uk/services/marketing/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourced oc={5566E205-B3D5-45E6-8678-429DA0A2C844}&file=MARKETING%20AND%20RECRUITMENT%20SUPPORT%20FOR%20PLS%20AND%20ADMISSIONS%20TUTORS%20(updated%20autumn%202018).docx&action=default)

More general information on the work of the Marketing and Communications Team can be found at share.qmu.ac.uk/services/marketing/SitePages/Home.aspx

The Marketing and Communications team are always happy to meet with Programme Leaders to discuss marketing issues, or meet with wider Divisional/School staff groups. For further information, email Jane Scott, Director of Marketing and Communications, at jscott@qmu.ac.uk

2) Timetable

Programme Leaders are not necessarily involved in timetabling, as this function is managed by the Divisional Timetable Co-ordinator. Some Programme Leaders are

also Timetable Co-ordinators. If this applies to you, you will have received separate guidance from the Space and Timetabling Team. The timetabling process for the next academic year starts in late January each year and Timetable Co-ordinators will typically contact Programme Leaders in February/March each year to gather and check timetable requirements for the new academic year. If you have any questions about timetabling, please speak with your Timetable Co-ordinator in the first instance. You can also find information on the [Intranet](#).

3) Personal Academic Tutors

All students should be assigned to a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT), who will provide academic advice and will be the first point of contact if a tutee wishes to discuss problems.

It is essential that all students are given the opportunity to meet their PAT within the first six weeks of semester each year. Whilst it is recognised that there can be variation in the implementation of the PAT system to reflect the discipline, some minimum expectations apply. Most importantly, PATs are expected to:

- Be a friendly and helpful first point of contact with the institution.
- Make contact, at least once per semester, to arrange an individual PAT meeting with each of their Tutees. Semester one meetings must happen within the first six weeks of semester. This means that Tutees can expect to hear from their PAT within the first three to four weeks of semester one with a note of the arrangements. Some PATs may also arrange group meetings, which are additional to (and not a substitute for) the individual meetings.
- Attend all meetings on time and let their Tutees know if they unavoidably need to change the date/time.
- Stay in touch with their Tutees between meetings, as appropriate – especially if there is a change in a Tutee's circumstances.
- Respond to messages from their Tutees within a reasonable timeframe. Typically this means a maximum of seven working days.
- Set aside reasonable time for the meeting – as a rough guideline PATs should plan for around 30-45 minutes, although the exact length of the meeting will depend on the topics for discussion.
- Offer advice and guidance on academic and pastoral matters. PATs are encouraged to discuss their Tutees' experience of feedback and feedforward to support the overall learning experience.
- Act as a link with other members of academic staff and as an advocate for their Tutees in appropriate circumstances.
- Be aware of the broader network of support services at QMU (as well as some external services) and refer you to these services, as appropriate. You can also find information on QMU Student Services here: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/>
- Make sure that there is a record of each meeting. This record is held electronically – usually in email format. Meeting records can be quite brief and will not contain confidential information – unless you agree to this.
- Follow up on any actions that are agreed through the PAT meetings.
- Provide an opportunity for you to comment on the content of meeting records before these are filed as a record of the discussion.
- Maintain confidentiality in line with the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Full information on the PAT system is available at:
<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/pm/default.htm>

The School Office usually assigns PATs, based on parameters provided by Heads of Divisions. Allocations are then communicated to staff. Students can view the PAT they have been assigned via the Student Portal: QM:u

4) Assessment

Regulations

QMU assessment regulations can be found here (under the Regulations tab):
<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/committees-regulations-policies-and-procedures/regulations-policies-and-procedures/> If you have any questions about the regulations, please contact your School Manager, or colleagues in Registry.

Management of assessment

Programme Leaders normally co-ordinate the planning and setting of assessments. Usually, this process occurs late in semester 2 for the following academic session. All Module Co-ordinators are asked to submit copies of their assessment specifications, criteria and submission dates to the Programme Leader. The Programme Leader should co-ordinate the peer review of assessments (within the teaching Team) and subsequent revisions before sending them to the External Examiner. The Programme Leader then receives and acts on feedback from the External Examiner, documents and co-ordinates distribution of submission dates to the Programme Team and School Office. Some External Examiners choose not to see assessments which are similar to those that have been in place previously. However, External Examiners should be consulted whenever there is a change in assessment mode, and they may be asked for an opinion on, for example, assessment criteria.

School Office colleagues will set up the online submission boxes within the relevant module Hub sites and will require the assessment deadlines early in Semester in order to complete this in good time.

The Programme Leader should liaise with Registry to establish and confirm dates for examinations, since rooms and invigilators must be organised well in advance.

Programme Leaders also co-ordinate responsibilities for marking, double marking, moderating and processing of marks. Please refer to the Assessment Regulations for definitions of terms and QMU regulations on marking of assessments. All marks are reported to School Administrators who then enter the data into the Student Records System prior to the Examination Boards.

The Programme Leader normally handles all requests for exemptions from modules and credit for achievement of prior (experiential) learning, often referred to as Accreditation or Recognition of Prior (Experiential) Learning: AP(E)L or RP(E)L. There is a University-wide RPL Panel, where all applications must come for ratification. Applications will only be considered by the RPL Panel if they have first been signed off by the Programme Leader.

See the Quality website for details: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/committees-regulations-policies-and-procedures/regulations-policies-and-procedures/>

Extenuating circumstances and deferrals

The Programme Leader works with the teaching Team to ensure students are well informed about regulations and processes associated with requests for extenuating circumstances and deferrals. These regulations and procedures are available on the Quality website at: <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/pm/default.htm>

It is important to be aware that there are different processes for ECs and deferrals so it is important to know when each is appropriate. A deferral is applicable where a student discontinues study with the University for an extended period of time (i.e. into the next academic year). It can be applied for and approved on the basis of valid medical or personal reasons at the request of the student. Short breaks for medical or personal reasons of less than 4 weeks, which affect a student's ability to undertake assessments on time or their performance in assessment, should be applied for under extenuating circumstances. The student deferral procedure is available at <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/media/5591/qmu-student-deferral-procedure.pdf>

The Programme Leader signs off extenuating circumstances forms, notifies the School Office of the nature of the circumstance and the proposed date of submission. Similarly, the Programme Leader should authorise requests for deferral on the student deferral request form and outline any conditions for return to study e.g. to provide a fit to study note or to submit any outstanding assessments before return.

5) References

An important service for students is to write or organise requests for letters of reference for students and graduates. Assistance can be sought from the School Office.

6) Other

Cases of students with communicable diseases

QMU has a Communicable Diseases Management Plan to deal with potential cases of: meningitis, pandemic influenza, legionnaires, mumps, whooping cough, and Ebola. The Plan can be found at: <http://intranet.qmu.ac.uk/Search.aspx?k=communicable%20diseases&s=All%20sources>

According to the Plan, if a staff member becomes aware of a student with a suspected or confirmed communicable disease, they should:

- Immediately notify QMU Security, either via the internal emergency telephone by dialling 2222, or 0131 474 0000
- Give the name, date of birth, address and telephone number of the student
- If the student is already in hospital, they should provide the name of the hospital, the name of the treating doctor and telephone number

A dedicated member of the Security team will take the matter further, meaning there is no requirement for the Programme Leader to take any additional steps.

D Quality

1) Good practice

An important function of the Programme Leader's role is the promotion, engagement with and dissemination of good practice. This activity may be manifested through curriculum development, education research, internal and external presentations and/or publications, sharing information with colleagues and through Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs, see below). Programme Leaders should remain informed and should seek to support their Team to engage with sector-wide initiatives related to the Enhancement Themes coordinated by the QAA – <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk>.

2) Student Experience Strategy

QMU expects that all programmes will explicitly articulate with QMU's Student Experience Strategy (2015-20): <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/quality-enhancement-and-external-context/quality-enhancement/> Alignment with the Student Experience Strategy should be explained in the Definitive Programme Document. Ongoing quality enhancement activities will be documented in AMRs and through sharing of good practice in other ways.

3) Quality assurance

Policy

As leader of a Team, the Programme Leader will be instrumental in ensuring the Team members know and implement new institutional policies and regulations. GQE regularly update staff on decisions taken by the [Student Experience Committee](#) (SEC) and are responsible for updating documents on the Internet and Intranet. The Programme Leader should work with the Team to incorporate regulatory mechanisms into programme management processes and ensure that such information is incorporated into student programme information, e.g. student handbooks and Hub resources.

Standards

The Programme Leader is in a position to promote and monitor academic and professional standards, as relevant to the programme. Activities of this nature will include: the promotion and dissemination of good practice; engagement in Annual Monitoring; and communication of information about academic and professional standards to all members of the Programme Team. Standards often feature as an agenda item at Team meetings, particularly when reviewing programmes for Annual Monitoring or preparing for a review and re-validation event.

Validation and review

All new programmes must be validated by QMU before students can be enrolled. All existing programmes must be regularly reviewed and re-validated. Reviews normally occur on a five year cycle.

Guidance on validation and review is provided on the Quality website at: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/resources-for-validation-and-review/>

It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to lead the Team through these processes. This will typically include convening meetings, allocation of tasks and liaison with other units, including GQE. There are useful guidelines for all involved at this website, and it is wise to read these in advance. Advice and training for validation and review is provided by GQE. GQE staff can also suggest colleagues in your Division with prior experience of the process who can assist you with your preparations and help you understand the process and your role.

Often, validation and review is associated with accreditation by professional bodies. Specific requirements for accreditation will vary according to the profession. As these processes are not the same, it is best to seek help from colleagues in the discipline and from staff of GQE who are also knowledgeable about the professional bodies which accredit QMU programmes.

Definitive Programme Document

The Definitive Programme Document includes crucial information about the programme, such as aims, philosophy, learning outcomes, structure, admissions requirements, progression requirements, learning and teaching approaches, assessment strategies, placement information and module descriptors. Good document control should ensure that it provides definitive information about the programme to all members of the Team. Full guidelines for preparation of programme documents is available from GQE.

Student Handbooks

All students should receive a Student **Programme** Handbook which should include information on: aims and learning outcomes, the programme structure, strategies for learning, teaching and assessment, learning support, learning resources, programme-specific regulations and guidelines. Should you wish to include information regarding the submission of assessments, teaching timetable, procedures for extenuating circumstances, deferral and withdrawal etc. it is recommended that handbooks provide links to existing regulations and forms on the QMU website, rather than duplicate information (which can later subsequently become out of date).

NB a general Student Handbook is available on the website; this contains comprehensive information regarding Student Services, LRC support, academic standards and procedures for submission, extenuating circumstances etc. It is good practice to include a link to this Handbook from your Programme Handbook and/or from Programme/module Hub sites. The generic Student Handbook can be found here (under the letter H): <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/quality-a-z-index/>

In addition to the Student Programme Handbook, students may need handbooks for modules, placement and dissertations. Increasingly, these are being made available online and within the Hub, for example.

Interim changes to programmes

Minor changes to programmes can be approved by the Programme Committee and reported to the relevant School Academic Board. More substantial changes have to be considered and agreed by both the Programme Committee and School Academic Board. It is recommended that you discuss any more significant changes with staff of GQE, since it may be appropriate to engage in a full review, rather than processing

these through the committee structure. All changes to the programme must be notified to professional bodies through GQE and to the External Examiner directly. It is important to consult students on proposed changes, and also to keep students updated once changes have been implemented.

Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs)

Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) are an essential component of QMU's quality assurance monitoring processes. The reports provide an opportunity for the teaching Team to:

- reflect on quantitative and qualitative evidence about the health of the programme;
- highlight good practice and innovation as well as any issues arising;
- set an action plan for the coming year.

It is important to involve students in the development of reports and implementation of actions arising from reports. This can be difficult due to the timing of submission. However, as a minimum Class Reps should expect to be involved in consideration of Programme reports through their involvement in committees. All students should have access to the AMR through its publication on the Hub, or dissemination in another agreed format.

Programme reports are usually due near the end of the second semester (typical submission date 30 June) with a requirement to submit an updated version by 31 October. The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement (GQE) is responsible for issuing instructions and a template each year. The AMR must be approved by the Programme Committee. Registry will provide statistics (e.g. on admissions and progression) prior to the October deadline for AMRs.

Information on external datasets to support AMR is available from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) on the HE Planners' Data Landscape resource: <https://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/current-enhancement-theme/defining-and-capturing-evidence/data-landscape-resource>

Reports for professional bodies

Many regulatory professional bodies will require annual audit reports in their specified format. GQE can advise about their role in this process.

Committees

Programme Committee

The Programme Committee is composed of all members of the teaching Team and student representation. Heads of Division (HoD) confirm the number and scope of Programme Committees within their area; sometimes these are an aggregate covering a number of programmes. Heads will also appoint the Programme Committee Conveners, who are usually Programme Leaders. School Office staff act as Secretaries to Programme Committee and will work with Conveners to arrange dates, compile agendas, circulate papers (ideally a week in advance) and take minutes.

The Committee provides a formal structure for discussion of key issues affecting the Programme. Class Reps attend meetings of the Committee and can suggest agenda

items informed by their engagement with other students in their cohort. The minutes of the Student-Staff Consultative Committee also come to the Programme Committee. The Committee oversees all key quality processes that affect the Programme. This means that it considers the AMR, External Examiner nominations, External Examiners' reports (and responses to these reports), as well as any proposed programme changes.

Programme Committee minutes are considered by the relevant School Academic Board. Issues for the attention of the Board should be clearly stated within the minutes.

Programme Team meetings

Team meetings should be held regularly to ensure effective coordination. Meetings are chaired by the Programme Leader.

4) Monitoring and evaluation (evidence, action research)

Module evaluation

The Programme Leader, working with the Programme Team, should:

- Ensure that all students have the opportunity to complete module evaluation for each module, and that students know how to engage with this process;
- Consider approaches to module evaluation that will maximise the response rate and are likely to generate the most useful feedback;
- Collect and collate all module evaluation forms for the AMR;
- Identify and plan a response to issues arising;
- Note any positive practice identified through module evaluation and consider how best to disseminate this;
- Establish a mechanism for 'closing the loop' i.e. feeding back to students on action taken in response to the module evaluation process.

QMU's module evaluation leaflet provides some helpful information on making the best use of the evidence gathered through this process:

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/resources-for-programme-leaders/>

Responding to student survey feedback

The University runs a number of surveys on the student experience, including:

- The National Student Survey (NSS), which is an annual survey of final year undergraduates across the UK.
- The QMU Student Survey (QSS), which is an annual internal survey, open to all other taught students, which replicates the NSS questions.
- The QMU Entrants' Survey (QES), which captures feedback from new entrants to the University.

The Programme Leader should work with the Programme Team to consider any survey results, identifying points of low satisfaction, as well as areas of good practice. It is important to remember (as with all survey data) that results are indicative and not conclusive, i.e. they provide a starting point for further investigation. It is expected that Programme Teams discuss the results with students to find out more detailed

information. Survey results should also be considered in Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs).

Programme Teams have a key role in encouraging students to take part in surveys. A higher response rate can provide more meaningful results. There is specific guidance on the NSS which staff should be aware of. Refer to the NSS promotional briefing for staff produced by GQE on the [NSS results intranet site](#).

Class Representatives (Class Reps)

'Class' here refers to a year cohort in your programme, for example second year undergraduates. Depending on your programme's structure, it may make sense to have one or more Class Reps who represent all students on the programme (e.g. in smaller programmes) rather than just one year group. Advice and guidance on the appointment of Class Reps is available from the Students' Union through classreps@qmu.ac.uk. Class Reps play an important role by helping support regular and constructive dialogue with students. They work with academic staff to consider and address students' views on their learning experience.

Programme Leaders are asked to call Class Rep elections as early as possible at the start of the semester (normally by the end of week three). Programme Leaders will be provided with guidance on the nomination and voting process as well as a profile of the role to give to students. Governance and Quality Enhancement (GQE) colleagues work in partnership with the Students' Union to support the process. Class Reps' details should be sent to classreps@qmu.c.uk

Once appointed, Class Reps receive introductory training and ongoing support from the Students' Union. Class Reps are encouraged to attend the Academic Council which is chaired by the Student President and meets four times a year. This forum gives Class Reps a chance to hear about any news and developments regarding the teaching and learning experience at QMU. They can also raise issues with the Student President, which they consider might affect students across the University, as well as helping each other resolve programme specific issues and sharing examples of successes on their programme.

Student-Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC)

The SSCC provides a forum for students to comment on and give feedback on the programme, as well as to raise issues of concern. The Committee typically includes two student representatives from each year. As a minimum, two members of the teaching Team will also attend, including the Programme Leader, although this will depend on the size of the cohort and level of programme. Students should be encouraged to chair the meetings and to take minutes. Where it is not possible for a student to take minutes, a member of the Programme Team will take on this role. If module-related issues have not been resolved by the Module Co-ordinator, they may be brought to this Committee. Staff encourage students to offer solutions to issues. The Programme Leader and members of the Team should remind students to elect their representatives. Student representatives should be nominated by their peers early in the academic session.

The Programme Leader may report on the SSCC to the subsequent Programme Committee meeting and may raise issues on behalf of students. However, in some Divisions, it is the student convener who has this responsibility. When the Programme Leader is unable to deal with student concerns, they should be reported to the Head of Division.

It is important that students are made aware of the function of the SSCC and that decisions are disseminated to the full cohort. The mechanism for achieving this should be agreed with student members. Consider using the SSCC template action plan (Appendix F) to record any items and responses/agreed actions. This can then be shared with all students in class, and/or on the Hub.

Students' Union Representative Structure

Full details of the Students' Union representative structure are available on the SU website: <https://www.qmusu.org.uk/top-menu/your-voice/representation-groups>
The main representative forum for Class Reps is the Academic Council which is chaired by the Student President and has a remit to consider academic issues raised by Class Representatives on behalf of their cohort. The names of all Class Reps should be given to the Students' Union and the School Office as soon as possible following appointment.

5) Inclusion, equality and diversity

QMU is committed to achieving a culture which is grounded on the principles of inclusion, equality and dignity for all, and there are a number of strategic initiatives to move that agenda forward.

Programme Teams are expected to promote equality and diversity, and to address potential exclusionary aspects of their Programme through validation and periodic review. Progress should also be monitored and evaluated through the Annual Monitoring process, when teams are required to pay due regard to relevant Equality legislation and to evaluate progress made towards the achievement of the University's equality outcomes, as set out in the University Mainstreaming Report and its Gender Action plan. For reference, the nine protected characteristics included in legislation are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation^[1].

Information on mainstreaming equality and diversity at QMU is available here: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/equality-and-diversity> The University's *Policy on Inclusive Learning and Teaching Materials* is an important reference point for Programme Teams. A further reference point is the University's British Sign Language Plan: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/footer/bsl-action-plan/> (<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/10/3540>)

6) External Examining

The Programme Leader should organise communication with the External Examiner(s) on all matters of assessment, notify the External of any changes to the programme or modules and ensure that the External receives the following documentation relevant to their duties:

- Definitive Programme Document;
- Student Handbooks (programme, module, placement);
- Module Descriptors;

^[1] For more information, see <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics> and <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/equality-legislation/>.

- Assessment Specifications, criteria and feedback forms.

She/he should also liaise with Module Co-ordinators to ensure the External Examiner receives samples of students' assessments (with accompanying assessment specifications and learning outcomes), as required by QMU regulations.

It is the responsibility of GQE to acknowledge receipt and thank External Examiners for their reports. The Programme Leader must respond to External Examiners' reports by indicating, if relevant, how their comments will be acted on. Normally, the response is approved by the Programme Committee and Dean of School (or Dean's nominee – typically the Head of Division). External Examiners' reports are distributed by GQE, and responses to reports should also be sent through GQE.

The Programme Leader may need to liaise with the External Examiner for other reasons as necessary, e.g. to discuss individual student circumstances.

The Programme Leader should also work with the Team to nominate a new External Examiner, when the incumbent's term of office expires. Nomination forms are available on the Quality website and must be submitted to the appropriate committee for approval. GQE staff can advise on the approval route.

7) Examination Boards

Normally, marks are presented first to a module board, in which students' marks are presented by module. The module board is then followed by another Exam Board, which deals with progression. At this Board, marks are presented by programme, with each student's cumulative record made available. Exam Boards are usually convened by Heads of Division or Deans of School. Arrangements for External Examiners' travel and accommodation are made by the School Office, on request of the Programme Leader. It is possible to arrange for the Externals to arrive the day before in order to review practical work, or to conduct online moderation on-site if they prefer.

It is the Programme Leader's responsibility to confirm extenuating circumstances, withdrawals and any other significant issues which may have affected students' assessments. It is good practice to hold a pre-Board meeting before the main Board to ensure all information is available about individual students' circumstances and to discuss the implications of the regulations for any non-standard cases.

The decisions of Boards of Examiners are released to students via the Student Portal. Resit requirements, based on the decisions of the Board of Examiners, are also made available to students via the Student Portal; it is essential that resit dates and specifications are provided in good time to the School Office in order to facilitate this.

In the event of an appeal, the Programme Leader may be asked to provide evidence related to the case; appeals are normally undertaken by the. Information regarding the Appeals process can be found here (under the letter A):

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/quality-a-z-index/>

Professional bodies will be informed of the names of graduands by the School Office.

Students will receive a copy of their transcript from Registry within a few weeks of the Exam Board.

APPENDICES A-E

A Academic calendar

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

B Contacts

Admissions and Recruitment	admissions@qmu.ac.uk
Effective Learning Service	https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/effective-learning-service-els
Finance	https://www.qmu.ac.uk/finance/
Governance and Quality Enhancement (GQE)	https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/ dmartin1@qmu.ac.uk
Human Resources	https://www.qmu.ac.uk/footer/vacancies/
Information Services:	https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/learning-facilities/it-services/
International Office	international@qmu.ac.uk
Library	http://www.qmu.ac.uk/lb/
Media Services	mediaservices@qmu.ac.uk
Recruitment & International Liaison Office	rilo@qmu.ac.uk
School Office	SchoolOffice@qmu.ac.uk
Student Services	https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/
Students' Union Class Reps emails	union@qmu.ac.uk classreps@qmu.ac.k
University Secretary	ihynd@qmu.ac.uk

C External Links

Advance HE: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/about-us>

Enhancement Themes: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/>

QAA Subject Benchmarks:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx>

D Programme Committee Agenda



Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

SCHOOL OF

PROGRAMME COMMITTEE PROGRAMME TITLE

Date
Time
Venue

Convener
Secretary

A G E N D A

- 1 Welcome and apologies
- 2 Determination of any other business
- 3 Minutes of previous meeting
- 4 Action status sheet and matters arising from the previous meeting not elsewhere on the agenda

(This is used to record progress in relation to actions agreed at previous meetings. It should clearly indicate the action required, responsibility and deadline for completion. If an action has not been completed, the reasons for this should also be recorded)

- 5 Programme operation

(This provides an opportunity for members to discuss the operation of the Programme in general and any issues not identified separately below)

- 6 Proposed changes to the Programme

(Where changes are agreed by Convener's Action between meetings this should be homologated and recorded in the minutes)

- 6.1 Changes to module descriptors
(Once agreed, these need to be approved by the School Academic Board before implementation)
- 6.2 Other changes
(For example: changes to programme specific regulations, attendance requirements, staffing)

- 7 SSSC minutes
(The Programme Committee should consider any issues referred from the SSSC and also identify the mechanism by which actions are to be reported back to students)
- 8 Other student issues
(Student representatives should be invited to raise any issues not covered in the SSSC minutes)
- 9 Issues arising through institutional committees
(Papers are circulated periodically to Programme Leaders by the Secretaries to the institutional academic committees. These are mainly for information, but sometimes action is required, or feedback requested)
- 10 Date of next meeting
(As a minimum the Programme Committee should meet twice a year)

Other possible items

- Validation and review preparations (for Teams going through validation and review)
- Annual Monitoring (the draft Annual Monitoring Report should be considered at the first meeting of each academic session before submission to GQE)
- External Examining arrangements (appointments, extensions to tenure and reallocation of duties need to be approved by the Programme Committee before referral to the School Academic Board)
- External Examiner reports and responses (External Examiner reports should be considered at the first meeting of each academic session together with the Team's response prior to submission to GQE)
- Student evaluation (the outcome of module evaluation should be considered through the Annual Monitoring process)
- Professional body issues
- Library issues

Reserved Business**(Students should not be in attendance for the items below)**

- 1 Determination of any other business
- 2 Minutes of previous meeting
- 3 Matters arising from minutes
- 4 Student progress
 - Exemptions
 - Withdrawals
 - Deferrals
 - Extenuating circumstances
- 5 Plagiarism
- 6 Attendance

E Student-Staff Consultative Committee Agenda

SCHOOL OF

STUDENT-STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
PROGRAMME TITLE

Date
Time
Venue

Convener
Secretary

A G E N D A

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Minutes from previous meeting, to include confirmation that minutes and information about actions have been disseminated to the full cohort.
3. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting
4. Action status sheet
(This is used to record progress in relation to actions agreed at previous meetings. It should clearly indicate the action required, responsibility and deadline for completion. If an action has not been completed, the reasons for this should also be recorded)
5. Student feedback
(This should be the main focus of the meeting. Students should be encouraged where possible to advise staff of the issues in advance, to allow staff to prepare adequately. Student feedback may include aspects of the Programme which are working well and suggestions for future enhancement)

Level one
Level two
Level three
Level four

(Note that it may not be necessary to divide feedback by level, and that this will depend on the cohort size and programme structure)

With effect from 2019-20, the Student Experience Committee has agreed that feedback and feedforward should be included as an SSCC agenda item for all programmes. It may be appropriate to consider this under the 'student feedback' agenda item. Please refer to paper SEC 17/19 Consistency of Assessment Feedback for further information:

<http://intranet.qmu.ac.uk/sites/SEC/2018-19/230518/Papers/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

6. Staff Issues
(This allows staff to share information about University, School or programme level issues. Staff may also wish to share information about other academic and professional issues, for example, professional body requirements)

7. Any Other Business
8. Date of Next Meeting

If preparing for review, it may be helpful to include a separate agenda item about this process.

F Student-Staff Consultative Committee Action Plan template

This template can be used to record any agreed actions or responses to items raised at SSCC. It can then be shared with all students in the next class and/or on the programme Hub site.

Date of SSCC: Programme:		
Item discussed	Response and/or agreed action	Person responsible and agreed timescale