

Quality Code for Higher Education

Introduction to the Quality Code for Higher Education

Reference Code:	1.1
Version:	3.1
Date:	August 2016
Date of Implementation:	August 2016
Originator:	Higher Education & Skills Department (HESD)
Approval by:	HE Learning & Teaching Committee (HELTC)
Date for Review:	July 2017
Description:	<p>The Quality Code (QC) for Higher Education provides a central reference point for members of staff and students, by detailing College objectives and principles of quality assurance and enhancement.</p> <p>The Quality Code (QC) provides information on regulations, policies and processes in relation to higher education quality and academic standards.</p>
Responsibilities:	HESD / Senior Leadership Team Academic Heads / Curriculum Managers / Service Units
Applications for exemptions to:	Not Applicable
Report Exemptions to:	Not Applicable

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Quality Code (QC) provides a structured framework about College governance of academic standards and quality. It also outlines how the College works with its awarding bodies for HE qualifications: Pearson/Edexcel, The University of Hull and Sheffield Hallam University.
- 1.2 Throughout the QC, reference to **academic standards** means the level of achievement that a student has to reach to gain an academic award (for example, a degree) which should be at a similar level across the UK.
- 1.3 Similarly, **academic quality** refers to how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their award. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for them.

2 Core Values

- 2.1 The management of quality and standards is underpinned by a number of values which the College feels are important:
- Responsiveness to the needs of students – Student Voice
 - Accountability to key stakeholders
 - Fairness and transparency in decision making
 - Inclusivity and safeguarding of student welfare
 - Collaboration with our key partners in the interests of teaching and learning
 - Collegiality, working together to share best practice and improve
 - Enhancement of quality and standards

3 Roles and Responsibilities for Quality and Standards

- 3.1 **Academic Staff**, engaged in delivering teaching and learning on higher education programmes will:
- take responsibility for the provision, sustainability and enhancement of matters relating to academic standards and quality
 - manage teaching and learning activity, within defined quality assurance processes, which are geared towards safeguarding and improving academic standards
 - ensure that standards are being achieved and a good quality education is being offered in order to ensure provision that is 'fit for purpose'
 - engage in the development and delivery of modules and programmes
 - the planning and processing of student assessment
 - the synthesis of provision to the FHEQ, subject benchmark statements and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
 - involvement in committees, joint boards, module, programme and department boards regarding issues relating to judgments of standards
- 3.2 **Administrative Support Staff** play an important role in matters relating to academic quality and standards:

- each Department is allocated a named administrator(s) who plays a key role in ensuring that Department processes operate effectively through appropriate handling of information and adherence to codes of practice, policies and other defined systems
- Administrative staff have particular responsibilities relating to the timely and accurate presentation, documentation and dissemination of information relating to quality and standards. This may, for example, include the production and handling of student transcripts, examination grids, agendas and minutes

3.3 **Support Staff** have responsibility for matters such as:

- examinations
- admissions
- communications
- work based learning coordination
- information
- advice and guidance

Staff are required to ensure rigorous adherence to systematic processes and to ensure processes are transparent, inclusive and take into account accuracy of information provided to staff and students.

3.4 **Higher Education & Skills Department:**

- supports all quality assurance boards, committees and processes
- takes responsibility for the dissemination, implementation, review and enhancement of quality assurance procedures to promote consistency
- encourages the identification and dissemination of good practice
- takes responsibility for providing guidance and support for Departments
- provides a direct link to, from and between all the College's Departments and units
- takes responsibility for communication and oversight of quality assurance processes to and from partner awarding bodies, Departments within the College which will involve a range of collaborative boards and partnership committees

3.5 **Leadership and Management**

Those with responsibility for leadership and management may be involved in a range of activities including responsibilities for management of higher education teams and administrative staff, teaching and learning, and the chairing of boards and relevant committees. It is expected that such persons will execute their responsibilities in relation to quality and standards and that they will ensure the effective operation of processes at all levels. The Director of Higher Education & Skills has responsibility for the oversight of the College HE & Skills Department. Other managers involved in HE include:

- Senior Leadership Team
- Academic Heads
- Curriculum Managers
- Curriculum Leaders
- Unit Managers (e.g. Student Services, Library)

4 Regulatory and Academic Framework

4.1 There are five key features to the College regulatory and academic framework:

- The College Committee Structure: Higher Education LTC / HE Staff Forum / HE Student Forum
- The Quality Code for Higher Education
- Programme-level regulations
- Collaborative Boards and Committees
- University regulations applicable to each qualification awarded by a partner institution

4.2 The College is committed to rigorous approaches that underpin the development, implementation and review of its regulatory and academic framework. The following processes are key to the way quality is assured:

- Enhancement led activities for continuous improvement
- Audit principles and themed reviews
- Programme approvals
- Annual monitoring
- Evaluation, reporting procedures and action planning

4.3 The College maintains its academic standards through systematic and rigorous processes. These involve:

- Assessment processes and moderation
- External examiners
- Analysis of recruitment, retention, progression and achievement data
- Feedback to students on assessment
- Accredited prior learning
- Professional accreditation
- Governance

4.4 The Chief Executive, SLT and governing body are responsible for finance, property, investments, general business and the strategic direction of the estate.

4.5 Oversight of the governance of academic quality and standards takes place through the **HELTC**. The group is comprised of the Director of HE & Skills, Academic Heads, Curriculum Managers and specialist Managers and reports to the Chief Executive and College Governors through the College committee structures. The group is chaired by the Director and will consider matters such as:

- operational aspects of quality and standards
- trends in annual monitoring reports
- external reports
- key themes arising from internal reviews and audits
- oversight of research, scholarship and scholarly activity
- profiles of HE observations of teaching and learning / peer review activity
- outcomes and key issues appertaining to validations, programme reviews and accreditation
- enhancement and review activities

- reporting and evaluation
- input into staff development planning

5 The College HE Strategic Plan HE / Self Evaluation Document

5.1 The **Higher Education Strategic Plan 2016-2019** provides an agreed direction and focus for the College. It builds on the work of earlier plans and reflects an institutional response to sector changes and priorities.

5.2 Key drivers underpinning the HE Strategic Plan include:

- the major changes in national Government policy and strategy
- changes in HE funding and development opportunities arising from HEFCE
- the LEP Regional priority framework
- the College's own needs assessment embracing local and regional demographic, economic and social factors as well as competitor analysis

5.3 The College aims to become a high-quality provider of learning opportunities in higher education, widening participation and working in partnership with higher and further education institutions and employers. It aims to develop a range of innovative programmes, which meet the needs of existing and potential students in the locality.

- to increase success and achievement of students in higher level programmes
- to develop quality assurance and enhancement systems and processes to ensure the right structures, systems and processes are in place to create the necessary challenge and continuous improvement in quality
- to develop the higher education curriculum and provide new progression routes for new and existing students
- to grow and develop higher education provision as part of the widening participation strategy for vocational learners, in which it seeks to provide higher-level progression routes for new and existing students
- to work in partnership with others and seek to identify and incorporate best practice

5.4 The College **HE Self Evaluation Document** is produced annually and provides an evaluation of HE provision. It is structured against the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education and the document is informed by:

- inputs capturing the HE Student Voice
- inputs from course level Annual Monitoring Reviews (AMRs) and External Examiner Reports
- inputs arising from validation reports and HE quality reviews

The HE SED is accompanied by an action plan and is compiled by the Director in conjunction with Academic Heads and the Higher Education & Skills Department and reviewed through the HELTC.