

Document Reference: Introduction to the Quality and Standards Handbook

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Description:

The purpose of the HE Quality and Standards handbook is to provide a central resource for all staff, partners, current and prospective students regarding the objectives and principles of quality assurance and quality enhancement at the Grimsby Institute. Divided into clear sections, the handbook draws together the Institute's collection of codes of practice, regulations, policies and processes that contribute to matters relating to higher education quality and academic standards.

In using this document and the handbook other sources of information may need to be considered:

Reference:

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education available at www.qaa.ac.uk

If you need any further advice on how the quality and standards handbook works, you should contact the Quality and Standards Department

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**This document is available in alternative forms
on request from the Quality and Standards Department**

1: Introduction

- 1.1 The quality handbook (the handbook) provides a consistently structured framework making clear the Institute's commitment to governance of academic standards and quality
- 1.2 The handbook comprises 10 clearly structured chapters each with a number of sub-sections. Each chapter appertains to a distinct theme; the handbook is structured to permit its users to access and navigate its chapters with relative ease
- 1.2 The handbook also details how the Institute works within the context of partner Universities. Whilst the handbook provides information relating to the responsibilities of all Institute staff engaged in Higher Education, the document also takes into account the Institute's relationships with:
 - i. The University of Hull
 - ii. Leeds Metropolitan University
 - iii. The University of Huddersfield
 - iv. Teesside University
- 1.3 Within the handbook '*academic standards*' refer to "the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award (for example, a degree)" which should be at a similar level across the UK (QAA 2012)
- 1.4 '*Academic quality*' refers to "how well the learning opportunities available to students enable them to achieve their award." (QAA 2012)

Core Values

- 1.5 The management of academic standards and quality for higher education at Grimsby Institute is underpinned by several core values:
 - i. Transparency
 - ii. Responsiveness
 - iii. Accountability
 - iv. Probity and fairness
 - v. Inclusiveness
 - vi. Collaboration
 - vii. Enhancement

2: Roles and Responsibilities for Quality and Standards

Academic Staff

2.1 Academic staff (meaning staff who are involved in assessment, teaching and learning on higher education programmes) must commit themselves to rigorous, systematic quality assurance processes that work towards safeguarding and improving academic standards

2.2 In recognising the significance of academic quality, academic staff should ensure that standards are being achieved and a good quality education is being offered to students in order to ensure provision that is fit for purpose. Whilst not definitive, this will include:

- i. the development and delivery of programmes and modules in accordance with approved documentation
 - ii. the planning and processing of student assessment
 - iii. programme monitoring and review
 - iv. involvement in relevant committees, joint boards, module, programme and school boards
 - v. issues relating to judgements of standards
 - vi. compliance to Institute and partner University policies, regulations and codes of practice
 - vii. where appropriate, the synthesis of provision to the Academic Infrastructure
- [the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\)](#)
 - [the foundation degree qualification benchmark \(FDQB\)](#)
 - [subject benchmark statements](#)
 - [guidance for programme specifications](#)
 - [the UK Quality Code](#)

Administrative Staff

2.3 Across the Institute administrative staff play a pivotal role in matters relating to academic standards and quality. Each school is required to have a named administrator(s) who will play a key role in ensuring that school processes operate effectively through appropriate handling of information and adherence to policies, regulations, codes of practice and other defined systems

2.4 Administrative staff have particular responsibilities relating to the timely and accurate presentation, documentation and dissemination of information relating to quality and standards. This may for example include the production and handling of student transcripts, examination grids, agendas and minutes

Support Staff

2.5 Support staff are those staff that have responsibility for matters such as timetabling, examinations, admissions, communications, work based learning coordination, information, advice and guidance. Staff are required to ensure rigorous adherence to systematic processes and to ensure processes are transparent, inclusive and take into account accuracy of information provided to staff and students

Quality and Standards Staff

- 2.6 The Quality and Standards Department (line managed by the Academic Registrar and HE Quality Manager) supports all quality assurance boards, committees and processes
- 2.7 Staff working within the department take responsibility for the dissemination, implementation, review and enhancement of quality assurance procedures to promote consistency and to encourage the identification and dissemination of good practice
- 2.8 Staff must take responsibility for providing guidance and support for schools within the Institute and will provide a direct link too, from and between all the Institute's schools and departments
- 2.9 Staff must also take responsibility for communication and oversight of quality assurance processes to and from partner Universities and schools within the Institute, which will involve a range of collaborative boards and partnership committees.

Leadership and Management

- 2.10 Senior management and Heads of School may be involved in a range of activities including responsibilities for management of higher education teams and administrative staff, teaching and learning, the chairing of boards and relevant committees. It is expected that such persons will execute their responsibilities and in relation to academic standards and quality and that they will ensure the effective operation of processes at all levels, as detailed herein
- 2.11 The Institute's Assistant Principal 14-19 and Higher Education has responsibility for oversight of the Institute's Quality and Standards and the Quality and Standards department

3: Regulatory and Academic Framework

- 3.1 There are five key features to the Institute's regulatory and academic framework:
 - i. The Institute's Board and Committee Structure
 - ii. The Quality and Standards Handbook for Higher Education
 - iii. Collaborative Boards and Committees with partner Universities
 - iv. University regulations applicable to each qualification awarded by a partner University
 - v. Stakeholder feedback and representation

Processes for Assuring Quality

- 3.2 The Institute is committed to rigorous approaches that underpin the development, implementation and review of its regulatory and academic framework. The following processes are key to the way quality is assured:
 - i. Use of the UK Quality Code and the Institute's quality handbook
 - ii. Enhancement led activities for continuous improvement
 - iii. Audit principles
 - iv. Annual monitoring, thematic and periodic review

- v. Analysis of recruitment, retention, progression and achievement
- vi. Effective collection and use of stakeholder feedback
- vii. Evaluation, reporting procedures and action planning

Processes for maintaining academic standards

3.3 The Institute maintains its academic standards through systematic and rigorous processes.

These involve rigorous:

- i. Use of the UK Quality Code and the Institute's quality handbook
- ii. Programme approval and amendment
- iii. Assessment processes and moderation
- iv. External examiner moderation and reporting
- v. Operation of boards of examiners
- vi. Moderation of transcripts
- vii. Approaches to unfair means prevention, detection and penalty application

Governance

3.4 Within the Institute the Principal and Chief Executive, senior management team and governing body are responsible for finance, property, investments, general business and the strategic direction of the Institute

Quality Improvement Committee

3.5 Oversight of the governance of academic quality and standards is enacted through the Quality Improvement Committee, which convenes three times per year

3.6 Membership of the board and its terms of reference are detailed in [appendix 1](#)

Quality and Standards Committee

3.7 The HE Quality and Standards Committee has devolved responsibilities (from the Quality Improvement Committee) for oversight of the Institute's academic standards and quality and convenes twice yearly. The responsibility of the Quality and Standards Committee includes the implementation of a consistent approach to management of quality and standards which is achieved through the Institute's Quality handbook

3.8 The Committee reports to the Quality Improvement Committee; membership of the board and its terms of reference are detailed in [appendix 2](#)

HE Coordinators Committee

3.9 The HE Coordinators Committee occurs once every two months and is comprised of one or two nominated individuals within each school

3.10 The nominated staff members are responsible for the reporting and dissemination of information from the relevant boards within their respective schools

3.11 The HE Coordinators Committee is a forum for discussion of matters relating to quality and standards and the wider HE strategy

3.12 Membership of the board and its terms of reference are detailed in [appendix 3](#)

4: The Institute's Higher Education Strategy

4.1 The Institute's HE Strategy (2012-2015) sets the direction and focus for the Institute, builds on the work of the Institute's earlier development plan and reflects an Institutional response to sector changes and priorities

4.2 The HE strategy is framed around the following themes:

- i. **Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment**
- ii. **Published Information to Stakeholders**
- iii. **Accountability for Public Funds, Value for Money and Sustainability**
- iv. **Putting Students at the Heart of Higher Education Activities**
- v. **Stakeholder Participation, Partnership and Networks**
- vi. **Development and Recognition of Staff**
- vii. **Widening Participation and a Coherent, Diverse, Responsive and Sustainable Undergraduate and Postgraduate Portfolio**
- viii. **Careers, Employability and Progression**

Quality Improvement Committee

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Quality Improvement Committee acts within the remit of Curriculum and Quality, a sub-committee of the Corporation and has responsibility for ensuring a high profile approach to continuous quality improvement across the entire organisation (Further and Higher Education and Work Based Learning). It will embed a culture of self-improvement as the basis for progress towards greater self-regulation and compliance.

The Board will meet 4 times a year.

Responsible for (decisions/ actions by the Committee)

1. Oversight of a robust cycle of critical self assessment (FE and WBL) and self evaluation (HE) showing a clear understanding of the priorities for strategic change and improvement as necessary
2. Coordinating the work of the Group's academic sub-committees and reporting to Curriculum and Quality on the activities undertaken and decisions made by the Committee and its sub-committees
3. Ensuring excellence in the services, teaching, learning, assessment and skills development of the organisation through prioritising improvement and strategic change as necessary
4. Making recommendations to the Corporation's sub-committee of Curriculum and Quality, on learning, teaching and assessment strategy and policy, changes to statutes, ordinance or regulatory frameworks
5. The receipt and approval of codes of practices and guidance documents within the HE Quality Handbook
6. The receipt and consideration of internal and external inspection (FE) and review (HE) reports
7. The receipt and consideration of high quality, succinct reports of progress with regards to quality key performance indicators and to agree and set challenging targets for improvement
8. The identification and eradication of poor provision and its replacement with, where practicable, a high quality demand led offer
9. Consideration of summary reports on the implementation of and outcomes of observations of the teaching and learning process; the reports of external examiners and verifiers and validation events
10. Consideration of the use and implementation of appropriate external quality standards such as Investors in People, Customer Service Excellence, E.F.Q.M., Matrix and Charter Mark, to improve the quality of service to customers
11. Ensuring effective and inclusive Group processes to include charters, policies, codes of practice, procedures and service level standards are in place and monitored to encourage consistency and an excellent standard of working practices for all
12. Monitoring the implementation of policy and regulations relating to customer complaints; the number and nature of complaints and critically assessing the impact that the process and complaints have on the business of the Group
13. Monitoring the level of stakeholder satisfaction through the implementation and analysis of external or internal customer surveys
14. Alignment of the regulatory and operational systems and standards of the organisation with external bodies and external reference points.

Composition and Membership

Principal and Chief Executive (Chair)
Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality
Vice Principal Corporate Services
Assistant Principal Adult & Community
Assistant Principal 14-19 & HE
Assistant Principal Workforce Development and Employability
Principal Yorkshire Coast College
Director of Quality Improvement FE
Group Enterprise, Entrepreneurship and Employability Manager
One Head of School with substantial HE
One Head of School with substantial FE
One Head of School with substantial WBL
Head of School Functional Skills
Director of Workforce Development
Director of Learner Services
Franchising and Partnerships Manager
Executive Director Marketing
Human Resources Director
Learner Representative (FE)
Learner Representative (HE)

Appendix 2

HE Quality & Standards Committee Membership & Terms of Reference

Membership: Academic Registrar and HE Quality Manager (Chair), HE Manager: Audit, Review and Enhancement, HE Manager: Admissions and Administration, , Group Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator, Audit Team Member

Terms of Reference

- i. Development and review of the Quality and Standards Framework, Regulations, Codes of Practice
- ii. Alignment to and implementation of the Academic Infrastructure in the assurance and enhancement of academic standards and the quality of the student experience
- iii. Oversight and coordination of matters relating to the quality of the student experience, such as:
 - a. Admissions
 - b. Annual monitoring and review
 - c. Analysis of progression and completion statistics
 - d. Mitigating circumstances
 - e. Feedback from and to students and stakeholders
 - f. Teaching and learning
 - g. Learning resources
- iv. Oversight and coordination of matters relating to academic standards, such as:
 - a. Programme approvals

- b. The assessment process
 - c. External examiners
 - d. Accreditation of prior learning
 - e. Professional accreditation
 - f. Unfair means/ plagiarism
 - g. Boards of Examiners
- v. The adoption and implementation of quality enhancement processes to support a culture of continuous improvement
 - vi. Collaborative provision and effective relationships
 - vii. Oversight of changes to legislation, external regulatory frameworks or codes

Appendix 3

HE Coordinators Committee Membership & Terms of Reference

Membership: , , HE Manager: Audit, Review and Enhancement (Chair), HE Manager: Admissions and Administration, Academic Registrar and HE Quality Manager, HE Teaching and Learning Coordinator, HE Study Skills Coordinators, , School HE Coordinators

Terms of Reference

- i. To share, discuss and contribute to quality enhancement processes to support a culture of continuous improvement
- ii. To discuss, review and contribute to the development and embedding of the academic infrastructure and the Institute's Quality handbook within schools
- iii. To consider, plan, review and evaluate processes and practices relating to academic standards and the quality of the student experience
- iv. To report committee discussions and outcomes to Deans and academic and support staff through school meetings and capture, report, share and disseminate school feedback to the committee

UNDER REVIEW