Guidance CG (vii) - Writing

Course Handbooks

2024-25

[COLLABORATIVE PROVISION ONLY

All KU-based provision should supply course handbooks via the template now available in Canvas]

1   Introduction

Kingston University currently provides information to students at three broad levels:

- **Institution level**: containing generic University level information (for example, the virtual learning environment Canvas);
- **Faculty level**: containing generic Faculty information (for example, the student diaries produced in FBSS and ECE); and
- **Course level**

There is no intention to specify precisely how course handbooks are presented, however, it is intended that all students should receive standard items of information. This template sets out, in the form of headings, the minimum level of information that students are entitled to receive be they studying at KU or at a collaborative partner. The format and presentation of this information is at the discretion of the Partner.

 Any prompts (shaded in grey) must be removed as you add your text. You can add extra pages or headings as you see fit.

1.1 - The Purpose of the Course Handbook

The purpose of the Course Handbook is to provide essential information to students about their course and its content; it should foster amongst students a sense of pride and belonging to their course community.

Principles for the preparation of course handbooks

- The term '*course*' handbook must be universally used, distinguishing it from other forms of information provided to students throughout their study;
- The provision of a course handbook for all taught provision is mandatory;
- The standard information contained in this guide is used for all course handbooks. The presentation of the material itself is at the discretion of the partner.
- The course handbook must always be made available in electronic form via the VLE used by the Partner.
- Hard copies of the course handbook can also be provided should the partner feel that this is appropriate.

1.2 - Best practice in producing course handbooks

When producing course handbooks authors should bear in mind the following. The course handbook should:

- Be student focused and student friendly. It should not assume that students are familiar with common HE/KU terminology;

- Be visually engaging, including images where possible;

- Remain course focused throughout;

- Not be too long;

- Not attempt to represent or reinterpret University or partner standard information (for example the Undergraduate or Postgraduate Regulations), instead links to the relevant University or partner website(s) should be provided.

2 - Course Handbooks and Collaborative Provision

It is a University requirement that student course handbooks for collaborative provision are produced as part of the initial validation documentation (see section C of the AQSH). It is expected that students studying for a KU degree at a partner institution will receive the core information outlined in this document, albeit supplemented by information relevant to the partner.

Student access to KU resources and services is dependent on the type of collaborative provision (see Guidance BG (vi) in the AQSH) - this will be further defined in the Institutional Agreement. The course handbook should make explicit what access partner students have to university facilities. If you are unsure of the category of your provision, please contact your University Liaison Officer or Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE).

A standard item in the course handbook is identification of the route for students to make either a complaint or an appeal. For provision offered by a collaborative partner it is important that the handbook makes clear how students should go about making either a complaint or an appeal and the means by which it will be investigated (see Guidance BG (iv) in the AQSH).

The Course Handbook

Some of the headings below are accompanied by a series of prompts (shaded in grey) – **these must be removed when the handbook is written**.

1. Welcome

This is normally an informal welcome from the Course Director or Head of Department/School. It should be a positive message which fosters student aspirations, makes clear that the University has high expectations of its students, emphasises that support is available to students and encourages them to make the most of the opportunities available to them throughout their time at the Institution.

2. Your Course

Course aims

Intended learning outcomes

How you will be taught/learn

Study Abroad and Industrial Placement (if applicable)

What you will study

List the modules and assessment*s here*

Important information about assessment

Missed Assessment - Mitigating Circumstances

Mitigating circumstances for coursework

Mitigating circumstances for exams/tests

Reassessment

Academic misconduct

Your responsibility to avoid plagiarism and academic misconduct

3. Your degree

Include one of the following statements either A), B) or C), as appropriate for your provision. Note: revisions to this standard text may be required if there are any approved variants from the regulations

A) Your Foundation Degree

Undergraduate Regulations

How your degree is classified

Award Predictor

B) Your Undergraduate Degree

The Undergraduate Regulations

How your degree is classified

Award Predictor

Other Undergraduate qualifications

Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)

C) Your Postgraduate Degree

Postgraduate Regulations

Classification of your award

Variations

Award Predictor

4. Resources

Describe the local resources to support student learning e.g. library, electronic resources, IT facilities, specialist equipment and/or spaces. Where applicable also describe any KU resources/services that students are entitled to access (see Guidance BG(vi) in the AQSH). Please check with the Liaison Officer and/or QAE if you are unsure whether students at the partner will have access to KU resources.

5. Course Based Support

Describe the local student support *e.g. faculty student support, academic support*. Where applicable also describe any KU resources/services that students may be entitled to access (see Guidance *BG (vi)* in the AQSH). Please check with the Liaison Officer and/or QAE if you are unsure whether students at the partner will have access to KU resources.

6. Other Types of Support

Describe the support available at the partner. This might include, for example, accommodation, careers, mental health and wellbeing services.

7. Fairness in Assessment

How do I know that the marking process is fair and impartial?

The role of the External Examiner

8. Careers and Employability

Employability statement

Explain how the course will help students' employability. Include information about the jobs that students could do upon successful completion of the course.

Careers support

The nature of careers support at a collaborative partner should be described. Specify whether students have access to KU resources (check with your Liaison Officer or QAE if you are unsure).

Self-Employment & Entrepreneurship

9. Getting Involved

Describe the opportunities available at the partner. This might include, for example, being a course representative or taking part in enrichment activities.

10.   How can we work together

Describe the ways in which students can provide formal and informal feedback on their experience.

11.   How to Contact Us

Include:

- *Where the course team are based (i.e. building and campus)*

- *Names of key academic and administrative staff – e.g. Course Director, Module Leader, Course Administrator or equivalent roles*

- *How to contact academic and administrative staff – office hours, e-mail addresses, phone numbers*

12.   How do I raise an issue?

Make clear how students should go about making either a complaint or an appeal and the means for it to be investigated (see Guidance BG (iv) in the AQSH).

13.   Staying in Touch

Make clear that students should check their e-mail regularly and ensure that their contact details are correct. Include details of students' responsibility to stay in touch while they are studying, what they need to frequently check and access e.g. emails, VLE.

Include details of Alumni Association.

14.   Changes that might affect your course

Option Module Availability

Core Module Availability

Module and Course changes

Change of Course Title

Course Closure

Students interrupting courses

Changes to the Academic and General Regulations

Significant material changes are any changes to:

- Course/award title
- Entry criteria
- Length of course
- Accreditation details
- Location of course (and work placements if applicable) delivery
- Total course costs

Other material changes are:

- Overall balance of how you get taught, i.e. between lectures, other scheduled learning, and self-study time
- Overall balance of the different types of assessments, i.e. exams, coursework, and practical examination
- The module diet for your course, i.e. list of cores (you have to take) and optional (you can choose to take) modules
- Particular terms on your course, i.e. anything in your course which does not follow standard University regulations