Academic Quality and Standards Handbook

Section 1: Quality and Standards Framework

2019/20
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

1.1.1 The University of West London (‘UWL’) is an autonomous degree-awarding body responsible for:

(a) The standard of the awards and qualifications granted in its name; and

(b) The quality of the courses that lead to those awards and qualifications.

1.1.2 To meet its responsibilities, UWL’s Quality and Standards Framework must comply with the Office for Students (OfS) Conditions B of registration and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Code for Higher Education, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered (including through an academic partnership)1:

1.1.3 The purpose of the Quality and Standards framework is to ensure that we are monitoring quality and standards appropriately and giving the Board of Governors appropriate assurance so that it can in turn provide assurances to the OfS. As the framework is risk based, it will identify areas deemed to be most at risk and take appropriate action.

2. OFS CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

2.1 Condition B1

The provider must deliver well designed courses that provide a high quality academic experience for all students and enable a student’s achievement to be reliably assessed

Associated behaviours:

- The provider designs and/or delivers high quality courses.
- The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high quality academic experience.
- The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high quality academic experience.
- Where the provider offers research degrees, they deliver these in

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1 This section is informed by the key values underpinning the UK Quality Code, and the ongoing conditions of registration for the Office for Students.
appropriate and supportive research environments.

- Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.

### 2.2 Condition B2

The provider must provide all students, from admission through to completion, with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education

**Associated behaviours:**

- The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.
- The data for the provider published under the transparency condition suggest that there is fair access to the provider’s courses for students from all backgrounds.
- The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.
- The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.
- Student continuation and qualification data suggests that the provider has a reliable and fair admission system that results in students from all backgrounds being matched to appropriate courses and provided with the support necessary for a high quality academic experience and successful completion.
- The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

NOTE: This section is covered through compliance with the University’s Admissions Policy.

### 2.3 Condition B3

The provider must deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers and/or enable further study

**Associated behaviours:**

- The outcomes achieved by the provider’s students meet a minimum acceptable baseline set by the OfS.
- The outcomes achieved by the provider’s students suggest that students from all backgrounds are able to succeed.

### 2.4 Condition B4

The provider must ensure that qualifications awarded to students hold their value at the point of qualification and over time, in line with sector recognised standards.

**Associated behaviours:**

- The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are
reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

- The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.
- Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.

2.5 **Condition B5**

The provider must deliver courses that meet the academic standards as they are described in the FHEQ at Level 4 or higher

Associated behaviours:
- The provider ensures that the threshold standards for their qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications framework.

2.6 **Condition B6**

The provider must participate in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)

3. **QAA QUALITY CODE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

3.1 **Standards**

S1) The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.

S2) The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

S3) Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.

S4) The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent

3.2 **Quality**

Q1) The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system

Q2) The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses

Q3) The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience

Q4) The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience
Q5) The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

Q6) The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

Q7) Where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments.

Q8) Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.

Q9) The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

4. PRINCIPLES AND CONTEXT

4.1 Principles

4.1.1 The Academic Quality and Standards Handbook outlines processes and procedures to support and ensure the effective and efficient implementation of processes to support student achievement of academic standards and high quality learning experience.

4.1.2 Each of the processes and procedures is underpinned by the UWL principles of quality management. These principles are:

(a) Principle 1: Education is Collaborative

Students, staff, professional bodies, academic partners, employers and local communities are all valuable stakeholders of higher education. The standards and quality of UWL qualifications are ensured when all stakeholders are - individually and collectively - sharing the development, assurance and enhancement of the educational experience – in sharing the development, assurance and enhancement of the educational experience.

(b) Principle 2: Value Professionalism

Standards and quality of UWL qualifications are ensured by the effective exercising of academic expertise and administrative professionalism. Appropriate documentation of robust dialogue between expert peers, students and wider stakeholders provides the basis for efficient and effective quality assurance and enhancement.
(c) Principle 3: Focus on Efficiency and Transparency

Clear value from and impact of all quality assurance activities undertaken will be sought. To achieve this all UWL staff, must be open and honest with all stakeholders when something that goes wrong has the potential to cause disruption, harm or distress in the education journey. Equally, all UWL staff should seek to share and learn from good practice in order to continually enhance the student experience.

(d) Principle 4: Make Inclusivity Deliberate and Informed

Schools/Colleges encourage and promote evidenced-based enhancement which seeks to develop a learning environment and curriculum from which students are supported to achieve outcomes which are unaffected by their background or prior educational achievement.

4.2 Values

4.2.1 The UWL Quality and Standards Framework is underpinned by the following values:

(a) Students are treated fairly, equitably, and are supported by well qualified staff to access, succeed in, and progress from their chosen UWL qualification.

(b) Students - irrespective of their background - receive a high quality academic experience, in line with the standards and quality expressed by the national frameworks.

(c) Students are properly and actively informed at appropriate times of all matters relevant to their course of study.

(d) Students, employers, external experts and wider professional groups have the opportunity to shape the standards and quality of UWL learning experiences including actively promoting innovation and creativity.

4.2.2 UWL believes it must ensure courses - whether delivered solely by UWL or in partnership – have undertaken and clearly documented:

(a) Systematic, strategic and informed approval for delivery;

(b) Routine monitoring, review and updating informed by robust data and information; and 5-year review

(c) Ongoing constructive and expert dialogue with all stakeholders (students, employers, professional bodies) regarding the structure and impact of initiatives for enhancing academic standards and quality.

4.3 Roles to support Quality and Standards
4.3.1 To support the implementation of the UWL Quality and Standards Framework, it is important to ensure that there are appropriate levels of consistency across Schools/Colleges, and courses. To assist with this, the Academic Quality and Standards Handbook has taken a role based approach which seeks to provide clarity on responsibility and accountability.

4.3.2 These roles are:

(a) Dean/Director/Head of School/College
(b) School/College Academic Quality Lead
(c) Course Leader
(d) Module Leader
(e) Academic Partnership Link Tutor
(f) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Assessor
(g) Student Representative
(h) External Examiner

4.3.3 Each of these roles will undergo initial training upon appointment and receive an initial targeted package of support to undertake their role. For some roles, there will be an additional annual cycle of licensing to ensure their knowledge and skills are up-to-date and continues to provide the assurance of standards and quality required by the University.

4.4 Scope

4.4.1 The Quality and Standards Framework applies to all courses and modules that are delivered directly by the University, as well as those operated in academic partnership with external institutions (i.e. jointly delivered courses, or courses that are validated by the University of West London for delivery by an external institution).

4.4.2 In the case of academic partnerships, the relevant Academic Quality Lead and Academic Partnership Link Tutor must all work with the partner/s to ensure that the course/module operates in accordance with the most recent version of the Global Partnerships Operations Manual. The role of the Academic Quality Lead is to advise the Academic Partnership Link Tutor and the Dean/Director/Head of School /College must monitor all aspects of the partnership in collaboration with the Global Partnerships Office

4.4.3 The requirements for School/Colleges, individual courses or modules may be altered and ‘enhanced’ depending upon the level of risk assessed to student outcomes or experience. This is explained in Section 6 of the Academic Quality and Standards Handbook.
4.5 Terms

4.5.1 To ensure that the expectations of School/Colleges, students and staff are clear the following verbs are adopted and highlighted in the text:

(a) **Must**: indicates a process that *is always undertaken* in all circumstances. Exceptions will only be granted by the Academic Board in exceptional circumstances. For example “Students **must** receive feedback on all assessed work”.

(b) **Should**: indicates a process that *is usually undertaken* in all usual circumstances. It may be altered if there are sound pedagogical, practical, or regulatory reasons which prevent adhering to the statement or it is part of a ‘pilot’ scheme approved by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee. For example “Students **should** be provided with timetables at the start of each module indicating when coursework will be set, and when it is to be submitted”.

(c) **May**: indicates a process that *is discretionary* but Schools/Colleges are expected to demonstrate that taking the action has been considered, and alternative actions are well-justified (the “comply or explain” principle). For example “A standard template for student feedback **may** be developed to ensure consistency of feedback across all modules and assessment methods”. **May** is used as an indication of the UWL collective view on good practice.

5. UWL GOVERNANCE OF QUALITY AND STANDARDS

5.1 Board of Governors

5.1.1 The Board of Governors receive regular updates on quality and standards through the Audit and Risk Sub-committee and from Academic Board via its minutes and, student liaison via its deliberations on student satisfaction.

5.1.2 In addition, the assurances are provided to the Board of Governors by means of the appropriate, verified data to assess the University’s performance as follows:

(a) Graduate employment;

(b) Progression to professional jobs and postgraduate study;

(c) Student retention levels;

(d) Student completion levels;

(e) Student recruitment levels;

(f) Degree outcomes;
(g)  Student entry requirements/ UCAS tariff data;

(h)  National Student Survey results;

(i)  Number of complaints to the OIA.

5.2  University Committees

5.2.1  The governance of quality and standards is managed through the seven key deliberate Committees/Groups/Boards. All have Students’ Union Representation:

(a)  Academic Board
(b)  Academic Quality and Standards Committee
(c)  Education Committee
(d)  University Research, Scholarship and Enterprise Committee
(e)  School Boards
(f)  Academic Partnerships Committee
(g)  Further Education and Apprenticeships Board
(h)  Equality and Diversity Advisory Group
(i)  Academic Regulations Review Committee
Academic Quality and Standards Handbook

Section 2: Qualifications and Curriculum Framework

2019/20
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Aims

1.1.1 This section describes the structures and curriculum requirements of courses leading to qualifications of the University of West London (UWL).

1.1.2 This section applies to all courses within UWL whether credit-bearing or not, with the exception of Research Courses.

1.1.3 All UWL qualifications and standalone modules must be aligned with the UWL Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (UWL-QCF) that is in force at the time that the course is approved. Some future changes to the UWL-QCF may affect all UWL courses and modules and should this be required the Academic Quality and Standards Office will manage the process to ensure that the amendments are made to the correct elements.

1.1.4 The aim of the Framework is to ensure that the University meets the obligations and expectations of its staff, students and regulators by:

(a) Promoting a shared and common understanding of UWL qualifications across the University and Academic Partnerships;

(b) To promote consistency in the use of qualifications and credit across UWL Schools/Colleges and Academic Partnerships;

(c) Providing a common reference point for setting and assessing academic standards when designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing courses of study and modules;

(d) To ensure that UWL qualifications are of an academic standard at least consistent with the standards referred to in the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ);

(e) To communicate to employers, schools, prospective students, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and other stakeholders the achievements represented by the qualifications of UWL; and

(f) To inform national and international comparability of academic standards.

This section applies to:

Courses
- Further Education ×
- Non-Award ×
- Undergraduate (inc. Apprenticeships) ✓
- Postgraduate Taught (inc. Apprenticeships) ✓
- Postgraduate Research ✓

Academic Partnerships
- Subcontracted UK ✓
- Subcontracted Non-UK ✓
- Validated Non-OfS Registered ×
- Validated OfS Registered ×
2. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 In line with national statements on academic standards, UWL uses the following terminology to describe its qualifications:

- **Award** means a degree, diploma, certificate or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the academic standards expressed by a level of the UK FHEQ. An example of an award is Bachelor of Arts with honours, expressed as BA (Hons)

- **Course of Study** means an approved sequence of study (usually broken into modules) that provides a coherent learning experience and includes details of curriculum and assessment in a discipline or field of study. An example of a course of study is Media Communications

- **Qualification** means an award granted on successful completion of a course of study which expresses both a level and a discipline or field of study, so for the example above the qualification would be BA (Hons) Media Communications

- **Degree** means an award that represents the achievement of a full-cycle under the Qualifications Frameworks in the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).

2.2 National Reference Points: terminology

2.2.1 The **Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)** describes the UK agreed threshold academic standards, ie the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for the award of academic credit or a qualification

2.2.2 **Characteristics Statements** describe the distinctive features of an award at a particular level within the Qualifications Framework. They focus on the particular purpose, general characteristics and generic outcomes of a given award.

2.2.3 **Subject Benchmark Statements** describe what knowledge and skills give a discipline its coherence and identity (academic characteristics) and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities and skills needed to develop understanding or competence in the subject.

2.2.4 All the above are available at: [https://www.qaa.ac.uk/](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/)

2.3 Categories of awards

2.3.1 There are different categories of awards within the UWL-QCF.
2.3.2 The category of award provides information about the general approaches to admissions, learning, teaching, assessment and accreditation, and the emphasis of the outcomes within the course.

2.3.3 The descriptions below of categories of award are intended to be advisory rather than definitive in the choice of award, as practice may differ in specific disciplines. However, consideration of the choice of category of award must take place during the approval of a course or module.

2.3.4 **Category 1: Research degrees**

This category of awards prepares students for further academic study, particularly further research-based study or research-based employment.

- Entrants will usually be limited to students who have previous study in the same subject or discipline to a level which enables research-based study.
- Learning, teaching and assessment is usually offered through individualised learning environments and opportunities (‘supervision’)
- Assessment usually includes an individualised approach with significant oral / discursive examination.

*Examples include: MPhil, or PhD. At UWL, currently no Category 1 awards are offered at undergraduate level.*

2.3.5 **Category 2: Specialised study degrees**

This category of awards prepares students for their careers through subject-specific study.

- Entrants will usually have previous study at a preparatory level but may be from outside the subject or discipline area depending on the structure and content of the course.
- Learning, teaching and assessment is usually offered in group environments, and through timetabled ‘contact hours’ and independent or guided study (‘taught’).
- Assessment usually includes set tasks which are specific to a set of knowledge or skills developed in learning and teaching.

*Examples include: BA (Hons), FdA, MA, MSc.*

2.3.6 **Category 3: Professional or practice degrees**

This category of awards enables graduates to enter into a profession, or provides development opportunities related to particular professions or employment settings.
• Entrants will usually have previous study at a preparatory level and be required to undertake additional assessments or complete other requirements related to the discipline or subject prior to entry.

• Learning, teaching and assessment is usually developed in collaboration with a Professional, Statutory, or Regulatory Body, and employers; and includes significant practical elements such as placements or work experience which facilitate structured or guided professional development to different-levels of a professional career.

• Assessment usually includes significant professional work and is sometimes recognised as achievement of professional standards as well as achievement of academic standards.

*Examples include: LLB (Hons), BEng (Hons), MBA*

### 2.4 UWL Awards

#### Undergraduate

**Level 3 Awards (outside the FHEQ)**

• Certificate of Achievement at Level 3

**Level 4 Awards**

• Certificate in Higher Education (Cert HE)

**Level 5 Awards**

• Diploma in Higher Education (Dip HE)
• Foundation Degree of Art (FdA)
• Foundation Degree of Science (FdSc)
• Foundation Degree of Engineering (FdEng)

**Level 6 Awards**

*Ordinary and Honours Degrees*

• Bachelor of Arts (BA or BA (Hons))
• Bachelor of Science (BSc or BSc (Hons))
• Bachelor of Engineering (BEng or BEng (Hons))
• Bachelor of Laws (LLB or LLB (Hons))
• Bachelor of Nursing (BNurs or BNurs (Hons))
- Bachelor of Music (BMus or BMus (Hons))

Graduate Certificates and Diplomas

- Graduate Certificate (Grad Cert)
- Graduate Diploma (Grad Dip)

Level 7 Awards

Integrated Masters Degrees

- Master of Science (MSci)
- Master of Engineering (MEng)

Postgraduate

Level 7 Awards

Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas

- Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)
- Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)

Masters Degrees (Taught)

- Master of Arts (MA)
- Master of Science (MSc)
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master of Education (MEd)
- Master of Higher Education (MHEd)
- Master of Laws (LLM)
- Master of Music (MMus)

Masters Degrees (Research)

- Master of Philosophy (MPhil) only as an exit award to the PhD or Doctorates

Level 8 Awards

Doctoral Degrees (Taught)

- Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA)
- Doctorate of Education (EdD)
• Doctorate of Nursing (DNurs)
• Doctorate of Midwifery (DMidwifery)
• Doctorate of Health Science (DHSc)
• Doctorate of Policing and Security (DPolSec)
• Doctorate of Music (DMus)

*Doctoral Degrees (Research)*

• Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

2.5 Interim and Exit Awards

2.5.1 For the all main award types, the University automatically confers an 'exit award' to students who have successfully completed a defined portion of the course but who are unable to complete the full award on which they enrolled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching degree types</th>
<th>CertHE</th>
<th>DipHE</th>
<th>Foundation Degree</th>
<th>Ordinary Degree</th>
<th>Honours Degree</th>
<th>PGCert</th>
<th>PGDip</th>
<th>MPhil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>3yr Honours Degree</td>
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<td>Masters Degree</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated Masters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taught Doctorates and PhDs (default)</td>
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</table>

2.5.2 During the process of developing a new course Schools/Colleges must confirm the exit awards to be made available; this is set up via the Academic Registry following approval.

2.5.3 In exceptional cases, Schools/Colleges may request that the standard exit awards relating to an overarching degree are not conferred to students e.g. in the case of professionally accredited courses where completion of the entire course is required to access relevant jobs. Such proposals must be made in the Business Case (Business Approval) Form (CA1).
2.5.4 Exit awards at the level of BA, BSc etc. and higher may be made available for direct application by students. In such cases the awards are referred to as 'enrollable awards'. Such proposals must be made in the Business Case (Business Approval) form (CA1).

2.5.5 The title of exit/enrollable awards will be identical to the overarching degree, unless to meet the requirements of a PSRB.

3. LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The Level Descriptors describe the depth and complexity of each level of study and outline the academic skills, amount of prior knowledge and amount of learner autonomy required to pass a course or module at that level.

3.1.2 The descriptors are closely aligned to the FHEQ and, together with the more discipline-specific Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statements, should be used as a reference point in the development of qualifications, courses and modules, and for the determination of local marking criteria.

3.2 Descriptor for Level 3

3.2.1 Students successfully completing courses or modules at this level will have demonstrated:

(a) A skills base of conceptual and factual knowledge with some appreciation of the field of study and of terminology used

(b) An ability to apply those skills independently in a range of complex activities or with guidance when working with greater complexity.

3.3 Descriptor for Level 4

3.3.1 Students successfully completing courses or modules at this level will have demonstrated:

(a) Knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their field of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that field

(b) An ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with the basic theories and concepts of their field of study.

3.4 Descriptor for Level 5
3.4.1 Students successfully completing courses or modules at this level will have demonstrated:

(a) Knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their field of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed

(b) An ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context

(c) Knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the field of study

(d) An ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study

(e) An understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations which might be based on that knowledge.

3.5 Descriptor for Level 6

3.5.1 Students successfully completing courses or modules at this level will have demonstrated:

(a) A systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including the acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the field

(b) An ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within the field of study

(c) A conceptual understanding that enables the student to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of the field of study

(d) A conceptual understanding that enables the student to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the field of study

(e) An appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge

(f) An ability to manage their own learning

(g) An ability to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the field of study).

3.6 Descriptor for Level 7
3.6.1 Students successfully completing courses or modules at this level will have demonstrated:

(a) A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their field

(b) A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship

(c) Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the field

(d) A conceptual understanding that enables the student to critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in the field

(e) A conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

3.7 Descriptor for Level 8

3.7.1 Students successfully completing courses or modules at this level will have demonstrated:

(a) An ability to create and interpret new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the field, and merit publication

(b) A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice

(c) An ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, application or understanding at the forefront of the field, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems

(d) A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry

4. UWL CREDIT STRUCTURE

4.1.1 All taught courses should align with the credit framework.

4.1.2 The credit framework requires courses and their component modules to be described in terms of their level (i.e. difficulty) of study, and their credit volume (i.e. the
notional time/learning hours needed for the associated teaching, private study, reflection and assessment).

4.1.3 As a general guide 1 credit equates to 10 hours of notional learning.

4.1.4 A base of 20 credits per module or multiples thereof is required unless prevented by professional body requirements.

4.1.5 In addition to the credit volume of the course overall, each award specifies the minimum amount of credit that has to be achieved at a particular level in order for a student to be eligible for the particular award (see table overleaf).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher Education Awards</th>
<th>FHEQ level of award</th>
<th>Minimum total credits for award</th>
<th>Minimum credits at the level of the award</th>
<th>FQ-EHEA cycles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Not typically credit-rated</td>
<td></td>
<td>End of third cycle qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Doctorates (e.g. EdD, DBA, DClinPsy)</td>
<td></td>
<td>540</td>
<td>360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research master's degree (e.g. MPhil, MLitt)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not typically credit-rated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taught MPhil</td>
<td></td>
<td>360</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>End of second cycle qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended master's degree (e.g. MFA)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taught master's degree (e.g. MA, MSc, MRes)</td>
<td></td>
<td>180</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated master's degree (e.g. MEng)</td>
<td></td>
<td>480</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate diploma</td>
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<td>120</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postgraduate certificate</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree with honours (e.g. BA Hons)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>End of first cycle qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate diploma</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate certificate</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Degree (e.g. FdA, FdSc)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Short cycle qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)</td>
<td></td>
<td>240</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of Achievement at L3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **THRESHOLD QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

5.1.1 The UWL Threshold Qualification Requirements (TQRs) describe the common structural components expected of each course of study leading to a particular UWL qualification.

5.1.2 A course should be approved in accordance with the UWL-TQRs, however they may diverge for example where a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requires it.

5.2 **Certificate of Achievement at Level 3**

5.2.1 Certificate of Achievement at Level 3 should include:

(a) At least 40 credits of modules related to the development of academic skills in preparation for learning at Level 4.

(b) At least 40 credits of modules relevant to the named qualification to which the preparatory certificate is attached.

(c) A range of specified progression routes including at least one identified honours degree course.

5.3 **Foundation Degrees (Level 5)**

5.3.1 Foundation Degrees should include:

(a) At least 40 credits at each level (4 and 5) of work-based or placement learning with extensive time in workplaces relevant to the qualification.

(b) Explicit reference and mapping, where available, to national occupational standards; sector skills foundation degree frameworks; professional body accreditation schemes; and apprenticeship standards, in addition to the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Standards.

(c) A 20 credit module at Level 5 covering the main methods of enquiry and research relevant to the discipline or subject area.

(d) A range of specified progression routes including at least one identified honours degree course.

5.4 **Honours Degrees (Level 6)**

5.4.1 Honours degrees should include:

(a) No unseen examinations at Level 4 unless required by an accrediting Professional Regulatory and Statutory Body;

(b) A 20 credit module at Level 5 covering the main methods of enquiry and research relevant to the discipline or subject area.
(c) A 40 credit dissertation or professional project at Level 6 which will produce a written or artistic product equivalent to 9000-10,000 words.

(d) Additionally, where the course includes a placement, this should be in accordance with the Quality Framework for Work Based learning (https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance), UKVI compliance (https://www.uwl.ac.uk/international/visas-and-immigration) and the UWL Placement and Employment Team checklist (Annex A of this section). A student enrolled on an Honours Degree with a Professional or Industry Placement where the placement is part the award (e.g. BSc Psychology (with placement)), will be reverted to the root award title (e.g. BSc Psychology) if they do not complete the placement.

5.5 Masters Degree (Level 7)

5.5.1 Masters degrees should include:

(a) A 20 credit module which ensures students have a comprehensive understanding of techniques (skills and methods) applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship.

(b) A 60 credit research element, either dissertation or professional project, which will produce a written or artistic product of the equivalence of 15,000 words.

(c) Additionally, where the course includes a placement or an internship, this should be in accordance with the Quality Framework for Work Based learning, UKVI compliance and the Placement and Employment Team checklist. A student enrolled on an Honours Degree with a Professional or Industry Placement where the placement is part the award (e.g. MSc Psychology (with placement)), will be reverted to the root award title (e.g. MSc Psychology) if they do not complete the placement.

6. QUALIFICATION TITLES

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 Public understanding of the achievements represented by higher education qualifications requires transparent and consistent use of qualification titles.

6.1.2 The course team must make sure that the title of any qualification accurately reflects the level of achievements, appropriately represents the nature, volume and field(s) of study undertaken and is not misleading.

6.2 Level
6.2.1 In order to ensure that qualification titles accurately convey information about the level of the qualification:

(a) The titles 'honours' (for example, Bachelor's degree with Honours), Masters (for example, Master of Arts) and Doctorate (for example, Doctor of Philosophy) are used only for qualifications that meet, in full, the expectations of the qualification descriptors at level 6, level 7 and level 8 on the FHEQ respectively.

(b) Titles with the stem 'graduate' (for example, 'Graduate Diploma') are used for qualifications from programmes of study that typically require graduate entry, or its equivalent, and have learning outcomes that match relevant parts of the descriptor for a qualification at level 6 on the FHEQ.

(c) Titles with the stem 'postgraduate' (for example, 'Postgraduate Diploma') are restricted to qualifications where the learning outcomes of the programme of study match relevant parts of the descriptor for a qualification at level 7 on the FHEQ.

6.3 Name

6.3.1 The name for the course of study should accurately reflect the content and discipline studied on the course.

6.3.2 Qualification titles that reflect the subject focus of course of study in two disciplines (for example, a joint honours qualification) adopt nomenclatures based on:

(a) 'A and B', where there is an equal balance between two components

(b) 'A with B' for a major/minor combination where the minor subject accounts for at least a third of the programme.

(c) Where there are more than three significant components, the title 'Combined Studies' is appropriate.

6.3.3 Use of the abbreviated titles PhD and DPhil is restricted to qualifications where assessment is solely by a final thesis or published work; or by artefact, composition or performance that is accompanied by a written commentary placing it in its academic context.

6.4 Pathways

6.4.1 Pathways are a particular type of variant. Within the confines of a course a named pathway can be created, whereby students complete a prescribed collection of modules. This would lead to the award of the standard award and title, with the pathway in parentheses or as a major/minor combination e.g. BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences (Animal Biology) or BSc (Hons) Psychology with Counselling. Multiple pathways must be contained within a single Course Specification.
6.4.2 A pathway with parentheses should use more than 2/3s of the same credit but be studied almost entirely within the specialism (including any placement activity). For a major/minor combination include at least two thirds of common credit from the parent course on which it is based although they may be taught within the specialism or not. This requirement applies to the course as a whole, with no stipulation regarding individual stages. Where there is less than two-thirds commonality in compulsory credit, the proposal should be treated as a new and separate course in its own right.

6.4.3 Pathways can operate in one of two ways. Both will result in the standard award and title with the pathway in parentheses or as a designated minor.

(a) Adjourned Pathways are those where students apply for and register on a generic course. Each participant’s eligibility for a pathway is then confirmed by the final Examination Board on the basis of the modules that have been completed.

Under this structure, students benefit from the opportunity to experience the course and identify their preferred elements, before deciding the pathway specialism that will appear on their final certificate. The different pathways will not show up during searches of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and other course listings.

Details of the available pathways can be articulated, however, in the text of the printed prospectus and webpages, once they have been approved by Course Quality and Approval Sub-Committee (CQASC) and reported to the Academic Quality and Standards Office.

With this type of pathway students must retain the choice to graduate with the standard award and title only (i.e. without a pathway in parentheses).

(b) Direct Entry Pathways require students to apply for and register on a specific pathway from the onset. It is anticipated that participants will remain on the pathway for the duration of their studies. Under this approach each pathway has unique identifying codes (including UCAS codes in the case of undergraduate offerings). Consequently, the pathway will be identified when individuals conduct searches involving the specialism word/s.

To ensure that Direct Entry Pathways are included in printed prospectuses and/or UCAS listings they should be approved by CQASC and reported to the Academic Quality and Standards Office as early as possible.
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<td>7.3</td>
<td>Non-award course (credit bearing) proposals</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 1 – Business Approval

Dean/Director
Head of School/College submits Business Case (CA1) to Vice-Chancellor’s Executive (VCE)

Step 2 – Course Design and Development: 3 mandatory* workshops

Course Development Lead attends Workshop 1: Preparing for Course Approval

Course Development Team (CDT) begins work on CA2

Step 2a

Step 2b
Workshop 1:
Preparing for Course Approval

Workshop 2:
Ensuring Well-designed Courses

CDT completes drafts of CA2-4 (+ CA5 if appropriate) and submits these to External Assessor(s) and Academic Quality and Standards Office

Step 2c
Workshop 3:
Ready for Approval Review

CDT and External Assessors attend Workshop 3: Ready for Approval Review

Step 3 – Final Approval

Dean/Director
Head of School/College submits Business Case (CA1) to Vice-Chancellor’s Executive (VCE)

Step 3a
Final Approval

Nominated member of Course Quality and Approval Subcommittee (CQASC) reviews documentation

Step 3 b
Response to Conditions and Recommendations

CDL revises documentation and resubmits to Academic Quality and Standards Office

*Where the PSRB requirements for accreditation involve the course development team engaging in a stringent course development process, to avoid duplication, participation in the workshop series outlined above may not be required. Please speak to AQSO for further guidance on whether this applies to you.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Aims

1.1.1 This section describes:
   a) How the University supports the design and development of a new course or module;
   b) How a new course or module is approved for delivery by the University or to be added to an existing course.

1.1.2 The aim of the course development and approval process is to ensure that the University meets the obligations and expectations of staff, students and regulators by:
   a) Using internal and external expertise to stimulate engagement which enhances the quality and sustainability of the University’s courses and modules (e.g. Wellbeing Teams, ExPERT Academy, External Subject Expertise, and engagement with PSRBs).
   b) Engaging students – individually and collectively – to encourage robust dialogue between expert peers, students and wider stakeholders on improving the educational experience within the University and its partners.
   c) Focusing on limiting “process for process sake”, and ensuring clear value and impact of each stage in the process of course and module approval.
   d) Responding to the individual circumstances of each course approval to ensure that all quality requirements are proportionate to the assessed risk being managed.

1.2 Regulation relevant to this chapter

1.2.1 The Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education relevant for course development and approval are:
   a) The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework
   b) The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.
c) Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student’s achievement to be reliably assessed.

d) From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

1.3 Responsibilities

1.3.1 Academic Board has the responsibility and authority to set, maintain and assure academic standards.

1.3.2 Course Quality and Approval Sub-Committee (CQASC) is a sub-committee of Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) and has the responsibility for the assurance of high-quality course design including ensuring that all courses have professional relevance and meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework. CQASC has delegated responsibility for the approval and re-approval of courses and modules of the University.

1.3.3 The Academic Quality and Standards Office (AQSO) is responsible for organising and managing the approval process for both courses and modules.

1.3.4 The Academic Quality Lead in each School/College is responsible for ensuring that colleagues observe the procedures and requirements.

1.3.5 A Course Leader or Lead Developer – identified for each course by the relevant School/College – is responsible for ensuring that any proposal for the approval of a new course represents a well-designed course. They are also responsible for giving assurance that the course has been developed through engagement with stakeholders including students, potential employers and External Assessor (Subject Expert).

1.3.6 External Assessors should be engaged in the final stage of the course development process and sign the course off – or make suggestions for changes - at the end of the process, before final approval by CQASC.

1.3.7 For courses requiring accreditation by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory bodies (PSRBs), a Course Approval Panel should to be arranged attended by the Director of Quality Assurance or their nominee before final approval by CQASC.

1.4 Interpretation

1.4.1 This document refers to named positions (e.g. Academic Quality Lead, Deans/Directors/Heads of School/College) in order to detail required activities or authorisations.

1.4.2 Where a department does not have the identified position an alternative must be identified, with comparable seniority and remit, such that all required activities or authorisations are undertaken.
1.5 **Further Guidance**

1.5.1 For further guidance colleagues **should** make early contact with the AQSO (e.g. enquiries regarding non-standard courses) at quality@uwl.ac.uk or on 020 8231 2116.

1.5.2 Where a proposal involves an academic partnership with an external institution, the School/College concerned **should** ensure they contact both the AQSO, and the Global Partnership Office at TNEadmin@uwl.ac.uk or on 020 8231 2749 at the earliest opportunity.

### 2. OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS

#### 2.1 Stages of process

2.1.1 The design, development and approval process for all new courses **should** comprise three stages: Business Approval, Course Design and Development, and Final Approval.

2.1.2 NB Stage 1 required for new courses only, stages 2 and 3 required for both new courses and re-approvals.

2.1.3 Exceptions to the model outlined below (workshop series) will be considered for some courses, normally those which are accredited by PSRBs or are seeking accreditation. See section 4.3 for further details.

2.1.4 Forms:

- **CA1** Business Case (Business Approval) including operational endorsement and VCE endorsement
- **CA2** Course Design and Development Report (CDDR)
- **CA3** Course Specification
- **CA4** Module Specification
- **CA5** Mapping Document (for apprenticeships or courses with PSRB accreditation)
- **CA6** External Assessor’s Report
- **CA7** Employer’s Report (Apprenticeships only)
- **CA8** Course Approval Outcomes
  - Integrated Placement/Internship Checklist*

*The Integrated Placement/Internship Checklist **must** be completed for any course with Placement/Internship/Work Experience/Work-Based Learning. The same checklist is used for Course Approval and Amendment of Courses (and modules).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Responsible person / office</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Authorising Body</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Approval</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Dean/Director/Head of School/College</td>
<td>Submits Business Case (CA1) to Vice-Chancellor’s Executive (VCE)</td>
<td>Vice-Chancellor’s Executive (VCE)</td>
<td>Reject or Approve (CA1), if approved proceed to Step 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em><em>Course Design and Development. 3 mandatory</em> workshops</em>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2a</td>
<td>Course Development Lead (CDL)</td>
<td>CDL attends Workshop 1: Preparing for Course Approval led by Academic Quality and Standards Office (AQSO) (other team members welcome). Begin work on CA2</td>
<td>Academic Quality Lead (AQL)</td>
<td>Confirm attendance - Proceed to Workshop 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2b</td>
<td>Course Development Lead (CDL)</td>
<td>Course Development Team (CDT) complete online tasks and attend Workshop 2: Ensuring Well-designed Courses led by ExPERT Academy. Complete drafts of CA2-4 + CA5 if appropriate) and submit to External Assessor(s) and AQSO</td>
<td>Academic Quality Lead (AQL)</td>
<td>Confirm attendance and check drafts - Proceed to Workshop 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2c</td>
<td>AQL in liaison with AQSO</td>
<td>CDT and External Assessors (EAs) attend Workshop 3: Ready for Approval Review led by AQSO. Finalise CA1-CA7 (as appropriate) in response to recommendations of EA and others and submit to AQSO</td>
<td>Dean/Director/Head of School/College</td>
<td>School/College endorsement - Proceed to Step 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Approval</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3a</td>
<td>AQSO</td>
<td>Final Approval: 3 members of CQASC and Students’ Union Representative review documentation (1 member is Lead Reader)</td>
<td>CQASC</td>
<td>Approve, Approve with conditions and/or recommendations, Refer, Reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3b</td>
<td>Dean/Director/Head of School/College</td>
<td>Response to Conditions and Recommendations: CDL revises documentation and resubmits to AQSO</td>
<td>External Assessor(s) and Lead Reader of original CQASC committee</td>
<td>Approve, Refer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Where the PSRB requirements for accreditation involve the course development team engaging in a stringent course development process, to avoid duplication, participation in the workshop series*
outlined above may not be required. Please speak to AQSO for further guidance on whether this applies to you.

2.1.5 Criteria for a well-designed course

In approving a course, the authorising body and individuals responsible should certify that the approved qualification and curriculum:

a) Involves an External Assessor who contributes to final stage of development and will sign off final version submitted to CQASC, and any subsequent conditions made by CQASC.

b) Clearly articulates outcomes – for each enrollable and exit qualification – which meet the threshold standards set by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

c) Clearly articulates how the course enables students to achieve standards beyond the threshold level in line with similar qualifications (for example, grading guidelines).

d) Clearly articulates how the course enables students to achieve the UWL graduate attributes and aligns with the University strategies and mission.

e) Clearly articulates criteria for admission that enables a reliable and fair opportunity for all students – regardless of background – to achieve the outcomes of the course within the study hours and mode of study of the course.

f) Clearly articulates how the outcomes of the course – both at threshold standard and above – will be reliably assessed and student achievements recognised.

g) Clearly articulates the qualifications and skills – subject specific, professional, and pedagogic – needed by the course team to deliver a high-quality experience.

h) Clearly articulates the facilities, learning resources and student support services needed by the course team to deliver a high-quality experience.

i) Clearly articulates how internal and external stakeholders (current staff, students, alumni, employers, and where appropriate PSRBs) have been engaged in the development and design of the course including in the setting of standards.

j) Clearly articulates the research and scholarship environment that the course will be based in, and how this contributes to the stretch and rigour provided by the course.

k) Clearly articulates how the course supports all students – regardless of background and study choice – to achieve the outcomes both at threshold standard and above.
2.1.6 The above should be cross-referenced with Section 5 of the AQSH on Assessment.

2.2 Definitive Course Documentation: Course Specifications and Module Specifications

2.2.1 Each course and module must be documented by a complete Course or Module Specification.

2.2.2 These documents:

   a) Form the basis of the legal contract between the University and its students.

   b) Provide academic and professional colleagues with the course and module details.

   c) Provide the basis for fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy marketing materials.

2.2.3 Information provided to future and current students must adhere to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) ‘UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law’ to ensure that:

   a) The University provides students with accurate information about our courses or modules and any associated costs at each stage of our dealings with them. This includes when they are researching the course prior to application, at the offer stage, and when they enrol and re-enrol with the University.

   b) The University ensures that course and module information remains accurate and up to date, that once a student has applied for a place any changes to course or module information has the express consent of all students affected; and

   c) The University specifically flags to offer holders and current students any terms and conditions that are particularly noteworthy or otherwise important.

2.2.4 Therefore, all staff involved in course or module development must use the latest templates as older templates may not include all relevant fields.

2.2.5 The latest templates and the current course and module specifications are held by the AQSO.

2.3 Cross School/College courses

2.3.1 Some courses may be jointly developed and delivered by two or more Schools/Colleges e.g. combined, major/minor and joint honours courses.

2.3.2 To avoid confusion and undue effort, milestones in the approvals process should not be duplicated (e.g. submission of documents to the AQSO, engagement with an External Assessor, etc.).
2.3.3 The lead School/College, as designated on the Business Case (CA1), **should** direct activities. Nonetheless, at key stages all School/College(s) involved **must** confirm all decisions by providing signatures as directed on the form.

2.4 Variants on Existing Courses

2.4.1 Variants provide a mechanism for expediting the creation of new courses where much of the content has been scrutinised as part of an earlier approval process. Variants, and the parent course on which they are based, **should** share a single Course Specification.

2.4.2 Most variants are treated as major amendments to an existing course (e.g., mode of study or with placement), with the requirements for approval stipulated in Section 4 of the AQSH on Amending Courses.

2.4.3 The AQSO will liaise with Academic Registry to make appropriate amendments to the University’s information management and student record systems, and will inform other professional services as appropriate (e.g., Strategic Planning, Admissions).

2.4.4 Other proposals may also be considered variants. If you are unsure staff **should** contact the AQSO at the earliest opportunity, for guidance on the appropriate procedures.

2.5 Timings

2.5.1 In most instances, maximal exposure of the course on UCAS and in University publicity materials will be important for recruitment and to support student achievement on the course.

2.5.2 To facilitate this, the course approval process **should** ideally be completed nine months prior to commencement of the course. Approval of the Business Case **must** be achieved before Step 2c of the course design and development process, Workshop 3: Ready for Approval Review/Course Approval Panel.

2.5.3 Therefore, although Business Cases **may** be submitted for approval at any point in the year, the optimal time for Business Approval is at least nine months prior to the projected commencement of the course.

2.5.4 It **should** be noted that in order to obtain all of the information required, work on some aspects of the Business Approval stage **should** begin well in advance of this suggested timeline.

2.5.5 In appropriate circumstances the process of approving a new course can be completed more quickly. For instance, where a course has identified a ready-made market (e.g., National Health Service professionals), or inclusion in the University Prospectus and/or UCAS listings **may** not be critical to successful recruitment.
2.5.6 Where Schools/Colleges are handling a course of this nature they should seek guidance from the AQSO at the earliest opportunity. In addition, they should use the Business Case (Form CA1) to articulate what alternative means will be used to ensure successful recruitment.

2.6 Overview of the course approval process

2.6.1 Course Approval ensures:

a) The course is congruent with the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework described in Section 2 of the AQSH;

b) The course is designed in accordance with the academic standards for the designated award(s);

c) The course is designed in accordance with the University's approved principles and regulations, as approved by the Academic Board;

d) There are (or will be) sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality learning experience for all students;

e) There are sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources, and student support services to deliver a high-quality learning experience for all students;

f) Compliance with regulatory or legislative requirements (e.g. immigration and consumer protection).

2.6.2 The Course Approval consists of 3 stages:

a) Course Design and Development (CDD) with Approval by the External Assessor after final CDD stage.

b) Approval by CQASC

c) Sign off of fulfilled conditions by the External Assessor and Lead Reader of the original submission to CQASC.

NB. Exceptions to this model (workshop series) will be considered for some courses, normally those which are accredited by PSRBs or are seeking accreditation. See section 4.3 for further details.

2.6.3 Following successful approval:

a) The course can be marketed on the University’s website, and in its prospectus, and students offered places on the course.

b) Students can be enrolled on the course and the course can be delivered to students.
c) The School/College can commit the allocated staff and financial resources in order to undertake delivery of the course.

d) Where necessary, the School/College, in consultation with the AQSO, can undertake relevant PSRB accreditation processes, in some cases for Statutory or Regulatory bodies this may be taken in parallel with the Course Approval process.

3. STAGE 1: BUSINESS APPROVAL

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Business Approval ensures:

a) The strategic and business fit of the course within the School/College and institutional portfolio;

b) All relevant prior information on PSRB, or other external requirements are known prior to the commencement of the course design and development;

c) Clarity of information needed to market and admit students to the course (subject to Course Approval); and

d) Ensure compliance with regulatory, or legislative requirements (e.g. immigration and consumer protection).

3.1.2 Business Approval consists of three stages:

a) Completion of the Business Case

b) Endorsement by internal stakeholders (professional services)

c) Approval by the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive.

3.1.3 Following a successful Business Approval:

a) The course can be marketed on the University’s website, and in its prospectus, and students offered places on the course. These must all carry a clear message that the course is subject to approval.

b) The School/College can commit the allocated staff and financial resources in order to undertake the full course development and approval process;

c) The School/College appoints (in agreement with the AQSO) an External Assessor to support course development; and

d) Where necessary, the School/College, in consultation with the AQSO, approaches the relevant PSRB to discuss arrangements for an accreditation event to be undertaken.
3.1.4 Partner institutions may proceed similarly, although any publicity materials should be approved by the University prior to advertisement and/or recruitment. Completion of Business Approval signifies that the University is committed to offering the course from the date indicated.

3.2 Completion of Business Approval

3.2.1 An academic staff member who wishes to propose the development of a new course should complete the Business Case (Form CA1) accessible on the AQSO SharePoint site.

3.2.2 In completing the Business Case, the staff member will need to:

a) Consult the AQSH Section 2 Qualifications and Curriculum Framework to check whether the proposed award is listed, and the qualification will meet all necessary external statutory and regulatory requirements

   **Note:** Where the course is seeking to introduce a new award, they must contact the AQSO for advice on the proposal, and confirmation of the outcome of this discussion will be required to complete the Business Case

b) Provide an intended structure for the course in general content terms. The proposal may include reference to specific modules where these are currently being delivered, however any new modules should be referenced using content only to ensure that any marketing of the course is prepared in general terms

c) Investigate and understand the requirements of any required accreditation, or where accreditations are an option a clear understanding of the timelines, costs, and benefits of any proposed accreditation

d) Provide an overview of the course and its component modules.

3.2.3 The Course Leader or Lead Developer for the course should conduct discussions with:

a) Strategic Planning and Marketing to establish the target market, and demand for the course

b) Finance to establish the financial costing for the course, and in particular the appropriate level of any non-standard fees

c) Academic Registry to establish the regulatory requirements for the course, and in particular the need for any non-standard regulations

d) Placements and Employment Service to establish requirements for any Placement/Internship/Work Experience/Work-based learning.
3.2.4 Where relevant, Schools/Colleges **should** also consult Global Partnerships Office and the International Office, regarding proposals either for direct international recruitment or for delivery in UK-based or transnational partnerships.

3.2.5 To assist Schools/Colleges in performing market research the Strategic Planning and Marketing teams have prepared advisory resources.

3.2.6 The completed Business Case (Form CA1) **should** be approved and signed by the Dean/Director/Head of School/College, and Chair of the School/College’s Executive. The timing and method for this approval of the proposal is managed by the Schools/Colleges who **may** take individual approaches to this approval process subject to local and disciplinary needs.

3.2.7 Where the proposal is to be jointly delivered by two or more Schools/Colleges, the respective figure in each School/College **should** approve and sign the Business Case.

### 3.3 Endorsement by Internal Stakeholders

3.3.1 Once the Business Case is approved and signed by the Dean/Director/Head of School/College it **should** be circulated to all required Heads of Professional Services for comment and endorsement.

3.3.2 In signing the form, Heads of Professional Services confirm that the proposal has been discussed and endorsed by them. In doing this, they agree that:

   a) The proposal is consistent with professional service business plans
   b) The proposal states all necessary impacts on their professional service areas
   c) There are the resources within their services to deliver a high-quality experience for students on the proposed course
   d) That in their professional service area there are no unstated risks to the recruitment to or delivery of a high-quality experience (for example, an area of study which is known to attract students with high demand for well-being services, or that the title of the course is less attractive than alternatives in the market).

### 3.4 Approval by the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive

3.4.1 The fully endorsed Business Case (Form CA1) **should** be submitted for approval by the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive. In signing the form, the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive confirms that the proposal has been discussed and approved at executive level within the University.

3.4.2 The approval confirms that the following points have been discussed and confirmed at both Executive and Operational level:

   a) The proposal is consistent with University and School/College business plans
b) The fee level is appropriate, and there is strong and sustainable demand for the proposal

c) There are adequate resources, which can and will be used to deliver the proposal to acceptable standards

d) The proposal compares favourably with competing offerings (including those within the University)

e) The proposal is consistent with supporting the research activity within the School/College.

3.4.3 The signed Business Case (Form CA1) must be deposited with the AQSO for future reference.

3.4.4 Where the proposal involves Academic Partnership, the academic partner will follow the Business Approval process as outlined in the Global Partnerships Operations Manual

3.4.5 Where submissions have incomplete fields or missing signatures they will be returned to the lead School/College for completion, prior to further processing.

3.5 Actions following Business Approval

3.5.1 Once the AQSO receives the approved Business Case (Form CA1) they will inform:

   a) Strategic Planning
   
   b) Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions
   
   c) Assistant Registrar

3.5.2 They will also book the Course Design and Development Team onto the relevant CDD Workshop Series that meets with the timeline of development. This process consists of three separate workshops. Workshop 3, Ready for Approval Review, must be attended by an External Assessor, either in person or via Skype, who will sign off the final proposal and any subsequent condition/recommendation that might arise from the CQASC final ratification.

3.5.3 Once complete, Business Approval is valid for 12 months. During this time, the full Approval Process should be completed. After 12 months, fresh Business Approval may be requested, in recognition that the prevailing market and resources could have changed.

3.5.4 Between Business Approval and Final Approval, Schools/Colleges should avoid:

   a) Altering the name of the course as this could negatively affect recruitment and impact student information provision.
b) Amending the Business Case (Form CA1). If the lead School/College becomes aware that corrections are needed, a new version should not be created. Rather, a summary of the amendments should be sent to the AQSO, along with documentary evidence (e.g. an email) showing the approval of the Chair of the School/College’s Executive (or its nominated body).

Note: If these are deemed to constitute a fundamental departure the AQSO may request that a new Business Case (Form CA1) be prepared, and in some cases that the document is resubmitted for Business Approval.

3.5.5 Until Course Approval is complete, applicants must not enrol on the Course and must not attend scheduled sessions or any placement.

3.5.6 On occasion, Schools/Colleges may need to change the title or status (interruption/withdrawal) of a Course that has been granted Business Approval but which is yet to receive Course Approval, or has not welcomed a first cohort of participants. In these instances, Schools/Colleges should follow the standard procedures laid down in Section 8 of the AQSH on Course Suspension and Closure. Failure to do so could mean that the course continues to be advertised and to accept applications on an inaccurate basis.

4. COURSE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT (CDD)

4.1 CDD three workshops:

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Workshops</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Preparing for course approval</td>
<td>AQSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ensuring well designed courses</td>
<td>ExPERT Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ready for approval review with External Assessor and Students Union Representative</td>
<td>Academic Quality Lead with Academic Quality and Standards Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. Exceptions to this model (workshop series) will be considered for some courses, normally those which are accredited by PSRBs or are seeking accreditation. See section 4.3 for further details.

4.1.1 To begin, the Course Leader should draw together the course development team. At minimum, this team will include:

- a) The Course Leader
- b) One External Assessor (involved in last stages and final approval)
c) Employer representation

d) A Lead Student Representative

e) At least two other members of School/College academic staff, at least one of whom must hold appropriate course design experience.

4.1.2 Workshop 3 must normally be attended by the External Assessor, either in person or via Skype. In exceptional circumstances, where the External Assessor is unable to attend, if they have submitted their External Assessor’s Report (form CA7), the workshop can be conducted without them.

4.1.3 Workshop 3 should also normally be attended by a Students’ Union representative and the SU must always be invited.

4.1.4 Where an existing course is subcontracted to an academic partner, the Course Design and Development Team must consult with the academic partner about the proposal to ensure that the academic partner has the necessary resources and expertise to deliver the amended course. Evidence of engagement with the academic partner must be provided as part of the course approval documentation.

4.1.5 A single Course Design and Development Team may design and develop multiple courses at once, and the collaboration of small course development teams either within the School/College or across the University is encouraged to provide greater input into course design.

4.1.6 Where a Course Design and Development Team is developing multiple courses, which include substantially different discipline areas or specialist content areas, the AQSO, may require the team to include more than one External Assessor to ensure that standards are appropriately set.

4.1.7 Please refer to the Appointing an External Assessor Guidance in Annex A.

4.1.8 Where an External Assessor is found retrospectively not to comply with the criteria for appointment, the AQSO reserves the right to request fresh review of the proposal by an alternative individual.

4.1.9 The Course Development Team will undertake an iterative design process, in consultation with relevant groups and individuals. Through consultation, the Course Development Team is required to develop and complete:

   a) Course Design and Development Report (Form CA2)

   b) Course Specification (Form CA3)

   c) Module Specifications (Form CA4)

   d) Course Mapping (Form CA5), for apprenticeships or courses with PSRB accreditation
4.1.10 In most cases, the iterative process of Course Design and Development should be supported by attendance at the supported course design and development workshop series offered jointly by the AQSO and the ExPERT Academy.

4.1.11 The Developmental Workshop series serves two major purposes:

a) An opportunity for academic peers to engage in discussion, to test the design and pedagogy of the course, identify good practice and make recommendations for improvement.

b) A check on the sufficiency and academic appropriateness of documentation and resources, including appropriate use of technology to enhance learning.

4.1.12 The AQSO will allocate the Course Design and Development Team to an appropriate workshop series. Each Workshop in the series will generally be approximately one month apart and consist of the topics:

a) Preparing for course approval: which will explain the documentation required; the process to be undertaken; and conduct initial exercises aimed at improving the design of the course including embedding of University strategies.

b) Ensuring well-designed courses: which is run in conjunction with the ExPERT Academy and will focus on elements of design such as outcomes alignment with the national frameworks and sector-recognised standards, assessment task design, embedding student experience.

c) Ready for approval review: which focuses on finalising of documentation, responding to the External Assessor review, embedding good practice from across the University.

4.1.13 Following Workshop 3, the draft course and module specifications must be circulated to the External Assessor(s).

4.1.14 The External Assessor(s) must complete the appropriate External Assessor Report to appraise the proposed course. On receiving the External Assessor’s report(s), the Course Leader must respond to the External Assessor’s final comments, and seek final sign off.

4.1.15 Where there are grounds for not adopting particular recommendations, the Course Leader should take this opportunity to articulate them, and the CQASC will make the final judgment on the appropriateness of the response through conditions or recommendations.

4.1.16 The AQSO will conduct payments to External Assessors in accordance with the payment schedule agreed by the AQSC.

4.2 External Assessor Approval
4.2.1 To enable a decision by CQASC, the Course Leader must submit the following documentation

a) Business Case (CA1)
b) Course Design and Development Report (CA2)
c) Course Specification (CA3)
d) Module Specifications (CA4) for all new modules signed by the External Assessor and module codes for all modules that currently exist.
e) Mapping Document (CA5) for Apprenticeships and courses with PSRB accreditation only
f) External Assessor’s Report (CA6)
g) Employer’s Report (CA7) for Apprenticeships only.

4.2.2 In approving the proposal, the External Assessor confirms that she/he is satisfied that:

a) The course is consistent with the original proposal for which Business Approval was granted. Any substantial departure/s from the original proposal should be flagged to the AQSO.
b) The Course and Module Specifications are clear and articulate the strengths of the course.
c) The intended learning outcomes are appropriate to the level of the course (as specified in the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications) and map onto any relevant external reference points (e.g. Quality Assurance Agency Benchmarking Statements; criteria from PSRBs, Apprenticeship Standards).
d) The course provides progression across stages in terms of intellectual rigour and challenge, and acquisition of skills and knowledge.
e) The learning, teaching and assessment activities are effective, research-informed, and sustainable given available resources.
f) The assessment activities can reliably measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
g) The course, and individual modules within it, are not under or over-assessed
h) The assessment arrangements and curriculum reflect relevant prevailing occupational/professional requirements.
i) The course is fully in accordance with the University’s Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. Any substantial departure(s) should be flagged to the AQSO.
4.3 Course Approval Panel where a PSRB accreditation is sought

4.3.1 Where the PSRB requirements for accreditation involve the course development team engaging in a stringent course development process, to avoid duplication, participation in the workshop series outlined above may not be required. Please speak to AQSO for further guidance on whether this applies to you.

4.3.2 In all cases, one developmental event is mandatory and must include an opportunity for the AQSO to review the documentation prior to submission to the PSRB or the Course Approval Panel.

4.3.3 Where a PSRB requires a Course Approval Panel this will be organised by the AQSO in conjunction with the School/College.

4.3.4 Course Approval Panels will have an appropriate balance of internal and external members, including External Assessor(s).

4.3.5 The External Assessor will attend the Course Approval Panel.

4.3.6 The Panel will normally comprise:

a) Coordinating Chair: Director of Quality Assurance (or their nominee) OR Senior member of Academic Staff from a School/College not associated with the course being approved.

b) 1 Internal Panellist (Academic) from another School/College within the University

c) 1 External Assessor (Academic)

d) 1 Student Panellist (having attended training)

e) 1 Students’ Union observer representing the overarching student experience

f) 1 Academic Registry Adviser (Assistant Registrar) and/or Academic Quality Adviser (Senior Quality Officer: Approval, Accreditation and Amendment).

4.3.7 Panel members may vary from this list based on PSRB requirements, and this will be agreed in advance by both the University and the PSRB.

4.3.8 Each PSRB will have its own protocols for operating joint approvals or accreditations, the AQSO will therefore liaise with the School/College leading the course development in communicating with the relevant PSRB.

4.3.9 The Panel will have the authority to:

(a) Approve without conditions or recommendations

(b) Approve subject to conditions and/or recommendations to the satisfaction of the Director of Quality Assurance
(c) Refer for resubmission at a later date  
(d) Reject the course.

**Note:** The Panel does not have the authority to approve additional resources for the delivery of the course. All decisions to submit a course to CQASC for ratification are only taken against the resources in the Business Case approved by the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive.

4.3.10 The Panel will be expected to identify Features of Good Practice (FGP) and provide commendations as appropriate.

4.3.11 Full guidance for the Course Approval Panel members and chairs on how to consider a course can be found in Annex B of this section of the Academic Quality and Standards Handbook.

4.3.12 Records **must** be made confirming all decisions made by the Panel. This **should** be explicitly referenced in the minutes of the meeting.

### 4.4 Academic Partner Course Approval: Validated (UK)

4.4.1 Where the University is approving a course designed and developed by a UK-based academic partner, the academic partner will follow the Business Approval process as outlined in the Global Partnerships Operations Manual and normally the Course Design and Development process as outlined in Sections 4.1 to 4.2, with a variation to Step 4.1 as follows:

#### CDD three workshops for UK-based academic partners

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<th>Workshops</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Preparing for course approval</td>
<td>Academic Quality and Standards Office OR Global Partnerships Quality Manager</td>
<td>Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ensuring well designed courses</td>
<td>ExPERT Academy</td>
<td>UWL</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Ready for approval review with External Assessor</td>
<td>Academic Quality and Standards Office</td>
<td>Partner</td>
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4.4.2 For new UK-based academic partners, Workshop 1, Preparing for course approval will normally be scheduled as part of a visit to conduct other essential activities required for the approval of the partnership, including a New Academic Partnership Quality Audit event and an audit of the campus/centre.
4.5 **Academic Partner Course Approval: Validated (International)**

4.5.1 Where the University is approving a course designed and developed by an academic partner based outside of the UK, the academic partner will follow an amended Course Design and Development process as follows:

2) A Course Approval Panel.

4.5.2 In lieu of the three workshops for internal Course Design and Development Teams and those from UK-based partners, the University will make alternative arrangements to support Course Design and Development Teams from international academic partners in preparing for a Course Approval Panel. Arrangements will be bespoke to each international academic partner and will involve staff from the AQSO, the Global Partnerships Office and the supporting School/College.

4.5.3 A Course Approval Panel for an international academic partner will be organised by the AQSO in conjunction with the Global Partnerships Office and the supporting School/College.

4.5.4 Course Approval Panels will have an appropriate balance of internal and external members, including External Assessor(s).

4.5.5 The External Assessor will attend the Course Approval Panel (in person or via Skype).

4.5.6 The Panel will normally comprise:

a) Coordinating Chair: Director of Quality Assurance (or their nominee)
b) 1 Internal Panellist (Academic) from a School/College within the University which is not associated with the partner
c) 1 External Assessor (Academic)
d) 1 Student Panellist (having attended training)
e) 1 Students’ Union observer representing the overarching student experience
f) 1 Academic Registry Adviser (Assistant Registrar) and/or Academic Quality Adviser (Senior Quality Officer: Approval, Accreditation and Amendment)

4.5.7 The Course Approval Panel will normally take place at the international academic partner’s campus/centre where the course is to be delivered. The University will liaise with the international academic partner about which members of the Panel will travel to the partner’s campus/centre and which members may join the meeting via Skype. The Coordinating Chair will normally attend the partner campus/centre to chair the meeting.

4.5.8 The Panel will have the authority to:

a) Approve without conditions or recommendations
b) Approve subject to conditions and/or recommendations to the satisfaction of the Director of Quality Assurance

c) Refer for resubmission at a later date

d) Reject the course.

Note: The Panel does not have the authority to approve additional resources for the delivery of the course. All decisions to submit a course to CQASC for ratification are only taken against the resources in the Business Case approved by the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive.

4.5.9 The Panel will be expected to identify Features of Good Practice (FGP) and provide commendations as appropriate.

4.5.10 Full guidance for the Course Approval Panel members and chairs on how to consider a course can be found in Annex B of this section of the Academic Quality and Standards Handbook.

4.5.11 Records must be made confirming all decisions made by the Panel. This should be explicitly referenced in the minutes of the meeting.

4.6 Academic Partner Course Approval: Subcontracting existing University courses

4.6.1 The process for approving an academic partner to deliver existing courses of the University on a subcontract basis is known as the Approval to Deliver process. The Approval to Deliver process is outlined in the Global Partnerships Operations Manual.

5. COURSE APPROVAL BY CQASC

5.1.1 Once all documentation has been submitted, AQSO will consider it. The purpose is to check that the proposed course complies with internal and external regulations, prior to submission to CQASC for final approval.

5.1.2 CQASC is a sub-committee of AQSC made up of staff with expertise in course design and development, course regulation, and course marketing. It is charged by the Academic Board with ensuring that UWL has ‘well-designed courses that offer a high-quality learning experience, and where student achievement can be reliably assessed’.

5.1.3 Members of the sub-committee should include three of the following:

   a) Director of Quality Assurance

   b) University Director of Learning, Teaching and Pedagogic Research

   c) Deans/Directors/Heads of School/College

   d) Heads of Subject

   e) Academic Quality Leads
f) Head of Graduate School

g) Global Partnerships Quality Manager (if course involves academic partnership)

h) Head of Degree Apprenticeships (if apprenticeship is part of approval)

i) Other members of staff who are Principal or Senior Fellows of the Higher Education Academy with expertise in course design.

5.1.4 In addition to the three sub-committee members, a representative of the Students’ Union must always be invited to be a fourth member of any CQASC scrutinising final course approval documents. However, if no SU Representative is available, the course scrutiny can go ahead without them.

5.1.5 Normally, AQSO will nominate three members of CQASC to consider the proposed course, through a thorough review of all documentation, including the External Assessor’s Report (CA6) and, where appropriate, the Employer’s Report (CA7).

5.1.6 This group of three should always include: one person of those listed from (a) to (d) above; the Global Partnerships Quality Manager where an international partner delivers the course or any part of it; the Head of Degree Apprenticeships where an apprenticeship is part of the approval; the Head of the Graduate School where the course being approved is a Level 8 course, ie research degree or professional doctorate; any two others of those listed.

5.1.7 Following their individual review of the course documentation, the three CQASC members will meet in person to discuss their responses and reach a decision about approval.

5.1.8 One group of three might simultaneously consider a number of courses. For each course considered, one of the three CQASC members will act as ‘Lead Reader’, with responsibility for leading the discussion, co-ordinating the decision-making process and establishing, where necessary, what conditions and/or recommendations should be set

5.1.9 If CQASC has concerns they may request that the Course Development Lead attend the meeting to discuss issues arising from the proposal, and/or invite one or more additional members of CQASC to review the documentation.

5.1.10 After considering the proposal CQASC will take one of the following actions:

a) Approve without conditions or recommendations
b) Approve subject to conditions and/or recommendations
c) Refer for resubmission to the Committee at a later date
d) Reject the course

5.1.11 If approved for delivery, the Lead Reader for the given course should ensure all documentation is in order and complete the Course Approval Outcomes form (CA8), before submitting all documentation to the AQSO for final record keeping.
5.1.12 Once CAQSC has granted final approval, the AQSO will send all documentation to the Dean/Director/Head of School/College, as well as the relevant professional services. From the School/College's perspective, the full approval process can now be considered complete.

5.2 Revisions

5.2.1 Where CQASC requires revisions, the Dean/Director/Head of School/College is responsible for ensuring these are completed and the documentation is resubmitted to AQSO.

5.2.2 AQSO sends the revised documentation to the External Assessor and Lead Reader of the original CQASC for approval.

5.2.3 Once the External Assessor and Lead Reader approval has been received, the Director of Quality Assurance gives final ratification. The full approval process can now be considered complete.

6. NEW MODULES

6.1 New modules during approval of new courses

6.1.1 A new module will be considered as part of the full course approval process under the following scenarios:

   a) The module sits within a new course.
   b) The module sits within an existing course that is being re-approved.

6.2 Adding new modules to existing courses

6.2.1 Where a new module is solely designed to contribute to an existing course or courses, the appropriate School/College should follow the process outlined in Section 4 of the AQSH: Amending Courses.

7. NON-AWARD COURSES

7.1 Non-award courses

7.1.1 These are contained courses of study that do not result in any of the formal awards listed in the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework in Section 2 of the AQSH. They include MOOCs (massive open online courses); International Summer Schools; one year/one semester courses for the purposes of ERASMUS and other incoming students; and individual modules delivered to professional groups (e.g. National Health Service staff) for the purposes of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
7.1.2 Non-award courses can be credit-bearing or non-credit-bearing. Schools/Colleges may wish to take an existing course and deliver all or many of the constituent modules as non-award courses, for the purposes of CPD. Where the modules are credit-bearing the intention may be that participants gradually accrue credit, which might be used ultimately to redeem an award.

7.1.3 It should be noted that non-award courses are closely aligned to conventional courses in several important ways (e.g. in typically requiring an external-facing admissions process). Nonetheless, owing to the condensed nature of non-award courses, the most suitable means of documenting their details is normally the Module Specification.

7.2 Non-award (short course) (non-credit bearing) proposals

7.2.1 To submit a short course (non-credit bearing) proposal for Approval, Schools/Colleges should complete the Non-Credit Bearing Short Course Proposal (Form CA9) and submit it to AQSO.

7.2.2 Approval for short courses (non-credit bearing) must be signed off by the Dean/Director/Head of School/College, Head of Research and Enterprise Operations and Director of Quality Assurance.

7.2.3 Following this level of approval, AQSO will submit the short course (non-credit bearing) proposal to CQASC for final approval.

7.2.4 After considering the proposal, CQASC will take one of the following actions:

a) Approve without conditions or recommendations
b) Approve subject to conditions and/or recommendations to the satisfaction of the Director of Quality Assurance
c) Refer for resubmission at a later date
d) Reject the course.

7.2.5 Once CQASC has granted approval, AQSO will notify the School/College concerned.

7.3 Non-award course (credit bearing) proposals

7.3.1 For Business Approval of non-award (credit-bearing) course proposals, follow the process outlined in Section 3.

7.3.2 For course approval of non-award (credit bearing) courses or modules, Schools/Colleges should submit to AQSO:

a) Module Specification (CA4).
b) External Assessor Form (CA6).

7.3.3 Following this level of approval, AQSO will submit the non-ward (credit bearing) proposal to CQASC for final approval. CQASC will take one of the following actions:

a) Approve without conditions or recommendations
b) Approve subject to conditions and/or recommendations to the satisfaction of the Director of Quality Assurance

c) Refer for resubmission at a later date

d) Reject the course.

7.3.4 In this case, an External Examiner appointed to an existing University course may complete the External Assessor Form. The School/College will be required to make an appropriate per module payment in this case.

7.3.5 Once the Chair of CQASC has granted approval, AQSO will notify the lead School/College, as well as the appropriate professional services. At this point approval is complete.
To appoint an External Assessor, the School/College will provide recommendations to the Academic Quality and Standards Office (AQSO) by email (quality@uwl.ac.uk) with a curriculum vitae of the proposed External Assessor.

To be appointed, the External Assessor must meet the following criteria:

(a) The External Assessor holds academic/professional qualifications, appropriate in level and subject, to appraise the course in hand. For professional External Assessors, this will usually mean at least five years senior experience in an area of professional practice relevant to the course.

(b) The External Assessor meets any criteria set out by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) who will be accrediting the course.

(c) The External Assessor is not engaged in a current financial, familial or collaborative relationship with any individual who is involved in the development or delivery of the course.

(d) The External Assessor is not involved in any reciprocal external assessing arrangements with the School/College who are developing the course.

(e) The External Assessor is not registered for an award of the University of West London.

(f) The University of West London has not employed the External Assessor as an External Examiner within the last five years within the School/College developing

In addition, the External Assessor will have to confirm upon appointment that they:

(g) Have not undertaken any activities which would breach the Bribery Act 2010 or act in an anti-competitive manner in breach of competition laws in England and Wales; and

(h) Will not use or disclose to any person either during or at any time after engagement any confidential information (information which is not in the public domain) supplied by the University in relation to the proposed course.
UWL Academic Quality and Standards Handbook  
Section 3: Course Approval and Re-approval (AY2019/20)  
Annex B  
Guidance for Chairs and Panel Members  

This Guidance Document introduces the Course Approval Process (CAP) as a formal process and the expectations of the Panel member role.

Panel members will receive

- Agenda
- Panel List
- Evaluation Form

Panel members will also receive the following documentation for each course or suite of courses:

- CA1: Business Case (for reference only)
- CA2: Course Design and Development Report – *This report is a record of and report on the course developmental process; it requires the Course Team to show who they have consulted, when and what key points arose from that consultation during the development of the overall course aims and structure.*
- CA3: Course Specification
- CA4: Module Specifications
- CA5: Mapping Document

These documents will be sent electronically prior to the Course Approval Event. Please note, Panel members are requested to bring their own electronic copies to the event, paper copies will not be supplied.

The Panel will have the authority to:

(a) Approve without conditions or recommendations  
(b) Approve subject to conditions and/or recommendations  
(c) Refer for resubmission at a later date  
(d) Reject the course

Please Note:  
The Panel is also expected to identify Features of Good Practice (FGP). The Panel does not have the authority to approve resources for the delivery of the course.
The Panel should not create conditions around accuracy of expression; these will be noted and circulated to the course team by the Quality Officer in attendance.

The Panel will normally comprise:

(a) Coordinating Chair: Director of Quality Assurance (or their nominee) OR Senior member of Academic Staff from a School/College not associated with the Course being approved.
(b) 1 Internal Panellist Academic from another School/College within the University
(c) 1 External Assessor (Academic)
(d) 1 Student Panellist (having attended training)
(e) 1 Students’ Union observer representing the overarching student experience
(f) 1 Academic Registry Adviser (Assistant Registrar) and/or Academic Quality Adviser (Senior Quality Officer: Approval, Accreditation and Amendment)

Panel members may vary from this list based on Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements, and this will be agreed in advance by both the University and the PSRB.

Please note, each PSRB will have its own protocols for operating joint approvals or accreditations, the Academic Quality and Standards Office (AQSO) will therefore liaise with the School/College leading the course development in communicating with the relevant PSRB.

Members of the Course Team will be present for the first part of the Panel meeting to engage in the discussion with the Panel.

The External Assessor will be required to sign-off (Validate) any new/amended modules at the end of the Approval. Module-specific items should therefore be brought to the Panel’s attention together with any other course-specific issues.

Panel members will be expected to prepare for the Course Approval Event having thoroughly read the course documentation. Included in this document is a Review Summary Form that can be used prior to the event to record Panellists’ initial assessment of the course documentation.

The Chair will guide the discussions taking into account the following areas:

**Rationale:**
The course is consistent with the original proposal for which Business Approval (Business Case) was granted.
**Standards, Level and Structure:**
The course-level learning outcomes for each enrollable and exit qualification meet the threshold standards set by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

The intended learning outcomes are appropriate to the level of the course and map onto any relevant external reference points (e.g. QAA Benchmarking Statements; criteria from PSRBs, Apprenticeship Standards).

The course provides progression across stages in terms of intellectual rigour and challenge, and acquisition of skills and knowledge.

The course enables students to achieve the UWL graduate attributes and aligns with the University strategies and mission.

The Course and Module Specifications are clear and articulate the strengths of the course.

**Learning, Teaching and Assessment:**
The learning, teaching and assessment activities are effective, research-informed, and sustainable.

Course documentation articulates the research and scholarship environment that the course will be based in, and how this contributes to the stretch and rigour provided by the course.

The course is fully in accordance with the University’s Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

Course content and delivery is aligned with current industry and professional practice and values.

The course supports all students – regardless of background and study choice – to achieve the outcomes both at threshold level and above.

The assessment activities can reliably measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

The course, and individual modules within it, are not under or over-assessed.

The assessment arrangements and curriculum reflect relevant prevailing occupational/professional requirements.

**Admission and entry requirements:**
The criteria for admission enable a reliable and fair opportunity for all students – regardless of background – to achieve the outcomes of the course within the study hours and mode of study of the course.
**Student Support:**
The arrangements for student support, learning resources and IT provision are satisfactory.

**University Academic Regulations**
The course meets UWL academic regulations, or special regulations have been agreed

Panel members will be asked to evaluate the process following participation in the Event, a simple template will be provided.
Panel Member Review Summary
Please use the table below to record your initial assessment of the documentation prior to the event:

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<thead>
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<th>Rationale</th>
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<td>Admissions and Entry Requirements</td>
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<td>Student Support</td>
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UWL Academic Quality and Standards Handbook

Section 3: Course Approval and Re-approval (AY2019/20)

Annex C

Guidance for Course Quality and Approval Sub-Committee (CQASC)

1. Remit

CQASC is a sub-committee of the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC). It is charged by the Academic Board with ensuring that UWL has 'well-designed courses that offer a high-quality learning experience, and where student achievement can be reliably assessed' (Quality Code May 2018). See Academic Quality and Standards Handbook Section 3, 5.1.3 for details about the CQASC membership.

2. Process

Normally, the Academic Quality and Standards Office (AQSO) nominates three members of CQASC to consider up to nine courses being approved and re-approved, through a thorough review of all documentation. A representative of the Students' Union (SU) must always be invited to be a fourth member of any CQASC scrutinising final course approval documents. However, if no SU Representative is available, the course scrutiny can go ahead without them. A Quality Officer attends the Committee as Clerk.

Following their individual review of the course documentation, CQASC meets in person to discuss their responses and reach a decision regarding approval. For each course considered, one of the three CQASC members acts as Lead Reader, with responsibility for leading the discussion, co-ordinating the decision-making process and establishing, where necessary, what conditions and/or recommendations are set.

If, following their individual scrutiny of the documentation, CQASC members have concerns, they can invite the Course Development Lead to attend the meeting to discuss issues arising from the proposal, and/or invite one or more additional members of CQASC to review the documentation.

One month prior to the CQASC meeting, committee members are sent electronic versions of the following documentation for each course or suite of courses (members are requested to bring their own electronic copies to the meeting, paper copies will not be supplied).

- CA1: Business Case (for reference only)
- CA2: Course Design and Development Report (for reference only)
- CA3: Course Specification
- CA4: Module Specifications
• CA5: Mapping Document (for apprenticeships and/or courses with PSRB accreditation)
• CA6: Academic External Assessor’s Report
• CA7: Employer’s Report (apprenticeships only)

CQASC has the authority to:

(a) Approve without conditions or recommendations
(b) Approve subject to conditions and/or recommendations.
(c) Refer for resubmission to the Committee at a later date.
(d) Reject the course

Please Note:
CQASC is also expected to identify Features of Good Practice (FGP). CQASC does not have the authority to approve resources for the delivery of the course. CQASC should not create conditions around accuracy of expression; these will be noted and circulated to the course team by the Quality Officer in attendance.

Following the discussion, the Lead Reader for each course should complete

- form CA8 Course Approval Outcomes

and submit it to AQSO.

Response to Conditions: when the course team has completed revisions to their documentation in response to any conditions set, the AQSO will send the revised documentation and completed form CA8 to the:

- External Assessor
- Lead Reader

Who have joint responsibility for confirming that the conditions for approval have been met.

3. Guidance for the discussion

The Lead Reader should guide the discussions taking into account the following areas:

External Assessor’s Report:
CQASC must consider how the course development team has responded to recommendations made by the External Assessor(s). If the course development team has chosen not to accept a recommendation made by the External Assessor, they should make their reasons clear on Part 2 of the External Assessor’s Report Form.

Rationale:
The course is consistent with the original proposal for which Business Approval was granted.
Standards, Level and Structure:
The course-level learning outcomes for each enrollable and exit qualification meet the threshold standards set by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

The intended learning outcomes are appropriate to the level of the course and map onto any relevant external reference points (e.g. QAA Benchmarking Statements; criteria from PSRBs, Apprenticeship Standards).

The course provides progression across stages in terms of intellectual rigour and challenge, and acquisition of skills and knowledge

The course enables students to achieve the UWL graduate attributes and aligns with the University strategies and mission

The Course and Module Specifications are clear and articulate the strengths of the course.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment:
The learning, teaching and assessment activities are effective, research-informed, and sustainable.

Course documentation articulates the research and scholarship environment that the course will be based in, and how this contributes to the stretch and rigour provided by the course.

The course is fully in accordance with the University’s Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

Course content and delivery is aligned with current industry and professional practice and values.

The course supports all students – regardless of background and study choice – to achieve the outcomes both at threshold level and above.

The assessment activities can reliably measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

The course, and individual modules within it, are not under or over-assessed.

The assessment arrangements and curriculum reflect relevant prevailing occupational/professional requirements.

Admission and entry requirements:
The criteria for admission enable a reliable and fair opportunity for all students – regardless of background – to achieve the outcomes of the course within the study hours and mode of study of the course.

Student Support:
The arrangements for student support, learning resources and IT provision are satisfactory.

**University Academic Regulations**
The course meets UWL academic regulations, or special regulations have been agreed.
CQASC Member Review Summary
Please use the table below to record your initial assessment of the documentation prior to the event:

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<th>Rationale</th>
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<th>University Academic Regulations</th>
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Academic Quality and Standards Handbook

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   1.2 Regulation relevant to this chapter ....................... 3
   1.3 Responsibilities ............................................... 4
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Aims

1.1.1 This section describes:

(a) How the University supports the amendment of a course or module;
(b) How an amendment to a course or module is approved for delivery by the University.

1.1.2 The aim of the amendment process is to ensure that the University meets the obligations and expectations of its staff, students and regulators by:

(a) Using internal and external expertise to stimulate engagement which enhances the quality and sustainability of the University’s courses and modules (e.g. Wellbeing Teams, ExPERT Academy, External Subject Expertise, and engagement with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)).
(b) Engaging current and past students – individually and collectively – to encourage robust dialogue between expert peers, students and wider stakeholders on improving the educational experience within the University and its partners.
(c) Focusing on limiting “process for process sake”, and ensuring clear value and impact of each stage in the process of course and module amendment.
(d) Responding to the individual circumstances of each amendment to ensure that all quality requirements are proportionate to the assessed risk being managed.

1.2 Regulation relevant to this chapter

1.2.1 The Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education relevant for amendment are:

(a) The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.
(b) The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.

This section applies to:

<table>
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<th>Courses</th>
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<td>Further Education</td>
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<td>Non-Award</td>
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<td>Undergraduate (inc. Apprenticeships)</td>
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<td>Postgraduate Taught (inc. Apprenticeships)</td>
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<td>Postgraduate Research</td>
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<th>Academic Partnerships</th>
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<td>Subcontracted UK</td>
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<td>Subcontracted Non-UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validated Non-OfS Registered</td>
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<td>Validated OfS Registered</td>
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(c) Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student’s achievement to be reliably assessed.

(d) From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

1.3 Responsibilities

1.3.1 Academic Board has the responsibility and authority to set, maintain and assure academic standards.

1.3.2 Course Quality and Approval Sub-Committee (CQASC) is a sub-committee of Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) and has the responsibility for the assurance of high-quality course design including ensuring that all courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework. CQASC has delegated responsibility for the final approval and re-approval of courses and modules of the University.

1.3.3 Academic Quality and Standards Office (AQSO) is responsible for organising and managing the processes for approving amendments for both courses and modules.

1.3.4 The Academic Quality Lead in each School/College is responsible for ensuring that colleagues observe the procedures and requirements.

1.3.5 A Course Leader – identified for each course by the relevant School/College – is responsible for ensuring that any proposal for the amendment of a course or module ensures that the course continues to represent a well-designed course. They are also responsible for giving assurance that any amendment has been developed through engagement with stakeholders including students, employers or external examiners where required.

1.4 Interpretation

1.4.1 This document refers to named positions (e.g. Academic Quality Lead or Dean/Director/Head of School/College) in order to detail required activities or authorisations.

1.4.2 Where a department does not have the identified position an alternative must be identified, with comparable seniority and experience, such that all required activities or authorisations are undertaken.

1.5 Further Guidance

1.5.1 For further guidance colleagues should make early contact with the AQSO (e.g. enquiries regarding innovative amendments or enhancements) at quality@uwl.ac.uk or on 020 8231 2116.
1.5.2 Where a proposal involves an academic partnership with an external institution, the School/College concerned should ensure they contact both the AQSO, and the Global Partnership Office at TNEadmin@uwl.ac.uk or on 020 8231 2749 at the earliest opportunity.

2. **OVERVIEW OF AMENDMENT PROCESS**

2.1 **Stages of amendment**

2.1.1 The approval process for amendments should comprise the following one or two stages depending on the size, effects and risk of the proposed change i.e. School/College approval must first go through Executive approval.

2.1.2 Once the amendment has been approved, whether through Executive or School/College approval, the documentation must be submitted to the AQSO (see section 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Approval Stage</th>
<th>Authorising Body</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School/College Executive Approval (minor)</td>
<td>Academic Quality Lead</td>
<td>Course Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>School/College Approval (major)</td>
<td>School/College Quality Committee</td>
<td>Academic Quality Lead</td>
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2.2 **Criteria for amendment**

2.2.1 In approving an amendment, the authorising body and responsible officers certify that the proposal for amendment:

(a) Clearly articulates a sound rationale for amending the course or module in line with UWL’s commitments to improving the student experience.

(b) Continues to clearly articulate outcomes – for each enrollable and exit qualification – which meet the threshold standards set by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

(c) Clearly articulates the implications for existing and incoming students of the proposed amendments.

(d) Clearly articulates any additional facilities, learning resources and student support services needed by the course team to deliver the amendment.

(e) Clearly articulates how internal and external stakeholders (current staff, students, alumni, employers, and where appropriate PSRBs) have been engaged in amendment process.
(f) Clearly articulates how the amendment may impact the support for all students – regardless of background and study choice – to achieve the outcomes both at threshold standard and above.

(g) Exhibits the Office for Students (OfS) behaviours expected of courses under Condition B1 of the Regulatory Framework.

2.3 Categories of Amendment

2.3.1 The amendment may be in a different category based on the amount of cumulative change to a course or module; or where small changes to modules may mean more serious changes to an overall course of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amendment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Replacement of 26% or more of the overall credit of the course either in a single amendment or cumulatively</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Changes that have an impact on the student learning experience comprising 26% or more of the overall credit of the course either in a single amendment or cumulatively</td>
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<td>3. Introduction of a new compulsory module</td>
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<td>4. Changes to the FHEQ or RQF level of any award or module within the course</td>
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<td>5. Changes to the credit value of the course</td>
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<td>6. Addition, removal, or renaming of pathways within the course, including adding a placement or internship; or move to a different mode of study (distance; for example). (Please note it is necessary to consult with the relevant PVC as to whether a Business Case is required when adding a new pathway to an existing course)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Addition of an Apprenticeship to an existing course. (Please note it is necessary to consult with the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) (with responsibility for the School/College) as to whether a Business Case is required when adding an Apprenticeship to an existing course</td>
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<td>8. Changes to the award (e.g. BSc) and/or title (e.g. Mathematics) of the course</td>
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<td>9. Replacement of 26% or more of the compulsory module(s) with optional module(s) and vice versa</td>
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<td>10. Changes to module title(s) that affect the content of two or more modules (compulsory or optional) representing up to 25% of the overall credit</td>
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### 2.4 Course Specifications and Module Specifications

2.4.1 Each course and module **must** be documented by a complete Course or Module Specification.

2.4.2 These documents:
(a) Form the basis of the legal contract between the University and its students.

(b) Provide academic and professional colleagues with the course and module details.

(c) Provide the basis for fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy marketing materials.

2.4.3 Information provided to future and current students **must** adhere to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) ‘UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law’ to ensure that:

(a) The University provides students with accurate information about the University’s courses or modules and any associated costs at each stage. This includes when they are researching the course prior to application, at the offer stage, and when they enrol and re-enrol with the University.

(b) The University ensures that course and module information remains accurate and up to date, that once a student has applied for a place any changes to course or module information has the express consent of all students affected; and

(c) The University specifically flags to offer holders and current students any terms and conditions that are particularly noteworthy or otherwise important.

2.4.4 Therefore, all staff involved in course or module amendment **must** use the latest templates as older templates **may** not include all relevant fields.

2.5 **Cross School/College courses**

2.5.1 Some courses (or modules) **may** be jointly delivered by two or more Schools/Colleges e.g. combined, major/minor and joint honours courses.

2.5.2 To avoid confusion and undue effort, milestones in the amendment process **should not** be duplicated (e.g. submission of documents to the AQSO, engagement with an External Examiner, etc.).

2.5.3 The lead School/College, as designated on the Amendment Form (A1), **should** direct activities. Nonetheless, at key stages all School/College’s involved **must** confirm all decisions by providing signatures as directed on the form.

2.6 **Professional Doctorates**

2.6.1 For Professional Doctorate courses, the Head of the Graduate School **should** indicate approval by signing the Amendment Form (A1). The amendment **must** have been discussed at a Course Committee meeting.

2.7 **Adding new modules to existing courses**
2.7.1 Where a new module is solely designed to contribute to an existing course or courses, the School/College Executive or School/College Committee (as appropriate) will first approve it without intervention from the AQSO.

2.7.2 In this case, the External Examiner appointed to the existing course may complete the External Assessor Form (CA6). The School/College will be required to make an appropriate per module payment in this case.

2.7.3 To enable a decision by the School/College Quality Committee or School/College Executive (or its nominated body), the following must be made available:

(a) Course Amendment Form (A1).
(b) Module Specification (CA4).
(c) External Assessor Form (CA6).

2.7.4 Records must be taken, confirming all decisions made by the School/College Executive or School/College Quality Committee. These must be retained in the School/College for future reference, along with the rationale and a copy of the approved Module Specification.

2.7.5 Following approval of new modules by the School/College Executive or Quality Committee (or its nominated body), the School/College should send the AQSO the new Module Specification(s), amended Course Specification (using tracked changes only) and the External Assessor Form. The AQSO will record the development and communicate to all relevant professional services.

2.8 Timings

2.8.1 In most instances, time is required in order to complete the communications that surround any amendment process and ensure that all students presently on the course have been effectively consulted.

2.8.2 Therefore, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) (with responsibility for the School/College) the approved amendment form should be submitted to the AQSO normally no later than:

*Final Friday in June for amendments effective from September term.*
e.g. 28 June 2019 for an amendment commencing in September 2019.

*Final Friday in November for amendments effective from January term*
e.g 29 November 2019 for an amendment commencing in January 2020.

2.8.3 It should be noted that in order to obtain all of the information required, work on some aspects of the amendment should begin well in advance of these deadlines.

2.8.4 In appropriate circumstances the process of amending a course or module can depart from the timelines stated and be completed more quickly. For instance, where
immediate changes are required due to changes in the legal environment in which the course or module is operating; cessation of PSRB regulation.

2.8.5 Where Schools/Colleges are handling a course of this nature they should seek guidance from the AQSO at the earliest opportunity.

3. PREPARATION OF THE AMENDMENT

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Preparation for the amendment ensures:

(a) All relevant prior information on PSRB, or other external requirements are known prior to the consideration and approval of the amendment;

(b) Clarity of information needed to market and admit students to the course; and

(c) Ensure compliance with regulatory, or legislative requirements (e.g. immigration and consumer protection).

3.1.2 Preparation of the amendments consists of:

(a) Completion of the amendment proposal

(b) Approval by the School/College Academic Quality Lead

3.1.3 Following a successful completion of this stage:

(a) The course or module as amended can be marketed on the University’s website, and in its prospectus. These must all carry a clear message that the course or module which has been amended is subject to approval.

(b) The School/College can commit the allocated staff and financial resources in order to undertake the full development of materials as a result of the amendment; and

(c) Where necessary, the School/College, in consultation with the AQSO, can approach the relevant PSRB to discuss arrangements for any further accreditation requirements or notifications to be undertaken.

3.1.4 Partner institutions may proceed similarly, although any publicity materials should be approved by the University prior to advertisement and/or recruitment. Completion of preparation of the amendment signifies that the University is committed to offering the course as amended from the date indicated.

3.2 Course and Module Amendment Form

3.2.1 An academic staff member who wishes to propose the amendment must first ensure that the Course Specification (CA3) and Module Specifications (CA4) have been transferred to the most up to date templates prior to completing the Amendment Form
(A1). The academic staff member must make the proposed amendments to the Course and Module Specifications using tracked changes only. The form and templates are accessible on the AQSO SharePoint site.

3.2.2 In completing the form, the staff member(s) will need to:

(a) Consult the Academic Quality and Standards Handbook Section 2: Qualification and Curriculum Framework to confirm that the qualification will continue to meet all necessary external statutory and regulatory requirements.

(b) Investigate and understand the requirements of the current (and where possible, immediate future) accreditation by any PSRB, and the implications of the scope of any amendment to the course.

3.2.3 The Course Leader for the course must conduct discussions with:

(a) Academic Registry colleagues to establish the regulatory requirements for the course, and in particular the need for any non-standard regulations that may be required due to the amendment.

(b) External Examiner to receive their approval for any major amendment.

(c) Student Representatives on the course to receive their comments on any amendments, where appropriate – this will normally be discussed at Course Committee Meetings and/or School Boards. For major amendments, students should be formally consulted on the amendment and their written approval received.

(d) All Academic Partnership Course Leaders affected by the proposed amendment, if relevant.

(e) Global Partnerships and the International Office, regarding the effects of the amendment for direct international recruitment or for delivery in one of the UWL branch campuses or Academic Partnerships, if relevant.

(f) *Placement and Employment Service if amending a course or module(s) with an integrated placement/internship/work experience/work-based learning, if relevant.

*The Integrated Placement/Internship Checklist must be completed for any course or module(s) with Placement/Internship/Work Experience/Work-Based Learning. The same checklist is used for Course Approval and Amendment of Courses and Modules.

3.2.4 The completed Amendment Form (A1) should be signed by the Course Leader before submission for approval and signature by the Academic Quality Lead. Where the proposal is in relation to a course or module that is jointly delivered by two or more Schools/Colleges, the respective Course Leader and Academic Quality Lead in each School/College should approve and sign.
3.3 Approval by the Academic Quality Lead

3.3.1 The fully endorsed Amendment Form (A1) should be submitted for approval by the Academic Quality Lead. In signing the form, the Academic Quality Lead confirms that the proposal has been discussed with the Course Leader.

3.3.2 The approval confirms that the following points have been discussed and confirmed by the Academic Quality Lead:

(a) The proposed amendment is consistent with University and School/College business plans.

(b) The proposed amendment is consistent with good practice in learning teaching and assessment.

3.3.3 Where submissions have incomplete fields or missing signatures they will be returned to the Course Leader for completion, prior to further processing.

3.3.4 Following approval, the Academic Quality Lead will submit the form to the appropriate approval body for consideration and final approval.

4. APPROVAL

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 Amendment approval ensures:

(a) The course continues to be designed in accordance with the academic standards for the designated award(s);

(b) The course continues to be designed in accordance with the University's approved principles and regulations, as approved by the Academic Board;

(c) There are (or will be) sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality learning experience for all students on the amended course;

(d) There are sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources, and student support services to deliver a high-quality learning experience for all students on the amended course;

(e) Compliance with regulatory or legislative requirements (e.g. immigration and consumer protection).

4.1.2 Amendment approval consists of the steps articulated in 3.1.2 above, followed by:

(a) Approval of major amendments

(b) Approval of minor amendments

(c) Implementation of the amendment.
4.1.3 Following a successful Amendment approval:

(a) The amended course can be marketed on the University’s website, and in its prospectus, and students offered places on the amended course without qualification.

(b) Students can be enrolled on the amended elements of the course and the amended course can be delivered to students.

(c) The School/College can commit the allocated staff and financial resources in order to undertake delivery of the amended course.

(d) Where necessary, the School/College, in consultation with the AQSO, can undertake relevant PSRB notification or accreditation processes, in some cases for Statutory or Regulatory bodies this may be taken in parallel with the amendment approval process.

4.2 Approval of Major Amendments

4.2.1 Major amendments will be submitted to the relevant School/College Quality Committee for consideration and approval.

4.2.2 The Committee will consider the application for amendment, and in some cases may request that the Course Leader attend a meeting of the Committee to discuss issues arising from the proposal.

4.2.3 After considering the proposal, the School/College Quality Committee will take one of the following actions:

(a) Approve without revisions.

(b) Approve subject to revisions to the satisfaction of the School/College Academic Quality Lead.

(c) Refer for resubmission to the School/College Quality Committee at a later date.

(d) Reject.

4.2.4 Once the School/College Quality Committee has granted final approval the School/College Academic Quality Lead must submit all documentation to the AQSO, the AQSO will notify the relevant professional services. From the School/College’s perspective, the full approval process can now be considered complete. Where the proposal involves an Academic Partnership, a senior member of staff from each partner institution must confirm receipt of the amendment, and their plan to implement it. This is the responsibility of the Academic Quality Lead.

4.3 Approval of Minor Amendments
4.3.1 Minor amendments will be submitted to the relevant School/College Executive for consideration and approval.

4.3.2 The School/College Executive will consider the application for amendment, and in some cases may request that the Course Leader attend a meeting to discuss issues arising from the proposal.

4.3.3 After considering the proposal the School/College Executive will take one of the following actions:

(a) Approve without revisions.

(b) Approve subject to revisions to the satisfaction of the School/College Academic Quality Lead.

(c) Refer for resubmission to the School/College Committee as a major amendment.

(d) Reject.

4.3.4 Once the School/College Executive has granted final approval the School/College Academic Quality Lead must submit all documentation to the AQSO, the AQSO will notify the relevant professional services. From the School/College’s perspective, the full approval process can now be considered complete. Where the proposal involves an Academic Partnership, a senior member of staff from each partner institution must confirm receipt of the amendment, and their plan to implement it. This is the responsibility of the Academic Quality Lead.

4.4 Implementation of amendment

4.4.1 Once the AQSO receives the approved Amendment Form (A1) and the amended Course Specification and Module Specifications, they will review and accept the tracked amendments and return a copy to the School/College.

4.4.2 For both major and minor amendments, they will inform:

(a) Strategic Planning.

(b) Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions.

(c) Assistant Registrar.

4.4.3 Until approval is complete students must not enrol on the amended element of the course or module and must not attend scheduled sessions or any placement.
Academic Quality and Standards Handbook

Section 5: Assessment

2019/20
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Aims

1.1.1 This section describes:

(a) How the University manages the assessment of students;

(b) How the examination process is secured

(c) How student achievement is reported and ratified at Assessment Boards.

1.1.2 The aim of the assessment process is to ensure that the University meets the obligations and expectations of its staff, students and regulators by:

(a) Using processes to ensure that qualifications are awarded only to those students who meet specified learning outcomes that are consistent with the relevant national qualifications descriptors, and that standards remain consistent over time.

(b) Ensuring that assessments measure the extent to which students achieve the learning outcomes both at and beyond the threshold levels specified in national qualifications descriptors.

(c) Using internal and external expertise to ensure that learning outcomes and assessments are consistent with the requirements of national qualification frameworks and that assessment measures the learning outcomes for courses.

(d) Operating processes for assessment and classification that ensure student achievement is measured reliably, fairly and transparently.

(e) Ensuring that course design supports the constructive alignment of curricula, learning outcomes and assessment, that assessment is valid and supports students’ learning, and that feedback is timely, constructive and purposeful.

(f) Ensuring that assessment is inclusive and equitable, and appropriately tailored to different environments.

(g) Ensuring that any partner involved in design or delivery of assessment understands and follows the requirements that are approved.

This section applies to:

Courses
- Further Education ✗
- Non-Award ✗
- Undergraduate (inc. Apprenticeships) ✓
- Postgraduate Taught (inc. Apprenticeships) ✓
- Postgraduate Research ✗

Academic Partnerships
- Subcontracted UK ✓
- Subcontracted Non-UK ✓
- Validated Non-OfS Registered ✓
- Validated OfS Registered ✓
1.2 Regulation relevant to this chapter

1.2.1 The Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education relevant for assessment are:

(a) The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.

(b) The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.

(c) Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student’s achievement to be reliably assessed.

(d) From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

1.3 Apprenticeships: End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO)

1.3.1 Apprenticeships must not be delivered unless an EPAO is in place.

1.3.2 However, at the point of approval of an apprenticeship, a letter to show that an organisation is intending to be an EPAO for the relevant standard is acceptable.

1.4 Responsibilities

1.4.1 Academic Board has the responsibility and authority to set, maintain and assure academic standards. Assessment Boards operate under the delegated authority of the Academic Board and are responsible for ratification of all assessment outcomes and for ensuring external approval of outcomes and processes of assessment.

1.4.2 Course Quality and Approval Sub-Committee (CQASC) is a sub-committee of Academic Quality and Standards Committee and has responsibility for the assurance of high-quality of course design including the assessment strategy and methodology. The Committee has delegated responsibility for the final approval and re-approval of courses and modules of the University.

1.4.3 The Academic Quality Lead is responsible for providing leadership and operational co-ordination at a School/College level to assure the standards and quality of UWL courses.

1.4.4 A Course Leader – identified for each course by the relevant School/College – is responsible for ensuring that the module assessments meet the module and course learning outcomes and that the overall balance, load and effectiveness of assessment is maintained. The Course Leader is responsible for ensuring that any proposed amendments to assessment are carefully considered, including in relation to any franchise or other partner delivery, with appropriate externality prior to submission for approval to the Academic Quality and Standards Office.
1.4.5 The Head of Subject is responsible for ensuring that all courses and modules have an External Examiner appointed to them and that assessment briefs and examination papers are reviewed and approved by External Examiners.

1.4.6 The Head of Subject is responsible for ensuring that courses are brought to a scheduled Module Assessment Board and an Award and Progression Board for consideration and ratification of assessment outcomes.

1.5 Interpretation

1.5.1 This Section refers to named positions (e.g. Academic Quality Lead, Dean/Director Head of School/College) in order to detail required activities, relation to regulations or authorisations.

1.5.2 Where a School/College does not have the identified position an alternative must be identified, with comparable seniority and remit, such that all required activities or authorisations are undertaken.

1.6 Further Guidance

1.6.1 For further guidance colleagues should contact the Academic Quality and Standards Office (e.g. for enquiries related to assessment during course development) at quality@uwl.ac.uk or on 020 8231 2116; the ExPERT Academy for enquiries related to assessment design and practice at expert-academy@uwl.ac.uk; the Registry for enquiries related to assessment boards or the Academic Regulations.

1.6.2 Where an assessment query involves an academic partnership with an external institution, the School/College should contact the Global Partnership Office at TNE.admin@uwl.ac.uk or on 020 8231 2749 for additional guidance.

2. ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

2.1 Assessment: Guiding Principles

2.1.1 The following principles draw on the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Code advice and guidance on assessment (https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance) and should be reflected in all assessment practice:

2.1.2 Assessment methods and criteria are aligned to learning outcomes and teaching activities: in designing assessment, course teams use constructive alignment to ensure that learning outcomes, teaching and learning strategies and assessment methods operate in clear alignment with each other. Assessment design should develop progressively across stages and levels of study.

2.1.3 Assessment is reliable, consistent, fair and valid: assessment processes are objective and repeatable over time. Assessment activities have clearly articulated
assessmen criteria and weightings. Assessment criteria facilitate reasonable parity between the judgements of different assessors. Grading and moderation procedures are clearly articulated and consistently operated.

2.1.4 **Assessment design is approached holistically**: assessment is designed ‘top down’, beginning with the award, then going down into module level so that it is clear how module learning outcomes contribute to the achievement of course learning outcomes. Variety in assessment helps develop a range of skills and assesses a range of learning styles but should not in itself become a barrier to learning.

2.1.5 **Assessment is inclusive and equitable**: every student has an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement through assessment, with no group or individual disadvantaged. Assessment methods are flexible enough to allow adjustments to overcome any substantial disadvantage a student could experience.

2.1.6 **Assessment is explicit and transparent**: Students are clearly informed of the purpose and requirements of assessment tasks. Feedback explicitly relates to the stated learning outcomes. Students are supported to understand and interpret learning outcomes, assessment criteria and grading guidelines.

2.1.7 **Assessment and feedback are purposeful**: assessment is fit for purpose and methods are valid in measuring achievement against learning outcomes. Assessment enables students to benchmark their current level of knowledge or skills, identify areas for improvement and make judgements about their overall progress. Feedback reflects attainment relevant to learning outcomes.

2.1.8 **Assessment is timely**: assessment tasks and feedback are timed to promote student learning and facilitate improvement. Students are given sufficient time and opportunity to undertake learning that builds their capacity for assessment. Course assessment calendars are designed to avoid over-burdening students. Feedback is provided in time to enable students to enhance their performance in subsequent assessment tasks.

2.1.9 **Assessment is efficient and manageable**: the scheduling of assignments and the amount of assessed work provides a reliable and valid profile of achievement without overloading students or staff. Assessment requirements take into account the notional learning hours for any given unit of study.

2.1.10 **Students are supported and prepared for assessment**: students are given opportunities to develop assessment literacy, practise subject-related skills and knowledge, engage with content and develop the competencies required to meet learning outcomes.

2.1.11 **Assessment encourages assessment literacy**: assessment is designed to minimise opportunities for students to commit academic misconduct, including
plagiarism. Policies and procedures relevant to academic integrity are clear, accessible and actively promoted.

2.2 Course Design: Assessment

2.2.1 In approving a course, the authorising body and individuals responsible should certify that the approved qualification and curriculum:

(a) Clearly articulates outcomes – for each enrollable and exit qualification – which meet the threshold standards set by the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

(b) Clearly articulates how the course enables students to achieve standards beyond the threshold level in line with similar qualifications (for example, grading guidelines).

(c) Clearly articulates how the assessment tasks on the course provide valid opportunities for students to achieve the learning outcomes at course and module level.

(d) Clearly articulates how the outcomes of the course – both at threshold standard and above – will be reliably assessed and student achievements recognised.

(e) Clearly articulates how the course supports all students – regardless of background and study choice – to achieve the outcomes both at threshold standard and above.

2.2.2 For further guidance on course approval see Academic Quality and Standards Handbook (QSH) Section 3: Course Approval and Re-approval.

2.3 Purposes of Assessment

2.3.1 Assessment is a fundamental aspect of the student learning experience. Engagement in assessment activities and interaction with staff and peers enables learning, both as part of the task and through review of their performance. It is a vehicle for obtaining feedback. Ultimately it determines whether each student has achieved their course’s learning outcomes and allows the awarding body to ensure that appropriate standards are being applied rigorously. Deliberate, systematic quality assurance ensures that assessment processes, standards and any other criteria are applied consistently and equitably, with reliability, validity and fairness (QAA Quality Code, Nov 2018)

2.3.2 Please refer also to Section 7 of this document, Assessment and Feedback policy

2.3.3 Further guidance and advice on assessment can be found on the Teaching Hub here: https://campuspress.uwl.ac.uk/teaching/

2.4 Feedback
2.4.1 Feedback (sometimes described as feedforward) is an essential element of assessment. It gives students information about their attainment relative to module and course learning outcomes, thereby enabling them to reflect on their learning, identify areas for improvement and understand how to progress and develop.

2.4.2 Students must receive feedback on all formative and summative assessments.

2.4.3 Justification of grade is one element of feedback, usually given after a summative assessment. It explains to students why they achieved a particular mark, making direct and specific reference to learning outcomes or assessment criteria, and to grading guidelines.

2.4.4 Justification of grade must be communicated to students within 15 working days of assignment submission.

2.4.5 Further guidance

2.5 Types of Assessment

2.5.1 Assessment is typically understood to be diagnostic, formative or summative. These definitions may overlap. For example, a summative assessment is often also formative in that it, and the feedback received on it, helps prepare students for future assessments.

2.5.2 Commonly held understandings of these terms are that:

(a) **Diagnostic assessment** provides an indicator of a student’s aptitude and preparedness for a course of study and identifies possible learning needs.

(b) **Formative assessment** is assessment with a developmental purpose, designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and how it can be improved and/or maintained. Although tutors may choose to give students grades for formative assessments, these do not count towards the final grade for the module.

(c) **Summative assessment** is used to indicate the extent of a learner’s success in meeting the assessment criteria to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or course. The marks awarded for summative assessments, count towards the final mark of the module.

2.5.3 No summative assessment type should be used unless a student has had a previous opportunity to experience or practice it, or key aspects of it. These opportunities may be formative.

2.6 Types of Assessment for Apprenticeships

2.6.1 All apprentices must undertake an initial assessment of prior learning of their qualifications and experience to establish their starting point. This includes their
knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) mapped against the apprenticeship standard that has been selected. There is a UWL assessment tool designed for every apprenticeship standard which maps against the knowledge, skills and behaviours of that standard.

2.6.2 Additional assessment to meet industry specific needs should be agreed at a local level by the relevant Deans/Directors/Heads of School/College.

2.6.3 Diagnostic assessment for maths and/or English must be carried out for apprentices who do not present the relevant qualifications at enrolment and are therefore deemed to require a maths and/or English Level 2 qualification before the Gateway stage of their apprenticeship.

2.6.4 **Apprenticeship Gateway:** all apprenticeship standards require the apprentice to complete a range of assessed activity to get them to the Gateway stage. This will include specific requirements for each standard:

(a) Minimum English and mathematics requirements

(b) Mandatory qualifications detailed in the occupational standard (e.g., gaining 360 academic credits enables the apprentice to achieve an Honours degree)

(c) Any requirements or outputs that underpin an assessment method. For example, if a portfolio demonstrating particular aspects of the occupational standard is used to support a presentation in the End Point Assessment (EPA), it should be made clear to the apprentice what this portfolio should contain and that it should be completed prior to the Gateway.

(d) Confirmation that the employer is confident that the apprentice is occupationally competent to, i.e., that they are deemed to be working at or above the level set out in the occupational standard and are ready to undertake the EPA.

2.6.5 **End Point Assessment (EPA):** Once the apprentice has met all of the requirements of the Gateway they will then enter the End Point Assessment stage.

2.6.6 The EPA must include at least two different assessment methods and at least one of these must assess the KSBs in the occupational standard synoptically, i.e., it should test some knowledge, some skills and some behaviours.

2.6.7 The EPA will be assessed by an independent End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO).

2.6.8 In the case of Integrated Degree Apprenticeships, the EPAO is the University of West London and the UWL will appoint approved assessors.

2.6.9 Please refer to the Apprenticeship Course Handbook for further details on the End Point Assessment for a given apprenticeship standard.
2.7 Assignment Typology

2.7.1 All assessment tasks should fit into one of the assessment types listed in bold. The examples offered in italics are indicative.

- **Written Examination**: a seen or unseen examination
- **Oral Examination**: a face-to-face discussion with a panel of examiners
- **Written Assignment**: eg report; essay; short-essay; review; analysis; case study; creative and/or professional brief; dissertation; thesis; literature review; research method essay; research proposal; multiple choice questionnaire (MCQ); mathematical/statistical problem; online task; web-based exercise; translation
- **Oral Assignment**: individual or group presentation; discussion; defence; pitch; performance; teaching
- **Portfolio**: a series of short written, creative, linguistic or mathematical tasks collected as part of one assignment
- **Artefact**: visual; audio; software; composition; design; culinary; artistic
- **Practical**: experiment, clinical, performance-based, educational or hospitality practice-based assignment

2.8 Guidance on Assessment Loads

2.8.1 The principles included in this section are provided for guidance only, with the aim of facilitating equity of assessment across courses and disciplines.

2.8.2 It is important to acknowledge that the progressive demands of assessment across levels may be related more to the quality than to the quantity of student work and those designing assessment may therefore interpret this guidance in accordance with practices and norms specific to their disciplines.

2.8.3 It is best practice to include no more than two summative assessment tasks per 20 credits at any level.

2.8.4 There is no limit on the number of formative tasks set per module, although course and module designers should pay due attention to notional learning hours.

2.8.5 **Word count and equivalency**: the word limits and timings shown in the table below are for guidance only. The demands of different courses means that word counts and timings cannot always be precisely calibrated and that it can be difficult to make comparisons between different assessment tasks, for instance, an essay and a performance.

2.8.6 In some cases it may be more appropriate to consider the progressive demands of assessment tasks over stages or levels in terms of their increased intellectual, artistic or technical sophistication rather than their length or volume.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Word limit (total for module)</th>
<th>Exams</th>
<th>Portfolios</th>
<th>Presentation/active task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>500 - 1500</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Portfolios may contain a range of tasks in different modes. Staff should consider student workload equivalency with written work/exams with an upper limit of 5000 words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>1500 - 2500</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td>The range of modes makes this difficult to quantify. Staff should consider student workload equivalency with written work/exams with an upper limit of 20 minutes for a group presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>3000 - 3500</td>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>3000 – 4000</td>
<td>1-3 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.8.7 **Dissertation** (please refer also to Section 2 of the QSH: Qualifications and Curriculum Framework)

(a) A 40 credit level 6 Dissertation or professional project should produce a written or artistic product equivalent to 9-1000 words

(b) A 60 credit Level 7 Dissertation should produce a written or artistic product equivalent to 15000 words

3. **GRADE CRITERIA**

3.1.1 Grade criteria are general descriptors of typical student performance within a marking band/range of marks for a particular level of course, for eg, they describe in general terms what constitutes a mark between 50 and 60 (lower 2nd class) for an undergraduate student.

3.1.2 They **should** be used in conjunction with module-specific learning outcomes to inform and guide assessors in assigning marks to assessed student work.

3.1.3 They play an important role in ensuring comparability of standards across modules, courses and disciplines within UWL.

3.1.4 They also help External Examiners to judge the comparability of standards across a given sector.

3.1.5 All Schools/Colleges **must** have grade descriptors, which **should** be aligned with:

(a) The UWL Generic marking scheme provided below

(b) The relevant national threshold level descriptors
(c) Sector-recognised standards as expressed in subject benchmark statements
(d) Other relevant resources such as Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements or apprenticeship standards.

3.1.6 Marking schemes must be made available to students and course teams should ensure that students are given time and support to engage with and understand them and the ways they are used to inform markers’ judgements.

3.2 Calibration

3.2.1 Schools/Colleges must ensure that all staff involved with assessment are familiar with the grade descriptors in use and participate in regular calibration activities to ensure a shared understanding of terms and standards.

3.2.2 Calibration activities could include exercises such as all staff blind marking a single piece of work and then comparing grades and comments. Calibration should address the full range of assessment tasks used within the School/College.

3.3 Pass-Fail Assessments

3.3.1 Where a course or module team wishes to incorporate a pass-fail assessment, care must be taken to ensure that use of the pass-fail will not skew the assessment results and unfairly advantage or disadvantage students.

3.3.2 Where an element of assessment is pass-fail, this must not contribute to the overall numerical grade of the module; its only function will be to determine that the module is passed or failed when other element(s) combine to achieve a pass mark. Under no circumstances may a numerical grade be determined or entered against a pass-fail element.

3.3.3 Where an entire module is graded pass-fail, the module credits will contribute to the credits required to complete the associated Level, but this module must not contribute to any numerical calculation of the final classification. A special algorithm may be required and special regulations may need to be approved for any course that incorporates a pass-fail module. Course Leaders and course developers must consult the Academic Quality and Standards Office and Academic Registry for guidance to ensure the course will operate within the Academic Regulations.

3.4 UWL Generic Grade descriptors

3.4.1 The tables below apply to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses respectively in all subject areas across the University, and must not be altered.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>86 - 100</td>
<td>The standard achieved is exceptional and the work provides clear evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved with many at an exceptional standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76 - 85</td>
<td>The standard achieved is outstanding and the work provides clear evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved with many at an outstanding standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 75</td>
<td>The standard achieved is excellent and the work provides clear evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved with many at an excellent standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 69</td>
<td>The standard achieved is very good and the work provides clear evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved with many at a very good standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 64</td>
<td>The standard achieved is good and the work provides evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved with many at a good standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 59</td>
<td>The standard achieved is satisfactory and the work provides evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved with many at a satisfactory standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 54</td>
<td>The standard achieved is acceptable and the work provides evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved mostly at an acceptable standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 49</td>
<td>The standard achieved is acceptable and the work provides evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved though quite a few are only achieved at a basic standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 44</td>
<td>The standard achieved is basic and the work provides evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved mostly at a basic standard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Generic Grade Descriptors – Undergraduate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35 - 39</td>
<td>The standard achieved is weak and the work provides evidence of insufficient knowledge, understanding and/or skills appropriate to the level of study, although some of the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 34</td>
<td>The standard achieved is very weak and the work provides evidence of insufficient knowledge, understanding and/or skills appropriate to the level of study. The evidence shows that some of the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved OR that none is achieved but there is evidence that many of the learning outcomes may be almost achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 29</td>
<td>The standard achieved is unacceptable and the work provides little evidence of the knowledge, understanding and/or skills appropriate to the level of study. The evidence shows that few, if any, of the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 19</td>
<td>The standard achieved is unacceptable and the work provides very little evidence of the knowledge, understanding and/or skills appropriate to the level of study. The evidence shows that very few, if any, of the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 9</td>
<td>The standard achieved is unacceptable and the work provides negligible or no evidence of the knowledge, understanding and/or skills appropriate to the level of study. The evidence fails to show that any of the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Generic Grade Descriptors – Postgraduate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>86 - 100</td>
<td>The standard achieved is exceptional and the work provides clear evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved with many at an exceptional standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76 - 85</td>
<td>The standard achieved is outstanding and the work provides clear evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved with many at an outstanding standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 75</td>
<td>The standard achieved is excellent and the work provides clear evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved with many at an excellent standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>Descriptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 69</td>
<td>The standard achieved is very good and the work provides clear evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved with many at a very good standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 64</td>
<td>The standard achieved is good and the work provides evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved with many at a good standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 59</td>
<td>The standard achieved is acceptable and the work provides evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved with many at an acceptable standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 54</td>
<td>The standard achieved is acceptable and the work provides evidence that the knowledge, understanding and skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that all the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved though a few at only a very basic level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 49</td>
<td>The standard achieved is weak and the work provides evidence of insufficient knowledge, understanding and/or skills at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that a majority but not all of the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 44</td>
<td>The standard achieved is weak and the work provides evidence of insufficient knowledge, understanding and/or skills are at a level appropriate to the level of study. There is evidence showing that several of the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 39</td>
<td>The standard achieved is very weak and the work provides evidence of insufficient knowledge, understanding and/or skills appropriate to the level of study, although some of the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 34</td>
<td>The standard achieved is very weak and the work provides evidence of insufficient knowledge, understanding and/or skills appropriate to the level of study. The evidence shows that some of the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved OR that none is achieved but there is evidence that many of the learning outcomes may be almost achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 29</td>
<td>The standard achieved is unacceptable and the work provides little evidence of the knowledge, understanding and/or skills appropriate to the level of study. The evidence shows that few, if any, of the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generic Grade Descriptors – Postgraduate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 - 24</td>
<td>The standard achieved is unacceptable and the work provides very little evidence of the knowledge, understanding and/or skills appropriate to the level of study. The evidence shows that very few, if any, of the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 14</td>
<td>The standard achieved is unacceptable and the work provides negligible or no evidence of the knowledge, understanding and/or skills appropriate to the level of study. The evidence fails to show that any of the learning outcomes appropriate to that level are achieved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. COURSEWORK SUBMISSION

4.1 Online Submission

4.1.1 All written coursework must be submitted online, through Turnitin. The submission should be set up to allow students to submit in advance as a formative process prior to making the final, formal submission.

4.1.2 As far as possible, arrangements should be made for all other forms of coursework, including portfolios and compositions, to be submitted electronically.

4.2 Artefact Submission

4.2.1 Where the nature of the coursework is such that online submission is not possible, for example where the coursework is an artefact or artistic output, arrangements must be made in advance with the administration office for submission to be done in person and evidence of the submission given to the submitting student.

4.2.2 Care must be taken to avoid the loss or misplacement of coursework submitted in this way; the module leader is responsible for collecting the work in good time and for its secure retention.

5. MARKING AND MODERATION

5.1 Marking

5.1.1 Marking must be done against learning outcomes or assessment criteria derived from learning outcomes, and with reference to grade descriptors (as described in Section 3 above).
5.1.2 Wherever possible, module teams should undertake calibration activities prior to the beginning of the summative marking processes, to ensure a shared understanding of terms and standards.

5.1.3 Typical practice for module marking is that grades should indicate clearly where a piece of coursework sits within the grade descriptor ie, markers should avoid marks at the grade boundaries.

5.1.4 This will prevent the need for any grade boundary considerations at module level. However, where a module has more than one element of assessment, this may result in a final grade that sits within a grade boundary. In this case, rounding up or down of grades should not take place and the final module grade must remain within the grade boundary. Boundary considerations must take place only at the point of final classification of the award so as not to skew results.

5.1.5 Deans/Directors/Heads of School/College, Academic Quality Leads and Heads of Subject must ensure that all markers clearly understand this practice and that inappropriate grade boundary considerations do not take place.

5.2 Anonymous Marking

5.2.1 Definition: Markers do not know the identity of the student(s) whose work they are marking.

5.2.2 Anonymous marking is a means of reducing unconscious bias for or against individual students. It can serve to protect staff from allegations of bias and to increase the confidence of students in the impartiality of the marking system.

5.2.3 Wherever possible, student work should be submitted and marked anonymously.

5.2.4 All written examinations must be anonymously marked.

5.3 Online Marking

5.3.1 Definition of online rubric: An online rubric is a scoring guide used to evaluate the quality of students' work typically using a set of marking criteria and quality definitions for those criteria at particular levels of achievement. Online rubrics are typically presented in a table format and can be developed using BlackBoard or Turnitin assignments.

5.3.2 Wherever possible student work should be marked online using Blackboard or Turnitin and normally using a scoring guide such as a rubric.

5.3.3 Grades and feedback should be returned to students electronically via Blackboard.

5.4 Internal Moderation
5.4.1 **Definition:** The process of ensuring that assessment criteria have been applied consistently and fairly, normally involving second marking of a representative sample.

5.4.2 A sample of all student assessed work that contributes to the final award must be internally moderated.

5.4.3 The minimum internal moderation requirement at all levels for all awards is: 10% of student work for each assessment on any modules that contribute to the final award, or ten pieces of work per assessment (whichever is the greater). The sample should reflect the range of marks across the module and include all borderline fails.

5.4.4 This applies to all modes of assessment that contribute to the final grade of a given module, except dissertations and final projects.

5.4.5 100% of all final dissertations and final projects should be internally moderated, normally through a process of blind second marking.

5.4.6 Schools/Colleges may choose to internally moderate a larger sample where, for instance, the 1st marker is new to the university, where the assessment involves group presentations or performances, for modules with an unusual profile of student performance, or for new courses or for large modules with a team of markers.

5.4.7 Samples for moderation should include:

   (a) The assessment(s) marked highest overall

   (b) A selection of passed assessments from each classification band

   (c) Any problematic assessments, particularly where there was wide disagreement among internal examiners

   (d) All borderline fails.

5.4.8 Internal moderation normally means that the sample of work is blind 2nd marked by a different member of staff to the first marker. It is understood that this is not always possible, for eg where students are presenting or performing.

5.4.9 Where possible, the 2nd marker should be someone who has not taught on the module, but it is understood that this is not always achievable.

5.4.10 It is expected that inconsistencies and variations between markers will occur. However, the mark awarded by the 1st marker should be recorded as the final mark unless moderation highlights a pattern of significant discrepancies between the two markers.

5.4.11 Following the 2nd marking process, the markers should discuss any significant disagreements and resolve them through close reference to the module learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria and grading guidelines.
5.4.12 The 2nd marker’s role is to assure standards and confirm that internal procedures have been followed. Their concern is with the overall marking pattern for the module, as illustrated by the sample of work, rather than with individual marks.

5.4.13 Therefore the 2nd marker **must** not argue for changes to individual marks but could comment, for instance, that overall marking is overly harsh, or that marks at the bottom end of the sample are too generous.

5.4.14 Moderators **must** assure themselves that no inappropriate grade boundary considerations have taken place.

5.4.15 Where there is disagreement in terms of the general consistency of marking, the two markers can negotiate to adjust the marks accordingly for all students, not just those in the sample.

5.4.16 Where first and second markers are unable to reach agreement, a third marker, nominated by the Dean/Director/Head of School/College, may be asked to adjudicate. The third marker should moderate the same sample as the second marker. The third marker will then make a recommendation to the Course Leader or Head of Subject taking into account the views of the first two markers.

5.4.17 A record of the moderation process **must** be made and submitted to the External Examiner along with the sample of student work for external moderation.

5.5 External Moderation

5.5.1 This section refers to the role of the External Examiner. Please see Section 7 of the QSH, External Examining, for full details.

5.5.2 The External Examiner is an impartial and independent expert responsible for ensuring the standards of UWL awards and the reliability of student achievement in relation to those standards.

5.5.3 A sample of all student assessed work that contributes to the final award **must** be submitted to the External Examiner for external moderation. This is normally the same sample that has been internally moderated (see 4.4 above), and **must** be accompanied by the record of internal moderation.

5.5.4 However, the External Examiner has the right to see all assessed work in order to select an appropriate sample for moderation and/or audit against marking schemes/model answers/outline solutions. Detailed arrangements for selection shall be agreed with the External Examiner in advance.

5.5.5 The External Examiner has the right to see any worked scripts and other assessed assignments, including coursework, projects, dissertations which contribute to the module mark. External Examiners shall have discretion to sample material which will allow them to render a judgement as to the:
(a) Overall suitability of the assessment methods in practice
(b) Coherence of the assessment strategy
(c) Reliability of internal marking

5.5.6 The External Examiner may conduct viva voce examinations in such exceptional cases as shall be determined by the Dean/Director/Head of School/College in consultation with the External Examiner.

6. EXAMINATION PROCESS: WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

6.1.1 Written Examinations are not permitted for assessment at Level 3 or Level 4. At Level 5 and Level 6, examinations may be used where there are PSRB requirements. Where used, examinations must be balanced against other assessment methods and constitute no more than 50% of a module mark (unless required by a PSRB).

6.1.2 Written examination durations are either two hours and ten minutes or three hours and ten minutes. The ten minutes is scheduled reading time and must be included. No other durations are available unless there is a specific PSRB requirement; this must be discussed and approved in the course and module approval process, in conjunction with the Head of Conferments and Awards.

6.1.3 A first sit and a resit examination paper and accompanying marking rubrics or guidance must be prepared for each examination session. Where the resit paper is not subsequently used (that is, there are no resitting students) the resit paper may be used for the next examination session.

6.1.4 Examination question papers must be produced on the standard University question paper proforma supplied by the Examinations Office.

6.1.5 All examination question papers and marking rubrics must be approved by the External Examiner and submitted to the Examinations Office when approved.

6.1.6 Answers to the examination questions or any marking guidance must not be attached to the main question paper.

6.1.7 Seen examination papers, once approved, should be made available to all students in advance of the examination at the same time, via an accessible means.

6.1.8 The examination paper cover sheet must clearly indicate if any books, calculators, materials, documents, formulae etc are to be allowed in the examination room.
### 7. ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK POLICY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK POLICY</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VISION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be sector leading in student satisfaction for assessment and feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MISSION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To inspire our students to become innovative and creative professionals connecting them to exciting and rewarding careers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VALUES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible, Affordable, Diverse, Transparent, Accountable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STAKEHOLDERS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUR STUDENTS CAN EXPECT:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessment practices that fairly but rigorously allow students to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessments which will enable them to demonstrate to employers the real world skills they have developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Timely and effective feedback that enables students, through reflection and application to enhance their assessment performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities for relevant, co &amp; extra curricula learning which enhance their engagement, personal confidence &amp; employability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUR STAFF CAN EXPECT:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support and guidance in designing and redesigning programmes of study which incorporate assessment FOR learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities to develop their professional practice in relation to feedback and feedforward to enhance student attainment and retention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advice and guidance on how to support student understanding of assessment and to provide clear and accessible assessment criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUR PARTNERS CAN EXPECT WHERE RELEVANT:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support and (where necessary) development in enhancing their assessment and feedback practices informed by this policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUR EMPLOYERS CAN EXPECT:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Graduates who have demonstrated their academic achievements through authentic, real world assessments, informed by developmental feedback.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## AIMS

### Assessment

**Authentic assessment:** all assessments should be authentic and explicitly related to the world of work.

**Formative assessment:** all students must have opportunities to submit work for feedback and feedforward only, to acclimatise them to what ‘good’ looks like in Higher Education.

**Synoptic assessments:** where possible synoptic assessments (those covering more than one topic/module) should be used to demonstrate course learning outcomes at the appropriate level.

**Timing of assessments:** all courses should map assessment points to avoid assessment overload at any one time and to provide early indications of progress.

**Uncoupling assessment:** All module, level and course learning outcomes need to be assessed, but not repeatedly. Where possible synoptic assessment should be used aimed at course learning outcomes across a number of module.

### Feedback

**Developmental Feedback (Feedforward):** this should be provided on all assessment and should inform subsequent substantive assessments. This type of feedback addresses skills (writing, argumentation, critical thinking) and demonstration and use of knowledge, rather than criticising explicit information.

**Consistent Feedback:** provided through the use of rubrics so that students understand how marks are apportioned and what is expected of them.

**Explicit Feedback:** to ensure students understand clearly when they are being given feedback and how to make use of it for future assignments.

**Timing:** All feedback to be supplied within 15 working days of submission

### Impact

**Improved student satisfaction:** increased NSS/MEQ assessment and feedback scores

**Improved learning gain:** assessment design drives student learning and feedback informs development.

**Employability:** Assessment and feedback lead to improvement of general and specific skills desired by employers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENABLERS</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Assessment &amp; Feedback Methods</th>
<th>Quality Assurance &amp; Enhancement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-assessment:</strong> Submission pro-forma to include student coursework checklist which also allows them to identify areas where they would welcome feedback on presentation, content and knowledge.</td>
<td><strong>Examinations:</strong> May not be used for L3 or 4. At L5 &amp; 6 examinations may be used where there are PSRB requirements. Where used they must be balanced against other assessment methods and will constitute no more than 50% of a module grade (unless required by a PSRB)</td>
<td><strong>New course validation:</strong> will ensure curriculum design incorporates this policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formative feedback:</strong> Provision of early formative feedback between weeks 2-4 to give an early indication of progress and retention. A draft of all summative assessments to be given formative feedforward (i.e. advice and guidance on how to develop their knowledge and skills which is applicable to any type of assessment. All courses should include regular opportunities for students to test their progress through in class exercises (e.g. using Poll everywhere) or online mini-tests, MCQs.</td>
<td><strong>In class exercises:</strong> Should be varied (BB quizzes, practicals, presentations), should not constitute more than 10% of the final module grade. At L5 &amp; 6 more focus should be on the submission of a substantive assessment for formative feedback (e.g. developmental feedback on a thesis or capstone project).</td>
<td><strong>Curriculum review:</strong> will include the need to provide evidence of how this policy has been implemented in modules and courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student engagement:</strong> Assessment should drive learning, thus all assessment artefacts should be introduced in class, assessment criteria and learning outcomes discussed, and opportunity for clarification be provided to ensure students understand what is expected.</td>
<td><strong>Feedback:</strong> should be provided in a variety of ways to suit the type of assessment activity. These include but are not limited to podcasts, video, annotated work, group feedback, face to face. The emphasis should be on development and its use in enhancing future assessment activities and so should not emphasise accuracy of content but quality of knowledge and skills.</td>
<td><strong>Staff Development:</strong> Staff development will be provided to help course teams consider assessment and feedback mapping, weighting and design.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flexible assessment and Reassessment:</strong> the approach to assessment should result in a ‘portfolio style’ of assessment encouraging learning through formative assessment and reducing the need for capping and reassessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISKS</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Financial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusivity:</strong> assessment practices need to be fit for all students.</td>
<td><strong>Perception of increased workload:</strong> the necessity for formative assessment suggests a doubling of assessment practices</td>
<td><strong>Improved retention:</strong> Assessment for learning identifies students at risk of failing allowing interventions to support their retention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mitigation:</strong> Use of inclusive practice frameworks when modules and courses are validated/reviewed</td>
<td><strong>Mitigation:</strong> ensure assessment regimes include technology-assisted assessment, reduces number of artefacts required and makes use of synoptic assessment to encourage cross-module connections and course integration</td>
<td><strong>Reduced cost of assessment:</strong> Loss of examinations at L3 and L4 and reduced examination at L5 and L6 means far less expenditure on examination particularly for those with disabilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timing:</strong> Feedback is only effective if provided in a timely way so that students can use it to improve their academic performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mitigation:</strong> Requirement for all feedback to be supplied within 15 working days of submission, monitored by course teams and School committees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over assessment:</td>
<td>Staff development:</td>
<td>Increased Staff Development needs:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential for perception of over assessment.</td>
<td>A lack of experience in delivering alternative assessments for learning leads to lack of implementation of policy.</td>
<td>The need to raise staff awareness about alternative methods of assessment and developing their technology skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mitigation:</strong> Ensure all students understand the role of assessment in driving learning and ensure assessment maps are published at the start of the year.</td>
<td><strong>Mitigation:</strong> Provision of a range of staff development opportunities both as CPD and through validation/review events.</td>
<td><strong>Mitigation:</strong> Appoint curriculum &amp; assessment academic development specialists.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authentic assessment:</strong> there may be a reliance on employers to provide 'live projects' to ensure authenticity.</td>
<td><strong>Mitigation:</strong> Develop a 'live projects' data base with current contacts as a resource for assessment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Aims

1.1.1 This section describes:
(a) How the University monitors student outcomes
(b) How the university uses outcomes-based data to evaluate its educational provision and services
(c) How monitoring and evaluation feeds into course design and development

1.1.2 The aim of the monitoring and evaluation process is to ensure that the University meets the obligations and expectations of its staff, students and regulators by:
(a) Routinely collecting and analysing data related to student outcomes as part of the assurance of sector-recognised standards
(b) Regularly reviewing and enhancing our provision, reflecting on a range of data sets as they relate to quality to ensure courses and wider services remain fit for purpose and to take account of changing circumstances, demands and pedagogical developments
(c) Involving key internal and external stakeholders, including students and external experts in the monitoring and evaluation process in order to encourage robust dialogue between expert peers, students and wider stakeholders on improving the educational experience within the University and its partners.
(d) Responding to the individual circumstances of each course to ensure that all quality requirements are proportionate to the assessed risk being managed.

1.2 Regulation relevant to this section

1.2.1 The Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education relevant for monitoring course outcomes are:
(a) The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.
(b) The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards
(c) Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student’s achievement to be reliably assessed.
(d) From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

1.3 Responsibilities

1.3.1 Academic Board has the responsibility and authority to set, maintain and assure academic standards.

1.3.2 Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) is responsible for ensuring that there is a robust framework and process to deliver quality and standards.

1.3.3 Course Quality and Approval Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of Academic Quality and Standards Committee and has the responsibility for the assurance of high-quality of course design including ensuring that all courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.

1.3.4 The Education Committee is responsible for reviewing student outcomes and the student experience including the annual Education Review.

1.3.5 Academic Quality and Standards Office (AQSO) is responsible for managing the monitoring and evaluation process and ensuring that all templates are developed and available for all required elements of the approval and monitoring process.

1.3.6 The Planning Office is responsible for organising and managing Annual Education Review

1.3.7 The Global Partnerships Office is responsible for supporting Academic Partnership Link Tutors in the relevant School/College.

1.3.8 The Academic Quality Lead in each School/College is responsible for ensuring that colleagues observe the procedures and requirements.

1.3.9 Course Leaders – identified for each course by the relevant School/College – are responsible for producing the Monitoring Summary for each course and updating the Course Enhancement Plan (CEP) on a continuous basis in response to incoming data or other evidence such as student feedback.

1.4 Further Guidance

1.4.1 For further guidance colleagues should make early contact with the AQSO at quality@uwl.ac.uk or on 020 8231 2116 (ext 2116).

1.4.2 Where an enquiry involves an academic partnership with an external institution, the lead School/College should ensure they contact both the AQSO, and the Global Partnership Office at TNEadmin@uwl.ac.uk or on 020 8231 2749 (ext 2749) at the earliest opportunity.

2. OVERVIEW OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS

2.1 Stages of the monitoring and evaluation process
2.1.1 The monitoring and evaluation process for all courses (including courses delivered by academic partners) should comprises four stages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Authorising Body</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Annual Education Review and CEP</td>
<td>VCE</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ongoing monitoring of CEP (end of each semester)</td>
<td>School/College Quality Committee</td>
<td>Course Leader/Academic Quality Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Annual summary report based on ongoing monitoring</td>
<td>Education Committee/AQSC</td>
<td>Academic Quality Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Calibration of standards review at re-approval stage</td>
<td>Supported by the AQSO</td>
<td>Academic Quality Lead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Criteria for effective monitoring and evaluation

2.2.1 In monitoring and evaluating a course, the Academic Quality Lead should certify that the approved qualification and curriculum:

(a) Continues to achieve student outcomes – for each enrollable and exit qualification – which meet the threshold standards set by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications supported by external expertise.

(b) Continues to enable students to achieve standards beyond the threshold level in line with similar qualifications (for example, grading guidelines) nationally, supported by external expertise.

(c) Continues to enable students to achieve the UWL graduate attributes and align with the University strategies and mission.

(d) Continues to provide reliable and fair opportunity for all students to achieve the outcomes within the study hours and mode of study of the course regardless of background.

(e) Continues to reliably assess student achievement through valid and appropriate methods.

(f) Continues to be delivered by a sufficient and appropriately qualified – subject specific, professional, and pedagogic – and skilled course team.

(g) Continues to have appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services needed to deliver a high-quality experience.

(h) Continues to engage a wide range of internal and external stakeholders (current staff, students, alumni, employers, and where appropriate PSRBs) in the development and delivery of the course.
(i) Continues to use research and scholarship to enhance the stretch and rigour provided by the course.

Where this is not the case, the CEP should be amended to reflect actions taken by the course team.

### 2.3 Cross School/College courses or modules

2.3.1 Some courses or modules **may** be jointly delivered by two or more Schools/Colleges e.g. combined, major/minor and joint honours courses. This is particularly the case where a module may be used in courses in two or more Schools/Colleges.

2.3.2 The lead School/College, as designated on the Business Case Form (CA1), **should** direct activities. Nonetheless, at key stages all School/College/s involved **must** offer the opportunity for other Schools/Colleges or courses involved to be consulted and discuss the development and enhancement of the module or course.

### 2.4 Timings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring</th>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>Continuous Monitoring</td>
<td>External Examiners’ reports received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Data Dashboards Updating CEP</td>
<td>Review of course data dashboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>For all courses including those delivered by academic partners</td>
<td>Education Reviews UG/PG CEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td></td>
<td>Minor/Major amendments to courses and modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Course and module development activities Minor and Major amendments to courses and modules Monitoring of CEP</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Course and module development activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Minor and Major amendments to courses and modules</td>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
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3. EDUCATION REVIEW

3.1 Preparation for review

3.1.1 Education Review takes place annually at School/College-level and is chaired by the Head of Strategic Planning and relevant PVC/DVC

3.1.2 Attendees **should** include:

(a) A member of VCE (normally the member of VCE with responsibility for the relevant School or College)

(b) Dean/Director/Head of School/College

(c) Head of Subject

(d) Representative of the AQSO (who will also minute the outcomes of the review)

3.1.3 The Dashboard may include:

(a) Trends of overall student numbers

(b) Applications, offers and acceptances broken down by students with different characteristics

(c) Qualifications profile of students on entry

(d) Retention, continuation and completion rates

(e) Degree and other outcomes, including different outcomes for students with different characteristics

(f) Number, nature and pattern of student complaints by stage
(g) Graduate employment and progression to professional jobs and postgraduate study
(h) Student Staff ratios (this may be grouped or at subject level)
(i) NSS scores
(j) TEF

3.2 Conducting the Review

3.2.1 The purpose of Education Review is to ensure:

(a) A supportive and developmental system of review, reflection, and enhancement;
(b) Effective setting and assessment of KPIs
(c) Effective sharing of good practice and timely collaborative action planning;
(d) Early identification of shortfalls in performance against benchmarks;
(e) Appropriate School/College/course action to be taken by drawing up of a CEP.

3.2.2 In order to enhance quality and standards, the Education Review should effectively capture and disseminate good practice in learning, teaching, assessment, research and innovation.

3.2.3 The Education Review provides a structure for consistently capturing and recognising excellence at all levels; for sharing that effectively, and for understanding the impact of the good practice that colleagues and students have developed, and for making that knowledge, expertise and experience available to support enhancement in those areas that would benefit from it.

3.2.4 A draft action plan for the School/College will be drawn at the end of the Education Review session, based on the different subjects in the School/College.

3.3 Outcomes and Reporting at School/College level

3.3.1 At School/College level, the School/College Executive is responsible for sharing the outcomes of the Education Review, overseeing the progress of a CEP for each course, to address the issues identified

3.3.2 CEPs should be presented to School/College Quality Committees and a summary of these at Education Committee/AQSC as described in 4.1.3.

3.3.3 Other outcomes of Education Review may include:

(a) Training and development requirements for course teams, subject areas or Schools/College
(b) A requirement to review the course, re-approve the course or undertake a calibration of standards review as appropriate.
3.3.4 Where these include recommendations to significantly amend or re-approve courses and modules, course teams must enter into the UWL processes for course approval articulated in Section 3 of this handbook.

3.3.5 Where minor or major amendments are recommended, course or module leaders (as appropriate) should consult Section 4 of this handbook.

3.4 Outcomes and reporting at University Level

3.4.1 Once all Education Reviews are completed, a full report will be compiled by the Director of Quality Assurance. This will consider:

   a) Issues that require University action broken down into quality and standards issues (for Education Committee/AQSC) and student experience issues (for the Student Experience Group)

   b) Good practice and how it will be disseminated across the University

   c) An overview of actions for courses which are red or amber rated.

4. ONGOING MONITORING

4.1 Ongoing monitoring of course

4.1.1 The School/College, led by the Academic Quality Leads, will monitor progress against the CEPs through the School/College Board both in relation to action planning and extension of good practice – at regular intervals across the year. They should ensure that effective networks are in place to communicate achievements and challenges discussed in these fora, as appropriate, across the School/College’s academic community.

4.1.2 Each course carries a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating.

4.1.3 Although all courses must be monitored, closer attention must be paid to those with Red and Amber ratings.

4.1.4 Updated CEPs must be presented to Education Committee/AQSC, with a final summary to inform University Annual Reporting process. The School/College Academic Quality Lead is responsible for ensuring that this takes place.

4.1.5 The final summary will serve as the School/College annual monitoring report for consideration by Education Committee/AQSC. There summaries of CEPs will feed into the following Education Review. They should clearly address the actions taken to enhance the course during the year.

5. CALIBRATION OF STANDARDS REVIEW

5.1 When to undertake a Calibration of Standards Review

5.1.1 A calibration of standards review will normally be undertaken at the 5 year (or less for new courses) review for re-approval. However, where there are concerns about the
standards off a course (i.e. it is red rated) the Education Review may require one to be undertaken earlier.

5.2 Organise calibration events prior to re-approval of courses

5.2.1 The AQSO will support Academic Quality Leads in each School/College who must organise a calibration exercise before re-approval of courses. This exercise should involve, as a minimum, all course leaders and module leaders responsible for delivery of teaching in a given subject area and could include other teaching staff and students.

5.2.2 The purpose of this exercise or series of exercises is to:

(a) Enhance staff awareness of sector-recognised standards and enable them to arrive at a shared understanding of key terms used within relevant standards descriptors including the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), FHEQ, Apprenticeship standards and standards developed by appropriate Professional bodies (as appropriate to each course)

(b) Ensure alignment with sector-recognised standards of course and module learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

5.2.3 All participants in the events should receive a copy of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, and the relevant benchmark statements for the areas under discussion. In addition, any previous guidance developed from previous calibration exercises should be circulated. In addition, it may be helpful to discuss particular examples of submitted assessment tasks – at each level – to ensure clear and focused conversation, from year to year this may be distributed between practical and written tasks in order that the majority of assessment items are included in calibration discussions.

5.3 Hold event and update guidance

5.3.1 There is no fixed format for the exercise(s), but Academic Quality Leads may request guidance on planning and delivery from the AQSO. The exercise(s), at minimum, should offer participants opportunities to:

(a) Discuss their understanding of key terms used within the appropriate standards and/or level descriptors and the ways in which these terms relate to their disciplinary areas;

(b) Examine how these terms are used or ‘translated’ into assessment criteria on the courses and modules they deliver;

(c) Consider the equivalence of standards across assessment items within levels and across courses within subject areas.

5.3.2 To complete a calibration exercise, the discussion should address carefully all levels

5.3.3 At the end of the exercise, where needed, each course should produce a summary of the interpretation of the relevant assessment criteria/expectations for assessment.
5.3.4 The guidance should be used to improve the understanding of staff and external examiners to ensure that they are still accurate and commonly understood.

6. **MONITORING STUDENT OUTCOMES FOR PARTNERS**

6.1 **Education review for academic partners**

6.1.1 Academic Partners are subject to an annual review which includes consideration of quality and standards and quality enhancement but also encompasses wider issues, as detailed in the Global Partnerships Operations Manual. Courses delivered by academic partners, whether validated or sub-contracted will follow the same process as set out above.

6.1.2 Where particular issues are identified with the provision at the partner, actions to rectify these issues will need to be included in the CEP.

6.1.3 Where good practice at the partner is identified, this should be disseminated within the School/College (and other partners as appropriate).

7. **SUMMARY OF ANNUAL MONITORING**

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<td>Annual Course Reports produced for Education Committee/AQSC</td>
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Academic Quality and Standards Handbook

Section 7: External Examining

2019/20
External Examining timeline

- **Sep**: External Examiner tenure commences
- **Oct**: External Examiner tenure ends 4 years later
- **Nov**: Annual Agreement sent to all External Examiners
- **Dec**: External Examiner report due – mid Oct
- **Jan**: External Examiner report due – mid Oct
- **Feb**: Additional External Examiner annual reporting to AQSC
- **Mar**: External Examiner annual reporting to AQSC
- **Apr**: Advance HE Professional Development Course for External Examiners – Sept and Oct
- **May**: Application deadline – end of May
- **Jun**: External Examiner induction Days – Oct and Nov
- **Jul**: External Examiner interim annual reporting to AQSC
- **Aug**: Advance HE Professional Development Course for External Examiners
External Examining process diagram

**Application**
- Course Leader identifies appropriate candidate, that meets the specified criteria, (including the initial check for reciprocity and conflict of interest), through advertisement on the External Examiner JISCMAIL List or other official network/forum.
- Course Leader completes External Examiner Application Form (EE1), signed by the External Examiner and Dean/Director/Head of School/College and submitted to quality@uwl.ac.uk together with CV and evidence of right to work in the UK.

**Appointment**
- Check of Application Form for completeness and accuracy by the Academic Quality and Standards Office (AQSO).
- Application Form and CV critically read by a nominated academic member of staff from another School/College, and signed with comments.
- AQSO sends Application Form and CV to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for final approval.
- If approved, contract issued to External Examiner, School/College informed.
- If not approved, further information may be required or an alternative candidate must be sought.

**Examining**
- Once signed contract has been returned, External Examiner is sent all required information from AQSO (e.g. Annual Agreement) and Course Leader.
- External Examiner attends Induction Day organised by AQSO.
- External Examiner reviews all required assessment briefs and examination papers prior to assessment being delivered.
- External Examiner moderates a sample of all required assessments.
- External Examiner attends all required assessment boards and signs off matrices.

**Reporting**
- External Examiner gives feedback at assessment boards.
- External Examiner completes annual report and submits to AQSO for review.
- Report is checked and sent to School/College and Academic Partner (where applicable).
- Response is generated by School/College and Academic Partner (where applicable) and sent to External Examiner.
- External Examiner claims annual fee on receipt of the annual report (expenses can be claimed as and when they are incurred).
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Aims

1.1.1 This section describes:

(a) How a new External Examiner is appointed by the University;

(b) The duties and responsibilities of the External Examiner.

1.1.2 The aim of the External Examining process is to ensure that the University meets the obligations and expectations of its staff, students and regulators by:

(a) Ensuring external experts contribute to the setting and maintaining of academic standards and alignment with the relevant national qualifications framework, Characteristics Statements, Subject Benchmark Statements, and any other requirements, such as those from Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

(b) Engaging external expertise – individually and collectively – to encourage robust dialogue between expert peers, students and wider stakeholders on improving the educational experience within the University and its academic partners.

1.2 Definition

1.2.1 External Examiner is an impartial and independent expert responsible for ensuring the standards of the University’s awards and the reliability of student achievement in relation to those standards. External Examiners have sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers, and where appropriate, professional peers. External Examiners **must** not contribute to delivery through teaching or any other direct capacity.

1.3 Regulation relevant to this section

1.3.1 The Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education relevant for External Examining are:

(a) The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.

(b) Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student’s achievement to be reliably assessed.

(c) From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
(d) The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector recognised standards.

1.4 Responsibilities

1.4.1 Academic Board has the responsibility and authority to set, maintain and assure academic standards.

1.4.2 The AQSO is responsible for organising and managing the approval process for External Examiners and ensuring that robust action is taken in response to their reports.

1.4.3 Academic Quality Lead in each School/College is responsible for ensuring that colleagues within their Schools/Colleges observe the procedures and requirements, and have effective communication mechanisms with their External Examiners.

1.4.4 Course Leader – identified for each course by the relevant School/College – is responsible for ensuring robust, transparent and scrupulous use of the External Examiner for the assurance of standards and the development of the quality of the learning experience on the course.

1.5 Further Guidance

1.5.1 For further guidance colleagues **should** make early contact with the AQSO at quality@uwl.ac.uk or on 020 8231 2116 (ext 2116).

1.5.2 Where an academic partnership is involved, the lead School/College **should** ensure they contact both the AQSO, and the Global Partnerships Office at TNEadmin@uwl.ac.uk or on 020 8231 2749 (ext 2749) at the earliest opportunity.

2. OVERVIEW OF EXTERNAL EXAMINING

2.1 Role of the External Examiner

2.1.1 An External Examiner at the University is an independent reviewer of assessments and student work with the aim of contributing to the moderation of standards and providing the University with a report on the standards achieved, the comparability of standards with other known Higher Education providers and the extent to which the course meets the national expectations in the subject discipline.

2.1.2 The final outcomes of external examining are:

(a) Approval of results as in line with sector-recognised standards.

(b) Agreement that results have been reliably arrived at through the student’s own work.

(c) Recommendations for enhancing the academic provision and the student experience.

2.1.3 The role can be divided into three main categories:
(a) Examiner

External Examiners act as an examiner of “output” and the standards achieved by those outputs. For example: review of assessments designed by the School/College and review of the student achievement in the work submitted. External Examiners will be expected to provide a view upon how effective and appropriate the assessments are in measuring the intended outcomes of the course together with approving the results as in line with sector recognised standards. External Examiners can withhold their approval of results where they do not believe they are in line with sector recognised standards or students have not been provided with opportunities – which are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers – to achieve standards beyond the threshold level.

This approval of results will usually entail the endorsement of the decisions made by Progression and/or Award Boards that External Examiners attend, normally through signature of the relevant papers that contain the student profiles and through confirmation in External Examiners’ annual report.

(b) Processes

External Examiners act as an auditor on the reliability, appropriateness and effectiveness of a School/College’s implementation of University processes for assuring the standards of its awards. In this capacity External Examiners might for example provide commentary upon the deliberations of the Award and Progression Board, upon School/College implementation of University policies, upon the University’s regulatory framework or perhaps the School/College’s management of the moderation process. These commentaries may include, for example, the impact of extenuation on the decision-making processes of a Board of Examiners (but not individual cases), the application and consistency of University regulations governing the conferment of awards, or the consistency with which “borderline” grades are treated and subsequent awards conferred. This is not exhaustive but indicative of the regulatory areas the University would ask External Examiners to bear in mind as part of the External Examiners’ role.

(c) Curricula

External Examiners may be consulted by Schools/Colleges on changes that affect the student experience and the development of the curriculum. For example, changes to the course structure or more particularly to the overall assessment regimes for the courses which External Examiners examine.

2.2 Levels requiring External Examiners

2.2.1 An External Examiner must be appointed to examine all taught components of higher education awards from Level 5 to Level 8. Level 4 taught components must be examined where:
(a) The award is an enrollable award (not an exit award) e.g. Cert HE, Dip HE or Foundation Degree

(b) It is the first year that the course is running

(c) It is a requirement set by a PSRB

(d) Any other subject specific requirement

2.2.2 Non-taught PhD Examiners are appointed with reference to their specific area of expertise, on a ‘one-off’ basis.

2.3 **External Examiner role**

2.3.1 External Examiners will:

- Be consulted on, and approve the form and content of proposed coursework and examinations and other assessments and reassessment that count towards the modules for which they are responsible;

- Have access to all, or if agreed, a sample of summatively assessed work on the modules they are responsible for;

- Moderate the marks awarded by internal examiners; and

- Consider all available information relating to modules they are responsible for, and to raise any issues at the Module Assessment Board.

- Be consulted on and approve the recommendations for award and progression for all students on awards for which they are responsible.

- Participate as required in any review of decisions about individual students’ outcomes taken during their term of appointment at Award Boards or Joint Assessment Boards.

- Occasionally, advise on proposed amendments to modules/courses.

- Where appropriate, have the opportunity to meet with students,

2.4 **Activities of the External Examiner**

2.4.1 During an academic year, External Examiners **must**:

(a) Attend the Progress/Award Boards to provide an independent view of student progression and reasonable comparability of awards.

(b) Review and comment upon all first sitting and resit of assessment briefs for the modules or courses for which the External Examiner is responsible.

(c) For specific courses or modules, visit students in practice once per academic year, as specified and agreed between the School/College and External Examiner
(d) Attend a minimum of normally two Module Assessment Boards (MABs) to provide an independent view of student achievement.

(e) Submit an impartial and independent report on the standards of the modules/courses for which External Examiners is responsible.

(f) Review and comment upon student achievement in line with sector-recognised standards on courses for which the External Examiner is responsible.

(g) Where appropriate, visit academic partner institutions

2.4.2 External Examiners have no special role in marking or adjudicating individual scripts and student work, and External Examiners are not expected to act as a third marker for any assessment where there is disagreement over a mark between internal markers. The role of the internal examiners is to award an appropriate mark based on the submitted work of a student.

2.4.3 External Examiners role in this respect is to review the standard of the marking across the cohort and advise upon its general appropriateness to the work submitted. External Examiners can recommend adjustments to cohort marks where there is evidence of under- or over-marking across grades. External Examiners must not act as an individual third marker for any given student work.

2.5 Period of appointment

2.5.1 An External Examiner will be appointed for a period of 4 years and 3 months beginning on the 1 September following appointment and ending on the 30 November.

2.5.2 An External Examiner’s appointment may be extended, by a maximum one academic year, in exceptional circumstances, including:

- Where either an appointment has not been able to be made;
- An External Examiner has resigned requiring an earlier start date;
- Due to the closure of a course there is need to keep continuity of external examining arrangements.

2.5.3 An External Examiner may be re-appointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years has elapsed since the completion of their last appointment.

3. EXTERNAL EXAMINING PROCESSES

3.1 External Examining stages

3.1.1 External examining should comprise the following four stages:

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<td>Application</td>
<td>Dean/Director/Head of School/College</td>
<td>Course Leader</td>
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3.2 Criteria for reliable and fair external examining

3.2.1 In approving an External Examiner, the authorising body and responsible officers should certify that the approved External Examiner:

(a) Is sufficiently and suitably qualified – usually to at least the level above the award to be examined – to undertake the duties proposed;

(b) Is independent of the University and its staff to the degree to offer robust and rigorous assurance of its academic standards;

(c) Is able to offer sufficient time and expertise to assure and enhance the learning experience of students on the course;

(d) Has current appropriate expertise – academically, and where relevant professionally – in the core disciplines of the course or module to be examined in order to provide judgement on academic standards;

(e) Has sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers, and where appropriate, professional peers.

(f) Has experience of teaching and assessing in UK higher education at the levels to be externally examined

(g) Is fluent in English, and any other language in which the course to be examined is taught or assessed; and

(h) Meets the criteria set by the relevant PSRBs, where necessary.

(i) In addition, in confirming the appointment, the Director of Human Resources (or nominee) must certify that the External Examiner has the right to work in the UK.

3.2.2 To ensure that criteria 3.2.1 (b) is met the appointed External Examiner should have no direct interest or ties to the University or its staff, courses or students, including:

(a) Being a member or advisor to the University Board of Governors.

(b) Being in a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student on the course. For example, both being members of the same
committee or board of a PSRB, or undertaking a recent or current collaborative research project.

(c) Being an internal examiner, academic partner or occasional staff member on a course at the University.

(d) Being closely associated with the sponsorship, placements or other training being provided to students on the course.

(e) Being in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the course either as an employer or in some other capacity.

(f) Required to assess current or recent previous colleagues who are recruited as students to the course.

(g) Being from the same Higher Education Provider, or other place of employment as any other External Examiner, or staff member on the Assessment Board.

(h) Replacing another External Examiner from the same institution unless the External Examiner has not completed the term of office.

(i) Being a current or recent staff member or student from the University or an academic partner institution. This may be considered but only after a period of five years has elapsed since their departure.

3.2.3 There should be no reciprocal examining arrangements between the University and the External Examiner’s employing organisation (within the same subject or course), save in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

3.2.4 The appointed External Examiner should hold no more than two External Examiner appointments at any one time. However, there are circumstances where this requirement can be waived at the discretion of appointing officer. These circumstances may include for example emergency cover or a proven shortage of specialists in the curriculum area.

3.2.5 Retirees can be considered provided they have sufficient evidence of continuing involvement in the academic area.

3.3 Timings

In most instances, a few months is required in order to complete the appointment, contracting and induction process required by the University. Therefore, application documentation should be submitted normally no later than the 31st May for appointments commencing in September of the following academic year. In exceptional circumstances, appointments may be made mid academic year, in these cases, applications should be submitted no later than 3 months prior to the start of the appointment.
3.3.1 This timescale ensures that the External Examiner’s Proof of Right to Work can be checked, their contract issued and signed, and they commence their appointment before any work has been sent to them for judgement.

3.3.2 It should be noted that in order to obtain all of the information required, work on some aspects of the Appointment stage should begin well in advance of these deadlines.

3.3.3 Where Schools/Colleges are handling an appointment of this nature they should seek guidance from the AQS0 at the earliest opportunity.

3.4 Termination, Resignation and Absence

3.4.1 The appointment of an External Examiner can be terminated by the University, approved by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic), if, for example, they fail to fulfil their obligations, normally subject to three months’ notice. Any termination of an External Examiner’s appointment must be reported to the next Academic Board with reasons for termination.

3.4.2 Where an External Examiner wishes to resign their post this will normally be subject to three months’ notice to ensure that all standards are secured. Prior to their departure a resigning External Examiner will be required to submit a completed annual report.

3.4.3 An External Examiner can be temporarily replaced where a current External Examiner is unable to carry out their duties for a maximum period of one year.

4. APPLICATION

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 External Examiner Application ensures compliance with regulatory or legislative requirements (e.g. immigration and OfS conditions of registration).

4.1.2 External Examiner Application consists of three stages:

(a) Identification of candidates for post

(b) Completion of Application

(c) Approval by the Dean/Director/Head of School/College

4.2 Identification of candidates for post

4.2.1 A Course Leader who wishes to propose the appointment of a new External Examiner should identify appropriate candidates for the role.

4.2.2 External Examiner posts can be advertised on the External Examiner JISCMAIL List or other official network/forum to ensure that all appropriate candidates have the opportunity to express their interest in roles at the University.

4.2.3 Assistance with advertisement or identification of candidates for External Examiner posts can be provided by the Assistant Registrar for the relevant School/College.
4.3 Completion of Application

4.3.1 A Course Leader who wishes to propose the appointment of a new External Examiner or an extension of time and/or duties of an existing External Examiner, must complete the External Examiner Application Form (EE1). The form is accessible on the AQSO SharePoint site.

4.3.2 In completing the form, the staff member(s) will need to:
   (a) consult Paragraph 3.2 above to ensure that the proposed External Examiner can demonstrably meet all necessary requirements.
   (b) provide the intended details of the course(s) and modules for which the External Examiner is to be appointed. The application form must include reference to specific courses and modules where these are currently being delivered, however any new modules should be referenced with indicative titles prior to the completion of course approval.

4.3.3 Schools/Colleges should also consult the Global Partnerships Office regarding the proposal for any impact on domestic or transnational Partnerships.

4.3.4 An application for an extension of time and/or duties should be processed in the same way as for a new application.

4.4 Approval by the Dean/Director/Head of School/College

4.4.1 The fully completed and signed External Examiner Application Form (EE1) must be submitted for approval by the Dean/Director/Head of School/College. In signing the form, the Dean/Director/Head of School/College confirms that the proposal has been discussed and approved at executive level within the School/College.

4.4.2 The Dean/Director/Head of School/College approval confirms that the following points have been discussed and confirmed at both Executive and Operational level:
   (a) The allocation of modules or awards is appropriate
   (b) The fee level is appropriate.
   (c) There are adequate resources allocated to the support of the External Examiner in undertaking their duties (e.g. an appropriate mentor has been identified)

4.4.3 The signed External Examiner Application Form (EE1) must be sent to the AQSO to enable the remaining stages to be completed. Where the AQSO considers that the application is either incomplete or does not meet the requirements for appointment this will be returned to the Dean/Director/Head of School/College with a clear explanation of the matters for consideration.

5. APPOINTMENT

5.1.1 The External Examiner Appointment process ensures compliance with regulatory or legislative requirements (e.g. immigration and OfS conditions of registration). The Pro-
Vice Chancellor (Academic) is authorised by the Academic Board to undertake this delegated duty.

5.1.2 The External Examiner Appointment process consists of two stages:

(a) University Approval
(b) Confirmation of Appointment

5.2 University Approval

5.2.1 Once the application form and CV has been submitted it will be considered by the AQSO and a critical reader (an academic member of staff from another School/College) who is trained for the consideration of applications. The purpose is to check that the proposed External Examiner complies with internal and external regulations, prior to submission to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) for final approval on recommendation made by the Director of Quality Assurance.

5.2.2 After considering the proposal, the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) will take one of the following actions:

(a) Approve without revisions.
(b) Approve subject to revisions to the satisfaction of the Director of Quality Assurance.
(c) Refer for resubmission at a later date.
(d) Reject, and require further identification of an appropriate External Examiner.

5.2.3 Once the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) has granted final approval the AQSO will send an Offer Letter (contract) and induction pack to the External Examiner. External Examiners are required to sign and return a copy of the Offer Letter to the AQSO. Once this has been received, the AQSO will notify the lead School/College, and Academic Partners (where appropriate), as well as the relevant professional services. From the School/College’s perspective, the full approval process can now be considered complete.

5.3 Confirmation of Appointment

5.3.1 Following approval, all newly appointed External Examiners must provide documentation proving eligibility in the form of a passport or ID, the original of which must be seen by a member of University staff. This documentation will be submitted to the Human Resources Department, who hold a list of appropriate documentation.

5.3.2 In order for the University to comply with its legal duties under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act (2006), checks that all External Examiners are eligible to work in the UK must be conducted. To avoid any possibility of discrimination this documentation is required from everyone, even if they are a UK or European Economic Area (EEA) citizen.
5.3.3 To enable swift appointment and to manage the expectations of applicants when staff members approach suitable candidates, they should mention to the candidate that they will be required to provide evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK.

6. EXAMINING

6.1 Introduction and contact

Induction and Support for newly appointed examiners

6.1.1 External Examiners will be briefed before the start of their duties. The AQSO will arrange induction days for External Examiners to be held, as required depending on appointment dates. The dates are normally scheduled to take place in October and November with an additional session scheduled in February/March.

6.1.2 The aim of these sessions is to provide information on the role of the External Examiner at the University as well as to look at the undergraduate and postgraduate scheme and associated regulations, the board structure and School/College operations.

6.1.3 The induction days should be interactive and informal and give newly appointed examiners the opportunity to familiarise themselves with University processes and meet with representatives from their School/College.

Information provided by the AQSO

6.1.4 The AQSO will send to the External Examiner, together with the Offer Letter and induction pack, guidance for claiming fees and expenses. All of which is available from the External Examiners Web Area. The Offer Letter will contain: details of the course(s) and module(s) the External Examiner will be covering including reference to academic partners (where applicable); period of tenure; contact details, induction day information, and information on right to work checks.

6.1.5 The AQSO will send to the External Examiner an Annual Agreement at the start of each academic year which details the course(s) and module(s) they are examining that academic year, including reference to academic partners (where applicable), fee information, assessment board dates, assessment brief and examination paper information and School/College contact details.

6.1.6 The workload of an External Examiner can change, reduce or increase annually for a number of reasons including:

   a) Changes in curricula coverage due to changes in External Examining arrangements

   b) Modules closing or new modules running

   c) The addition of academic partnership provision

Information provided by the Course Leader
6.1.7 The Course Leader will ensure that the following information is sent to the External Examiner for complete initial briefing.

(a) Access to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) - Blackboard and specific modules

(b) Website link to the academic regulations

(c) Website link to the current General Regulations and Procedures Affecting Students

(d) Course documentation including Course Handbook and Module Study Guides for each module for which the External Examiner has responsibility

(e) PSRB requirements (if applicable)

(f) Student handbooks

(g) Previous External Examiner reports and annual course/module reports

(h) Any relevant discipline assessment criteria, marking schemes or model answers.

Mentoring arrangements for new External Examiners

6.1.8 A Course team may wish to nominate an External Examiner who, whilst being well qualified to examine in terms of their specialist subject knowledge, does not have sufficient recent external examining experience. Nominees without sufficient external examining experience should, where possible, join an experienced external examining team and the School/College is also required to allocate a mentor to offer support on the University’s processes in their first year as External Examiner. The mentor must be an existing and experienced External Examiner of the University and should preferably be associated to a similar subject area.

Meeting with students

6.1.9 There is no formal University requirement for External Examiners to meet with students, although it is a PSRB requirement in some instances. External Examiners should be provided with the opportunity to engage with students where this is deemed appropriate by the board or the course team. This will in part be determined by the nature of the discipline and assessment methods.

6.1.10 External Examiners find it useful to meet with students to assist in evaluation of the appropriateness of assessment methodologies, as well as to assist them in forming a view on standards and on quality of delivery.

6.1.11 Where External Examiners do meet with students the focus of discussion should be on the students’ experience of learning and assessment. Questions might include:

(a) Are students made aware of the overall outcomes for the course? Are timetables and workloads appropriate?

(b) Do students feel they are being challenged?
(c) Do students know how they are doing?
(d) What feedback do students get on their progress and does it help them improve?
(e) Are the library and IT facilities adequate?
(f) What are the course strengths and are there any other areas for improvement?

6.1.12 The University expects the External Examiner to exercise judgement when reporting on student views and interpret them against their wider knowledge of the course. Students should be encouraged to support and illustrate their views with examples of practice. The contribution from the External Examiner is to provide an independent critical perspective on what students tell us. The University values student feedback and the course team should already have a good understanding of student opinion. It does not always add value for External Examiners to simply report student views as stated without placing them in a critical context.

6.2 Approving Assessment Tasks

6.2.1 External examiners must be consulted on draft assessment briefs and examination papers at undergraduate levels 5 and 6, and at postgraduate levels 7 and 8. Assessment briefs and examination papers must be reviewed by External Examiners where the assessment is part of an enrollable Cert HE, Dip HE or Foundation Degree or where required by a PSRB or other subject specific requirement. To facilitate consideration by examiners model answers, outline solutions and related marking schemes must be provided along with draft assessment briefs and examination papers.

6.2.2 All documents should be provided to External Examiners at least four months in advance of the assessment.

6.2.3 External Examiners should normally be consulted regarding students’ choice of projects and/or design exercises and/or dissertations where these are integral components of module assessment at Level 6 or Level 7.

6.3 Sampling Assessed Work

6.3.1 The External Examiner has the right to see all assessed work in order to select an appropriate sample for moderation and/or audit against marking schemes/model answers/outline solutions. Detailed arrangements for selection shall be agreed with the External Examiner in advance.

6.3.1 The minimum moderation sample of student work, at all levels for all awards is: 10% of student work for each assessment on any modules that contribute to the final award, or ten pieces of work per assessment (whichever is the greater). The sample should reflect the range of marks across the module and include all borderline fails.

6.3.2 Where a sample is provided it should include:

(a) The assessment(s) marked highest overall
(b) A selection of passed assessments from each classification band
(c) Any problematic assessments particularly where there was wide disagreement among internal examiners
(d) A sample of fails.
(e) At the External Examiner’s discretion all fails in dissertation/major projects can be reviewed

6.3.3 Assessments include all components contributing to a module including coursework elements and examination papers. The reference to ‘problematic assessments’ is intended to cover a variety of eventualities where a department wants the particular advice of the External Examiner. This would include, for example, exceptional cases where there is internal disagreement the application of the marking scheme but must not be regarding a mark for a script or coursework assignment.

6.3.4 The External Examiner has the right to see any worked scripts and other assessed assignments, including coursework, projects, dissertations which contribute to the module mark. External Examiners shall have discretion to sample material which will allow them to render a judgement as to the:
(a) Overall suitability of the assessment methods in practice
(b) Coherence of the assessment strategy
(c) Reliability of internal marking

6.3.5 The External Examiner may conduct viva voce examinations in such exceptional cases as shall be determined by the Dean/Director/Head of School/College in consultation with the External Examiner.

6.4 Approving Student Achievement
6.4.1 External Examiners shall be bound by the academic and assessment regulations of the University.

6.4.2 External Examiners shall offer advice and comments regarding the standards of the cohort and the assessment process. The External Examiner shall have equal power with internal members of the Assessment Board and may not override the collective view of the Board.

6.4.3 External Examiners must sign the matrices to signify endorsement of the marks for the modules and that decisions have been made in accordance with University regulations.

6.4.4 Where unable to attend, the External Examiner must submit a statement to the Chair of the Assessment Board which states that he/she agrees with the final marks awarded and standards achieved, and this should be attached to the matrices in lieu of their signature.
Where an external does not wish to or refuses to sign, see paragraphs on disputes below.

6.4.5 The signed pass lists will be retained within the Registry records as part of the Award and Progression Board minutes.

Disputes involving External Examiners

6.4.6 However, where an External Examiner does not agree with decisions taken by the Board or disagrees regarding issues of standards on taught modules, the views of the External Examiner shall be noted in the minutes of the relevant Assessment Board and in time in the External Examiners’ report.

6.4.7 In these cases, the decisions of the Board **must** be separately ratified by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) before they are final.

6.4.8 The External Examiner may appeal, in exceptional circumstances, to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or another Pro-Vice-Chancellor (where the PVC is unavailable or is in conflict of interest). The decision of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor shall be final.

6.4.9 If the External Examiner is unwilling to sign then he/she shall submit, in writing, his/her rationale, with justification to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic). The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will investigate any issues which might mean that students’ marks would not otherwise be considered at the Award Board. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) shall have authority to sign the pass list in lieu of the External Examiner.

6.4.10 When the decision of an External Examiner considering a dissertation submitted for a Master’s degree by Examination gives rise to a case of dispute between the External Examiner(s) and internal examiners it is within the power of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to decide on the matter, at his/her discretion, or to appoint another External Examiner to provide an independent opinion. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) may take into account any written reports submitted by members of the Assessment Board.

6.4.11 In choosing a second External Examiner the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) may also take into account, but need not be bound by, the nomination (if any) of an Assessment Board for a second External Examiner. A decision on whether or not to reconvene the Examining Board shall be at the discretion of this second External Examiner whose decision on this matter shall be final.

7. **REPORTING**

7.1 **Submitting the annual report**

7.1.1 External Examiners will provide reports on individual modules to the module leaders throughout the years. External examiners are required to submit a written report on an annual basis to the University according to the deadlines set in the report template and communicated to the External Examiners. The report must be received before payment
of fees is authorised. Such reports should cover the full range of activities with which the examiner has been involved.

7.1.2 The final report (completed on the same template as the annual) made at the end of the term of office, should give general observations based on the whole period as well as covering the year in question. Particular attention should be paid to any issues that have been raised, but not addressed during the examiner’s period of office.

7.1.3 Where an External Examiner is appointed to oversee work delivered at the University and Academic Partner, the External Examiner must refer specifically to the academic partner(s) cohort(s) in the annual report, raising any issues (where appropriate) and confirming the academic quality and standards of the provision.

7.1.4 Interim/supplementary reports may be submitted at any times where an examiner considers that issues have arisen which require prompt attention. This report is intended to be exceptional and it will not be necessary for examiners to report on the satisfactory operation, or progress of the work, of the assessment board.

7.1.5 An External Examiner may send a separate report to the Vice-Chancellor on any matter which she/he deems necessary; such a report may be sent in confidence at any time. If an External Examiner has serious concerns about issues related to standards within the institution and has exhausted all internal procedures including a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, they should access the independent mechanism for addressing concerns about standards and quality in higher education managed by Office for Students (OfS).

7.1.6 Each report must be emailed to quality@uw.ac.uk. The reports will be processed and reviewed by the AQSO who is responsible for ensuring that reports are considered and that any necessary actions are taken within the University.

7.1.7 Annual reports should be completed on the appropriate template available on the External Examiners Web Area. The report is a major source of information in the annual monitoring process. The report should contain clear information on academic standards and should advise on good practice, innovation and areas for enhancement. The most useful reports not only celebrate the positive aspects of courses but also give specific recommendations for actions.

7.1.8 In the unlikely event of a report not being sufficiently clear or informative, the University may seek further details.

7.2 Responding to the Annual Report

7.2.1 The AQSO should send an email to the External Examiner acknowledging receipt of his/her annual report and providing an indication of the timescale for a formal written response from the Course Leader or his/her nominee.

7.2.2 The Course Leader or his/her nominee is responsible for preparing the formal response to the External Examiner by the appropriate deadline (usually 10 working day from the receipt of the report by the Course Leader) using the External Examiner’s Response
Template. The response must be checked by the AQSO prior to being sent to the External Examiner.

7.2.3 The report and response must be reviewed by the Academic Quality Lead who is responsible for ensuring that any ‘management issues’ raised by the External Examiner (for example, relating to staffing resources) are referred to the School Executive for response.

7.2.4 Summaries of all External Examiner reports and responses, are considered by the relevant Course Committee and School/College Quality Committee, as part of the evidence base for the University’s monitoring and review processes.

7.2.5 The full report and response is shared with students through publication on Blackboard and discussion at appropriate student/staff committee structures to strengthen student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement. Reports should not include the names of students or members of staff.

7.2.6 Where an External Examiner has raised ‘causes for concern’ about standards, the Director of Quality Assurance is responsible for ensuring that these concerns are addressed appropriately by the School/Academic Partner in a timely fashion and that an appropriate and timely response is sent to the External Examiner.

7.2.7 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Director of Quality Assurance have access to copies of all External Examiners’ reports and responses. If their attention is drawn to any issue of concern which requires urgent action the issue can be dealt with outside the quality assurance committee structure but must involve the Dean/Director/Head of School/College and other relevant staff. Reports on the action taken, if any, shall be provided to the AQSC, as appropriate. A summary report of all External Examiner reports is submitted to the AQSC annually by the Director of Quality Assurance.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Aims

1.1.1 This section describes:

(a) How the University supports the suspension or closure of an existing course;

(b) How the suspension or closure of a course is approved by the University.

1.1.2 The aim of the suspension and closure process is to ensure that the University meets the obligations and expectations of its staff, students and regulators by:

(a) Ensuring compliance with the University’s obligations under its conditions of registration with the Office for Students, and broader compliance responsibilities (i.e. Competition and Markets Authority Guidance)

(b) Ensuring that internal expertise is exploited in protecting the student’s interests and outcomes in suspending and closing University courses are well communicated to all involved (e.g. Marketing and Communication Teams, Wellbeing Teams, ExPERT Academy).

(c) Responding to the individual circumstances of each suspension or closure to ensure that all quality requirements are proportionate to the risk being managed.

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 The following definitions are used:

(a) **Suspension**: A course will not undertake the recruitment of new students. All remaining students will be ‘taught out’ for the remainder or their course, including all publicised elements. A course may be suspended with a view to closing or reopening.

(b) **Closure**: A course will not undertake the recruitment of new students. All remaining students will be ‘taught out’ for the remainder or their course including all publicised elements.

1.3 Regulation relevant to this section

1.3.1 The Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education relevant for course suspension and closure are:
(a) The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.

(b) Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

(c) From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

(d) The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector recognised standards.

1.4 Responsibilities

1.4.1 Academic Board has the responsibility and authority to set, maintain and assure academic standards.

1.4.2 Course Quality and Approval Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of Academic Quality and Standards Committee and has the responsibility for the assurance that courses meet national expectations.

1.4.3 Academic Quality and Standards Office (AQSO) is responsible for organising and managing the suspension and closure process for courses.

1.4.4 Academic Quality Lead in each School/College is responsible for ensuring that colleagues observe the procedures and requirements.

1.4.5 A Course Leader – identified for each course by the relevant School/College – is responsible for ensuring that any proposal for the suspension/closure of a course is managed appropriately and according to this section. They are also responsible for giving assurance that the communication throughout the suspension/closure of a course has been appropriately undertaken.

1.4.6 The University Secretary is responsible for CMA compliance and the requirements of the Student Protection Plan.

1.5 Cross School/College courses

1.5.1 Some courses may be jointly delivered by two or more Schools/Colleges e.g. combined, major/minor and joint honours courses.

1.5.2 The lead School/College, as designated on the Suspension and Closure Form (SC1), should direct activities. Nonetheless, at key stages all School/Colleges involved must confirm all decisions by providing signatures as directed on the form.

1.6 Interpretation

1.6.1 This document refers to named positions (e.g. Academic Quality Lead, Deans or Heads of School/College) to detail required activities or authorisations.
1.6.2 Where a department does not have the identified position, an alternative must be identified, with comparable seniority and remit, such that all required activities or authorisations are undertaken.

1.7 Further Guidance

1.7.1 For further guidance colleagues should make early contact with the AQSO (e.g. enquiries regarding non-standard courses or appointments) at quality@uwl.ac.uk or on 020 8231 2116 (ext 2116).

1.7.2 Where a proposal involves an academic partnership with an external institution, the lead School/College should ensure they contact both the AQSO, and the Global Partnership Office at TNEadmin@uwl.ac.uk or on 020 8231 2749 (ext 2749) at the earliest opportunity.

1.7.3 The University Secretary should be consulted where CMA compliance guidance is required, including dealing with issues that may lead to complaints and appeals. Advice can be provided on the provisions of the Student Protection Plan.

2. OVERVIEW OF SUSPENSION AND CLOSURE PROCESS

2.1 Stages of suspension and closure process

2.1.1 The University might decide to suspend or close a course for several reasons, including:

(a) Declining student numbers;

(b) Lack of specialist academic staff which is affecting the delivery of the course;

(c) Replacing an existing course with a new one;

(d) Changing strategic priorities in the academic discipline, School/College or University;

(e) Concerns about the quality, academic standards or student outcomes on the course raised by students, staff, or External Examiners; or

(f) Termination of an academic partnership which results in withdrawal of a course.

2.1.2 The suspension and closure process for all provision should comprises two stages:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Authorising Body</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>Vice-Chancellor’s Executive</td>
<td>Dean/Director/Head of School/College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Academic Planning and Monitoring</td>
<td>School/College Academic Quality Committee</td>
<td>Course Leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.3 It must be noted that, the process of recruitment places a contractual obligation on the School/College and University to run the course as advertised, and therefore only in extreme situations will the University approve the closure of a course without fulfilling the University’s contractual obligation to teach out students currently active on the course. In this exceptional situation all students will be offered replacement provision. All current students must be consulted prior to transferring to the replacement provision.

2.2 Criteria for effective suspension/closure

2.2.1 In suspending or closing provision, the authorising body and responsible officers should certify that the proposal:

(a) Clearly articulates how the outcomes – for each enrollable and exit qualification – will continue to meet the threshold standards set by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

(b) Clearly articulates how the course team will provide a reliable and fair opportunity for all students – regardless of background – to achieve the outcomes of the course within a reasonable time period.

(c) Clearly articulates how appropriate communications with students and other stakeholder regarding the suspension/closure are proposed to be and have been undertaken.

(d) Clearly articulates how appropriate communications with staff and External Examiners affected by the suspension/closure have been undertaken.

(e) Clearly articulates how the facilities, learning resources and student support services needed by the course team will be maintained during the closure period in order to deliver a high-quality experience.

(f) Clearly articulates how appropriately qualified and sufficient staff needed to deliver the course will be maintained during the suspension/closure period in order to deliver a high-quality experience.

(g) Clearly articulates how internal and external stakeholders (current staff, students, alumni, employers, and where appropriate PSRBs) have been appropriately engaged in the suspension/closure of the course.

(h) Sets our necessary actions in relation to the Student Protection Plan where appropriate.

2.3 Timings

2.3.1 In most instances, early removal of the course from the University publicity materials will be important to the management of the suspension/closure process.

2.3.2 Therefore, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with the Pro-Vice Chancellor (with responsibility for the Lead School/College) Business Approval
documentation **should** be submitted to Vice Chancellor’s Executive (VCE) no later than the end of November, for courses due to cease recruitment the following September:

2.3.3 It **should** be noted that to obtain all the information required, work on some aspects of the Business Approval stage **should** begin well in advance of these deadlines.

2.3.4 In appropriate circumstances the process of suspending/closing a course can depart from the timelines stated and be completed more quickly.

2.3.5 Where Schools/Colleges are handling a course of this nature they **should** seek guidance from the AQSO at the earliest opportunity. In addition, they **should** use the Course Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) to articulate what alternative means will be used to ensure successful recruitment.

3. APPROVAL FOR COURSE SUSPENSION/CLOSURE

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Approval ensures:

(a) The strategic and business rationale for the suspension/closure of the course within the School/College and institutional portfolio;

(b) All relevant prior information on PSRB, or other external requirements are known prior to the commencement of the suspension/closure process; and

(c) Ensure compliance with regulatory or legislative requirements (e.g. consumer protection and the implementation of the student protection plan).

3.1.2 Approval ensures that there is a compelling case for the strategic and business rationale of the planned closure/suspension and to provide course teams and professional services with the technical information that they need to:

(a) Communicate effectively with students;

(b) Plan effectively for managing student outcomes;

(c) Arrange and manage student finance implications, where applicable;

(d) Ensure compliance with legislation and regulation (e.g. consumer protection and the student protection plan); and

(e) Make required statutory or compliance returns such as those required for the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

3.1.3 Following successful Approval:

(a) The course can be removed from the University’s website, and its prospectus, and students offered places on the course may be informed that the course will not be taking further enrolments. These **must** all carry a clear message that the course is currently subject to a closure that will not affect current students, unless full and immediate closure has been approved by the VCE.
(b) The School/College can commit the required staffing and estates required in order to undertake the full suspension/closure process; and

(c) Where necessary, the School/College, in consultation with the AQSO, can approach the relevant PSRB to discuss arrangements for the closure of the accreditation process to be undertaken.

3.1.4 Partner institutions may proceed similarly, although any communications or materials related to the suspension/closure should be approved by the University prior to release. Completion of Business Approval signifies that the University is committed to suspending/closing the course from the date indicated.

3.2 Prepare Suspension and Closure Form (SC1)

3.2.1 A Course Leader proposing the suspension/closure of an existing course should complete the Suspension and Closure Form (SC1). The form is accessible on the AQSO SharePoint site.

3.2.2 In completing the form, the Course Leader will need to:

(a) Consult the Student Protection Plan to check whether the proposed suspension/closure is listed, and the necessary external statutory and regulatory requirements.

(b) Provide an intended teaching out plan for the students on the course.

(c) Investigate and understand the requirements of any required suspension/closure of PSRB accreditation including the costs involved.

3.2.3 The Course Leader for the course should conduct discussions with

(a) Strategic Planning and Marketing colleagues to establish the current demand for the course.

(b) Student Services colleagues to establish the impact on student fees and funding arrangements.

(c) Academic Registry colleagues or University Secretary as required, to establish the regulatory requirements for the course suspension/closure, and in particular the need for activating the Student Protection Plan.

3.2.4 Schools/Colleges may also consult the Global Partnerships Office and the International Office, regarding impact of the proposal either for direct international recruitment or for delivery in one of the UWL branch campuses or academic partnerships.

3.2.5 The completed Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) should be signed by the Dean/Director/Head of School/College.

3.2.6 Where the proposal is for a course jointly delivered by two or more Schools/Colleges, the respective Dean/Director/Heads of each School/College should sign the form.
3.3 **University Approval**

3.3.1 The fully endorsed Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) **should** be submitted for approval by the VCE. In signing the form, VCE confirms that the proposal has been discussed and approved at executive level within the University.

3.3.2 The approval confirms that the following points have been discussed and confirmed at both Executive and Operational level:

(a) The proposal is consistent with the University’s strategic plan;

(b) The proposal is consistent with the University Student Protection Plan, and the decision whether to activate the plan is in line with the University’s regulatory obligations;

(c) Students and applicants’ interests have been thoroughly planned for at an individual and collective level;

(d) All impacts on the outcomes of current students have been mitigated or will be effectively communicated under the terms of the University’s Student Protection Plan;

(e) The plan does not affect the outcomes or experience of any group of students disproportionately.

3.3.3 VCE will consider the application for confirmation of suspension/closure, and in some cases **may** request that the Course Leader attend a meeting of the VCE to discuss issues arising from the proposal.

3.3.4 After considering the proposal, the VCE will take one of the following actions:

(a) Approve without revisions.

(b) Approve subject to revisions to the satisfaction of the Director of Quality Assurance

(c) Refer

3.3.5 Once the VCE has granted approval, the AQSO will notify the lead School/College, as well as the relevant professional services. From the School/College’s perspective, the full approval process can now be considered complete.

3.3.6 The signed Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) **must** be sent to the AQSO for their records.

3.3.7 Where the proposal involves academic partnerships, a senior officer from each partner institution **must** also sign the Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) to indicate approval.

3.3.8 Where submissions have incomplete fields or missing signatures they will be returned to the lead School/College for completion, prior to further processing.

3.4 **Actions following Approval**
3.4.1 Once the AQSO receives the approved Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) they will inform:

(a) Strategic Planning.
(b) Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions.
(c) Assistant Registrar.

3.4.2 They will also meet with the course team to ensure appropriate initial planning of student communications, and monitoring of student progress, and to ensure the course team are aware of their monitoring and reporting obligations.

3.4.3 Once complete, Business Approval is valid for 12 months. During this time, Stage 2 must be commenced. After 12 months, fresh Business Approval may be requested, in recognition that the prevailing conditions surrounding the suspension/closure could have changed.

3.4.4 At this point Business Approval is considered complete, and Schools/Colleges and professional services may proceed with detailed planning for the suspension/closure.

3.4.5 Partner institutions may proceed similarly, although any publicity materials which refer to the suspension/closure should be approved by the University prior to advertisement and/or recruitment.

3.4.6 Between application for Approval and Final Approval, Schools/College should avoid:

(a) Amending the Suspension and Closure Form (SC1). If the lead School/College becomes aware that corrections are needed, a new version should not be created. Rather, a summary of the amendments should be sent to the AQSO, along with documentary evidence (e.g. an email) showing the approval of the Chair of the School/College’s Executive (or its nominated body).

NOTE: If these are deemed to constitute a fundamental departure the AQSO may request that a new Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) be prepared, and in some cases that the document is resubmitted for Business Approval.

3.4.7 Completion of Business Approval signifies that the University is committed to suspending/closing the course from the date indicated.

4. ACADEMIC PLANNING AND MONITORING OF COURSE SUSPENSION/CLOSURE

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 Academic Planning and Monitoring ensures:

(a) The course is suspended/closed in accordance with the University's approved principles and regulations, as approved by the Academic Board;
(b) Each enrollable and exit qualification will continue to meet the threshold standards set by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

(c) Appropriate communications with students and other stakeholder are proposed, monitored and completed.

(d) There are and will continue to be sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality learning experience for all students;

(e) There are and will continue to be sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources, and student support services to deliver a high-quality learning experience for all students;

(f) Compliance with regulatory or legislative requirements (e.g. the Student Protection Plan, immigration and consumer protection).

4.1.2 This must include a formal notification of all remaining students on the course, providing an explanation for the suspension/closure, assurance that the integrity and continuity of their education will be preserved and details of who to contact for further information.

4.2 Academic Planning and Monitoring

4.2.1 The Academic Planning and Monitoring stage begins immediately following University Approval and continues throughout the suspension/closure of the course.

4.2.2 Academic Planning and Monitoring should consist of a number of meetings. These should be planned for key decision points throughout the suspension/closure process (e.g. after each Award Board)

4.2.3 The function of the meetings is to confirm that the learning experience of continuing students on a suspended/closing course has been appropriately considered and preserved. The Course Leader will continue to complete the Course Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) and share this with other members in advance of the meeting in order to inform discussions.

4.2.4 Attendees at the initial suspension/closure meeting should include:

(a) Dean/Director/Head of School/College or nominee (Chair).

(b) School/College Academic Quality Lead

(c) Member of the AQSO

(d) Course Leader of the closing course

(e) Student Representatives.

(f) Relevant Assistant Registrar
(g) Representative from Student Recruitment and Admissions, where there are current applicants or outstanding offers for the course.

4.2.5 For courses with academic partners, additional attendees will be:

(a) Academic Partnership Link Tutor.
(b) Senior member of the delivery team from the academic partner.

4.2.6 For degree apprenticeship courses additional attendees will be:

(a) Employer representatives.

4.2.7 The Course Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) will direct the agenda of the meeting.

4.2.8 The outcomes will be recorded on the Course Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) and will be subject to approval by the Chair. These will be shared with all members after the meeting, and submitted to the AQSO.

4.2.9 Where recruitment to a course is to be suspended during its validated period of approval, externality will be provided through normal quality management processes e.g. consultation with external examiners regarding course changes and annual reporting.

4.3 Implementation of the Plan

4.3.1 Meetings with the course team will continue until all students have completed the course (or have been transferred to alternative provision or compensated under the terms of the Student Compensation Policy).

4.3.2 Attendees at the continuing meetings must include at minimum:

(a) School/College Academic Quality Lead (Chair)
(b) Member of the AQSO
(c) Course Leader of the closing course.

4.3.3 Where required, additional attendees may include:

(a) Student Representatives.
(b) Relevant Assistant Registrar.
(c) Representative from Student Recruitment and Admissions, where there are current applicants or outstanding offers for the course.
(d) Academic Partnership Link Tutor.
(e) Senior member of the delivery team from the academic partner.
(f) Employer representatives (for degree apprenticeships)
4.3.4 Following all continuing meetings, communications to the wider stakeholder group must be agreed and implemented, and an updated Course Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) submitted to the AQSO no later than 3 working days following the meeting.

4.3.5 The Course Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) will be monitored by the AQSO who may request specific actions be taken to ensure completeness.

4.3.6 When the meetings have confirmed all students have completed the course (or have been transferred to alternative provision or compensated under the terms of the Student Compensation Policy), the Course Suspension and Closure Form (SC1) will be forwarded to the AQSO for their records.

4.4 **Non-award course suspension/closures**

4.4.1 The process for business approval of the closure of Non-Award credit and non-credit bearing courses is the same as detailed above.

4.4.2 Given the potential impact of the closure of a Non-Award Course, the proposer of the course must arrange for the completion of Business Approval stages, however with signature from the Dean/Director/Head of School/College and the Head of Research and Enterprise Operations rather than VCE.