Introduction to the Academic Quality and Standards Handbook

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Abbreviations in this section

AQSH	Academic Quality & Standards Handbook
EC	Education Committee
IQA	Internal Quality Audit
KCEP	Kingston Continuous Enhancement Process
PSRB	Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body
RDC	Research Degrees Committee
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RFC	Regulatory Framework Committee
SEC	School Education Committee
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SVC	Student Voice Committee
VC	Vice-Chancellor

Purpose of the Academic Quality and Standards Handbook (AQSH)

1. The AQSH is intended to provide guidance and information for all participants involved in quality assurance and enhancement across the University and its collaborative partners. The University discharges its responsibilities for the quality assurance and enhancement of taught provision through the procedures set out in the AQSH. The Handbook has been framed in the context of the University's Policy on Academic Standards and Quality (available from the Kingston University website – Policy and Regulations page) and the Town House Strategy.

2. The AQSH covers the following areas:
    *   Academic portfolio changes *(section A)*
    *   Managing HE provision with others (collaborative provision) *(section B)*
    *   Validation of new courses *(section C)*
    *   Kingston Continuous Enhancement Process (KCEP) *(section D)*
    *   Substantive Review *(section E)*
    *   Internal Quality Audit (IQA) (s*ection F*)
    *   Changes to courses,modules and academic regulations *(section G)*
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    *   Committees, Groups and Panels Terms of Reference (*section O*)

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Processes and Structures

3. The University's approach to managing academic standards and quality is

through both the executive and deliberative structures of the University and operates within the framework set out in the Policy on Academic Standards and Quality (available from the KU Policy and Regulations page*)* which covers the:

- Academic Quality and Standards Handbook (AQSH)
- Regulations for Taught and Research Degree provision; and
- The Town House Strategy and related documents

The University's Management Structure

4. The University is led by the Vice-Chancellor (VC), supported by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) which comprises the:
   - Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor
   - Chief Operating Officer
   - Executive Director for Student Services
   - University Secretary
   - Pro Vice-Chancellor, Strategy
   - Deans of Faculties

5. Overall management responsibility for the quality and standards of all awards lies with the Vice-Chancellor.

6. Further details on how the SLT portfolio is balanced can be found on Kingston University's Internet site

Academic Council and its sub-committees

7. Deliberative consideration of academic standards and quality matters is undertaken at University-level by Academic Council and its sub-committees which:
   - provide direction for quality assurance and enhancement, curriculum development, and the enhancement of pedagogical practice
   - develop and approve changes to relevant policies and strategies
   - approve amendments to the academic regulations, academic quality procedures, and related documentation
   - receive and consider reports on outcomes from, and the effectiveness of, quality assurance and enhancement and curriculum development

8. The key University level sub-committees of Academic Council with roles in academic quality management include the following:
   - Education Committee (EC)
   - Regulatory Framework Committee (RFC)
   - Research Degrees Committee (RDC)

9. A Committee Structure Diagram can be found in section O Guidance (i). Fuller details of these committees, including terms of reference and copies of past papers, can be found here.

10. Each University-level sub-committee of Academic Council will produce an annual report and schedule of business for approval by the last meeting of its parent committee each academic year.

Education Committee (EC)

11. Through EC, the University monitors the effective implementation of policies and practice for the continuous enhancement of teaching quality, the learning environment and student outcomes as prioritised by the Town House Strategy. The Committee also has responsibility to monitor the quality and standards of all taught provision including that delivered by collaborative partners and to ensure that the University's quality assurance policies and procedures are implemented appropriately. The Education Committee is responsible for the consideration of new academic developments, including new collaborative partnerships. The Education Committee reports directly to Academic Council.

Regulatory Framework Committee (RFC)

12. RFC considers all matters pertaining to the University regulations and assessment processes for approval and recommendation to Academic Council and reports directly to Academic Council.

13. For Assessment Boards – see [Academic Regulations 2: Undergraduate Regulations](#) and [Academic Regulations 3: Postgraduate Regulations](#)

Faculty-level committee structures

14. Faculties have committee structures developed in line with the terms of reference laid out by the Academic Council. Faculty committees consider issues related to academic development, quality assurance and learning enhancement of taught programmes, and the quality assurance and enhancement of research degree provision. The precise structure and constitution of the committees varies from faculty to faculty in order to best meet local circumstances; nonetheless the overall committee structure and functions at faculty level must fulfill all the Academic Council requirements.

15. The key faculty level committees are:
    - Faculty Education Committee – see section O Guidance (iv)
    - Faculty Forum – see section L
    - School Education Committee (SEC) – see section O Guidance (xiii)
    - Student Voice Committee (SVC) - see section L

16. Faculties have quality assurance responsibilities through their formal structures in the following areas:
    - Review of existing courses (see section B and section D)
    - Changes to validated courses and modules (see section G)
    - External examining: appointment and reporting (see section I)
    - Student engagement and feedback (see section L)

Course Leaders/Director of Studies

17. Specified sets of modules are validated as being available to contribute to named progammes. Each course must have a designated Course Leader who is responsible for the student experience of the course, including ensuring the coherence of the course and its constituent modules. The

Course Leader is also responsible for ensuring that the course is monitored and evaluated in accordance with the University regulations, policies and procedures.

Management of modules

18. All modules should have a designated Module Leader responsible for the delivery and quality of the module. The Module Leader is supported by a module teaching team.

Revisions to the quality and regulatory framework

19. The AQSH and regulatory policies and procedures are determined centrally in consultation with faculties, and revised on a regular basis (annually in the case of the procedures and regulations) to reflect changing internal and external demands and in order to improve efficacy. Any such changes are approved at University level. Changes to the AQSH are approved by EC. Academic regulations are approved by RFC and by the University Research Degrees Committee (RDC) in the case of research degree regulations.

20. EC considers matters in relation to learning and teaching to ensure that full synergy is achieved between quality assurance and enhancement activities. Responsibility for fulfilling procedural requirements is devolved to faculties. This devolution is coupled with associated central monitoring and evaluation by the University's deliberative structure.