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# **HANDBOOK OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT**

2023/2024

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# 1 OVERVIEW

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1.1 This volume should be considered to have the full force of regulations.
- 1.1.2 The School currently publishes annually four main documents that aim to document the academic governance of the School:
- Handbook of Academic Regulations
  - Handbook of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (this document)
  - Committee Handbook
  - Research Ethics Handbook
- 1.1.3 The School's quality assurance systems are designed to be fit-for-purpose in relation the wider English and UK higher education context, as well as with respect to the particular characteristics and portfolio of a small specialist institution. A key underpinning principle of the institution is that quality assurance principles and practices should be embedded in its daily life. The School adopts a School-wide and Departmental-level approach to enhancement in particular, and to explore the scope for common approaches where they make sense, in the interest both of consistency and of containing academic staff workloads associated with managing quality and standards.
- 1.1.5 This document seeks to outline the key quality assurance and enhancement processes and policies of the School as well as providing guidance for staff and students.

## **1.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT STATEMENT**

- 1.2.1 Central is committed to the on-going quality assurance and enhancement of the courses, awards and learning experiences it offers. The School is a registered provider with the Office for Students.
- 1.2.2 Our on-going aim has been to embed quality assurance and enhancement within the academic and student community, and to ensure that systems are fit for purpose in relation to the character and portfolio of a small specialist institution. One key aim is that quality assurance and enhancement principles should be embedded in the daily life of the institution.
- 1.2.3 The following quality assurance and enhancement procedures and policies are in place at the School:
- Validation process – the approval of new programmes
  - A schedule for the periodic review of existing programmes
  - Thematic review, including Portfolio Review
  - Course and unit modification approval process
  - Annual Monitoring
  - External Examiner system
  - Student Feedback from such sources as:
    - National Student Survey (NSS, IpsosMORI)
    - Postgraduate Taught and Research Experience Survey (PTES, PRES, HEA)
    - Unit or termly Surveys

- Termly Course Committees

1.2.5 Key features of the approach at Central include:

- **Student engagement and consultation**, this includes student representation on key School committees such as Academic Board and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. In addition, the Students' Union is represented on a number of School committees including the Board of Governors, Academic Board, Health and Safety Management Committee and the Access, Participation, Progression and Inclusion Committee.
- **Staff Development**, this includes twice-termly staff development sessions (ISTLA) on assessment, teaching and learning as well as quality assurance and enhancement.
- The systems in place aim to incorporate internal and **external peer** involvement and scrutiny as fully as possible.
- **Enhancement** is a key feature. Central not only wishes to *assure* itself and external audiences of the on-going quality of its awards and learning experience but actively wishes to progress and enhance this provision so that it remains a cutting edge, high quality, internationally renowned provider of higher education in the face of a changing and developing discipline and world.

### **Operation and Management**

1.2.6 Quality assurance and enhancement is overseen and managed on a day-to-day basis by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement. In addition, senior members of academic staff are also heavily involved in QAE, including the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Students) Vice-Principal (Curriculum and Students), the Director of Learning, Teaching and Inclusion, and the Vice-Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange).

1.2.7 The effectiveness of the School's quality assurance and enhancement processes and direction is overseen by the Academic Board and its sub-committee, Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. Academic Board has overall responsibility for the standard of awards made and academic policy.

### **School Committees and QAE**

- The Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and its sub-committees play a key part in implanting many of the course-based QA systems, especially through detailed consideration of annual course monitoring reports and follow-up actions, receiving and discussing student survey results, nominating external examiners, and considering their reports.
- Course Committees are a key forum for student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement issues.
- Access, Participation, Progression and Inclusion Committee, reporting to EMG, informs School policies and procedures and influences course monitoring and review with a view to enhancement of the student learning opportunity.
- Key committees involving quality assurance including Academic Board, Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and Course Committees are supported by the Assistant Academic Registrar, ensuring the efficient running of the committee system.
- The Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships Group considers the School's approval and review of academic partnerships.

## 2 COURSE DESIGN, APPROVAL AND MODIFICATION

## **2.1 COURSE PROPOSALS AND VALIDATION**

- 2.1.1 Proposals for new degree award courses are first mooted and discussed at the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. If the principle of the proposal is agreed then this is developed into a Feasibility Study which is circulated electronically to Heads of Department for comment.
- 2.1.2 Feasibility forms are available from the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement. The feasibility study will indicate:
- a brief outline of the aims, nature and content of the course
  - the mode(s) of the course proposed i.e. full-time, part-time or distance-learning,
  - the rationale behind the proposal,
  - the student market that supports the proposal,
  - the proposed course starting date,
  - the proposed cohort size
  - the proposed course budget,
  - whether the course will involve placement learning,
  - any implications regarding professional accreditation,
  - and any known resource implications for:
    - Library Services
    - IT Services
    - Technical Support
    - Accommodation
    - Academic Administration
- 2.1.3 The feasibility study for programmes and comments from professional services, and then require sign-off by the appropriate academic Head of Department before referral to the Strategic Management Group (SMG) and if agreed becomes part of the programme of validation and review for the academic year. The Faculty Office will be responsible for ensuring that a team of academic staff develop the proposal for validation, obtaining advice on regulation, policy, curriculum design and the validation process from the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement as and when necessary.
- 2.1.4 The final programme specification should be provided to the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement no later than four weeks before the validation event.
- 2.1.5 The development team will nominate at least one external panel member to be part of the validation panel.

### **THE VALIDATION MEETING**

- 2.1.6 Validation is the stage in the process of recommending Academic Board's approval of a course. A panel is convened for this event, which will include the Chair and at least one external member and at least one internal panel member. A senior member of the staff of the School, approved by the Vice-Principal (Curriculum and Students), normally chairs the panel.
- 2.1.7 Documentation for the event comprises the materials as specified below:
- the draft programme specification,



- the School Context document
- relevant subject benchmark statements and relevant extracts of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)
- the Feasibility study
- Prospectus extract
- Handbook of Academic Regulations
- Handbook of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- Placement and/or Attachments Handbook (for courses with placements/work-based learning)
- The School's Academic Strategy
- For PG courses, the M Framework from this Handbook.

2.1.8 The documentation will be provided in electronic format..

2.1.9 In addition to discussion of the documents with the course team, the programme for the validation meeting may include a meeting with present or former students on the precursor course or, if appropriate in the case of a wholly new course, on a related course. In the case of a development in a new curriculum area, requiring new staff or physical resources, the programme may include a meeting with a member of the School's executive management and/or an opportunity to view specialist resources.

### **COURSE PUBLICITY**

2.1.10 No course may be advertised until a feasibility study has been approved by SMG. Any course awaiting validation must state this in publicity material.

### **OUTCOMES OF VALIDATION**

2.1.11 The Validation panel will normally:

- summarise commendable aspects of the proposed course;
- comment on the course specification with particular reference to the appropriateness of the aims and learning outcomes, admissions criteria, structure, content and assessment and provisions for student support on the course;
- provide a recommendation to Academic Board as to whether the course can be validated in its presented form, validated but with conditions for amendments, or a recommendation to not validate the course.

2.1.12 If validation is granted with conditions, the panel will categorise them as follows:

- **Essential:** used only if there is a clear risk to quality of standards unless action is taken. Essential recommendations must be completed for validation to be granted.
- **Advisable:** matters which the panel considers important contributions to the future quality of learning opportunities. The course may be validated in its current form but actions must be taken to address the items before the first periodic review;
- **Worth further consideration:** matters which may enhance the course(s). These are not essential for validation to be given but the course team will be expected to provide a response as to when they will be remedied or provide a clear rationale as to why it is not possible.

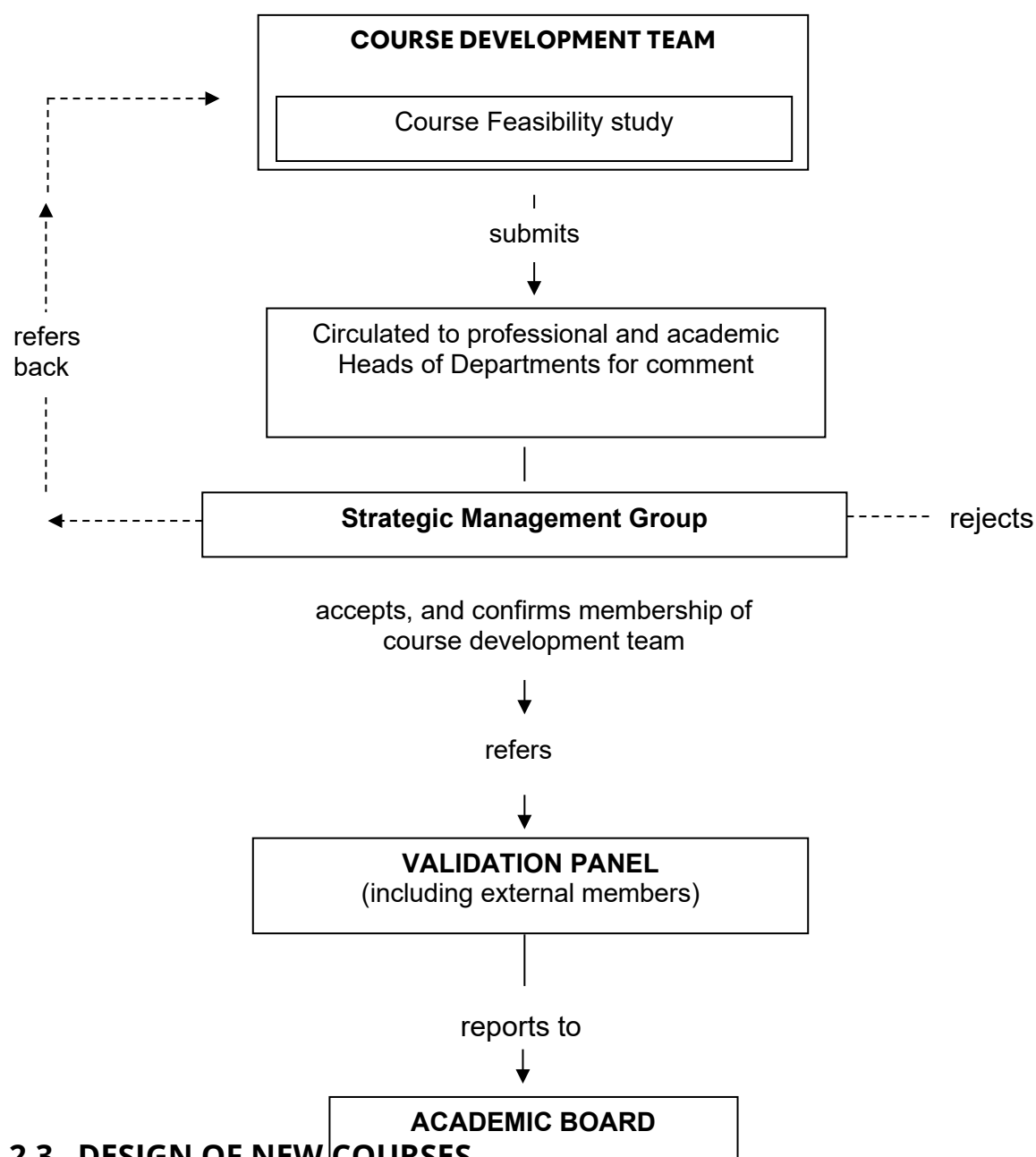
2.1.13 The Panel will specify whether the amendments need be approved by the Chair of the panel only or by the whole panel electronically.

## 2.2 VALIDATION CONDITIONS

- 2.11.14 Following receipt of the validation panel's recommendations, Academic Board becomes responsible for ensuring that any conditions for validation are met. Once the course is operational it will automatically become a part of the School's on-going course monitoring and review programme - which will include the monitoring of the course's response to any conditions and recommendations established at validation.

*The process described above is illustrated by the diagram below.*

### INTERNAL PROCEDURES FOR NEW PROGRAMME AND/OR COURSE PROPOSAL/VALIDATION OF COURSES LEADING TO CSSD ACADEMIC AWARDS



## 2.3 DESIGN OF NEW COURSES

2.3.1 New programmes and courses should follow information within the Handbook of Academic Regulations concerning structure, ensuring that they comply with the Framework for Higher Education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In addition all degree programmes must be devised with reference to School policy initiatives such as the Masters Framework and University of London Regulation 1 and other external documents as appropriate.

2.3.2 New programme specifications should contain the following information:

- Title and award of course
- Total credits required for the final and intermediate awards
- Mode(s) of study
- Level(s) of study and progression requirements
- An introduction to the course
- Educational aims and learning outcomes of the course
- An indication of the who the course is for
- Distinctive features of the course
- Learning and teaching methods
- Admissions criteria
- An indicative schedule of activity
- Support for learning
- How the quality of the course is maintained
- Specify any core competencies of the course
- Information on any mandatory placement or work-based learning activities
- Define the units of the course and include an appendix of unit outlines
- Criteria for assessment and marking descriptors
- Criminal Records Bureau requirements (or equivalent as updated)

### **PUBLIC PRODUCTIONS**

2.2.3 In designing a new course, performances may only be designated as a “Public Production” where a formal service level agreement has been agreed between the course and the Technical and Production department (T&P). Designation of a performance as a “public production” will mean that a clearly defined level of service and resources are provided to the production for each year of the agreement by T&P. Any other performances will gain support and resources from T&P on the basis of yearly negotiation, and the articulation of the performance in unit outlines should be sufficient to permit some variability from year to year without necessitating a formal modification.

### **CURRICULUM DESIGN – SOME PRINCIPLES**

2.2.4 Courses must:

- accord with Central’s mission. In many cases, this may entail a balance of research-led and vocational or industry-informed elements
- be compatible with the current Academic Strategy
- have a clear rationale, addressing their place in the School’s portfolio
- have a clear aim, typically including a vision of who the course is for, broadly how students will learn, and the likely range and character of destinations for the course may prepare them;

- align with external benchmarks for standards, including the national qualification level descriptors, relevant subject benchmark statements and the guidelines of relevant professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (PSRBs);
- offer students a coherent programme of study “in terms of its logic in structure and intellectual integrity, [with] assessment methods [that] are aligned with the programme content, learning outcomes and learning and teaching activities”<sup>1</sup>;
- support students in progression towards the level of the intended award, where the course as a whole spans work at more than one level. This will mean that demands on the learner in intellectual challenge, skills, knowledge conceptualisation and learning autonomy increase. (A Masters course is usually all at the same level, but its design should still give some attention to how students are prepared for the most substantial and autonomous task with which the course concludes);
- be achievable within the normal timescale of the course and within the approved resource;
- meet the needs of the range of learners who enter the course, be as inclusive as possible, and align with the School’s principles relating to widening participation;
- lead to an award title which reflects the intended learning outcomes and which is aligned with the national framework for higher education qualifications;
- be clearly defined and communicated;
- (for MA/MFA courses) be defined to operate within the School’s M Framework.

### **WHAT DEFINES THE PROGRAMME?**

- 2.2.5 The Programme Specification and the individual unit outlines incorporate the course definition. Additional information is normally included on the virtual learning environment for teaching staff and students.
- 2.2.6 Within the programme specification and unit outlines, the key definitive elements are the aims, learning outcomes, units approved as part of the course, with their level and credit value, mode of study, unit assessment elements and their contribution to the unit mark, and the contribution of the unit to the qualification. None of these things can be changed after validation except as part of a formal modification approved by Committee and also the Academic Board (in the case of the most substantial or ‘major’ modifications).

### **EDUCATIONAL AIMS**

- 2.2.7 Aims appear in the Programme Specification. Much of the Programme Specification will also be included on the virtual learning environment as well as the website for prospective applicants, so the Programme Specification should use language appropriate to student readers. Aims may include opportunities which the course aims to provide, which may in some cases not be directly related to the learning outcomes. For example, aims could include a flexible pace of work, scope to undertake independent work, opportunities for work-based learning or for study abroad, engagement with students on other courses or from different national and cultural backgrounds. Some of the aims, however, will directly relate to enabling students to achieve the intended learning outcomes
- 2.2.8 The statement of aims in the Programme Specification may include:

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from the QAA’s UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B1 (Programme Design, Development and Approval), p.9

- Subject-specific, and possibly also generic, educational aims;
- the development of professional/vocational/practice skills and/or reflection
- aims relating to how students access the course, flexibility, mode of study etc.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 2.2.9 A learning outcome is a statement of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate at the end of a period of learning.
- 2.2.10 Learning outcomes will be specified for the course as a whole and for each unit in the course. The learning outcomes for the individual units must be compatible with (add up to) those for the programme as a whole. The programme learning outcomes should state what is expected of **all** students who pass the course, regardless of the mode of study or the options taken, or the strand or pathway followed.
- 2.2.11 This means that learning outcomes are written at **threshold level**. Unit learning outcomes are what a student must achieve in order to pass the unit. Course learning outcomes are what a student must achieve to pass the course. In practice, most students can achieve above the threshold.
- 2.2.12 It is helpful to outline the principal different categories of learning outcome. For the Programme Specifications, in almost all institutions, these are:
- Knowledge and understanding;
  - Thinking skills
  - Professional and/or practical skills
  - Transferable skills (or “broader life skills”)
- 2.2.13 These are not all equally relevant to every course. There is not a completely clear-cut dividing line between them, and the category to which you assign a particular outcome may be a matter of judgement. Outcomes do not have to be evenly distributed between the four categories.
- 2.2.14 If a course incorporates qualifications at different levels (e.g. DipHE, BA (Hons)) it may be helpful to add a note on the extent to which the outcomes are expected to be met by students who exit the course with the lower qualification. However, it is not necessary to define the outcomes separately for each award in the programme.
- 2.2.15 For a Masters course, the whole course is at the same academic level, but there may be some outcomes which are entirely dependent on an extended final piece of work, the sustained independent project (SIP), often a dissertation or portfolio. In this case they may be presented separately (e.g. “Masters graduates will be able to [...]”).

## Guidance on writing learning outcomes<sup>2</sup>

- 2.2.16 Learning outcomes should be written in the future tense and identify the essential threshold learning requirements. All learning outcomes for a unit should be achievable and, in principle, all assessed. They should be written in a language easily understandable to students.

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from a Guide to Learning Outcomes published within the University of Westminster, 2001.

2.2.17 When writing outcomes, use the following expression:

*At the end of this unit the successful student will be expected to be able to...*

2.2.18 The learning outcome has the following components:

- a verb .....what the learner is expected to do;
- the context .....indication of what learning is about;
- a modifier .....(optional) nature of task in terms of subject or standard to be achieved.

### **Example**

*On successful completion of this unit, you should be able to....*

*... demonstrate your engagement with critical debates, concepts, and discourses relevant to researching in the broad field of drama, theatre and performance*

### **The following is for guidance:**

#### **Words which could be useful in writing learning outcomes and assessment criteria<sup>3</sup>**

*Finding the right words for use in writing learning outcomes and assessment criteria can be difficult, particularly when the statements must mesh with the generic level descriptors. The following list is provided as an aid in this process. The words are organised for convenience under headings but no hierarchy is intended.*

#### **Verbs which require evidence of knowing**

Define, describe, identify, label, list, name, outline, reproduce, recall, select, state, present, extract, organise, recount, write, recognise, measure, underline, repeat, relate, match.

#### **Verbs which require evidence of comprehension**

Interpret, translate, estimate, justify, comprehend, convert, clarify, defend, distinguish, explain, extend, generalise, exemplify, give examples of, infer, paraphrase, predict, rewrite, summarise, discuss, perform, report, present, restate, identify, illustrate, indicate, find, select, represent, name, formulate, judge, contrast, classify, express, compare.

#### **Verbs which require evidence of knowledge / understanding**

Apply, solve, construct, demonstrate, change, compute, manipulate, modify, operate, predict, prepare, produce, relate, show, use, give examples, exemplify, draw up, select, explain how, find, choose, assess, practice, operate, illustrate, verify.

#### **Verbs which require evidence of analysis**

Recognise, distinguish between, evaluate, analyse, break down, differentiate, identify, illustrate how, outline, point out, relate, select, separate, divide, subdivide, compare, contrast, justify, resolve, devote, examine, conclude, criticise, question, diagnose, identify, categorise, elucidate.

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<sup>3</sup> The list originally appeared in “How to use learning outcomes and assessment criteria” by Davis Gosling and Jenny Moon (SEEC, 2002).

### Verbs which require evidence of synthesis

Propose, present, structure, integrate, formulate, teach, develop, combine, compile, compose, create, devise, design, explain, generate, modify, organise, plan, re-arrange, reconstruct, relate, re-organise, revise, write, summarise, tell, account for, restate, report, alter, argue, order, select, manage, generalise, précis, derive, conclude, build up, engender, synthesise, put together, suggest, enlarge.

### Verbs which require evidence of evaluation

Judge, appraise, assess, conclude, compare, contrast, describe how, criticise, justify, defend, evaluate, rate, determine, choose, question.

### CREDIT

- 2.2.19 Credit is awarded for achieving learning outcomes. Each unit of study carries credit value at a defined level. When the student passes the unit assessment, he or she is awarded the credit for that unit. It is 'all or nothing' – it is not possible to get some of the credit for meeting some of the unit learning outcomes. However, the the Exam Board may compensate marginal failure in a unit if similar learning outcomes have been achieved elsewhere in the course; refer to the Handbook of Academic Regulations for more details.

*These definitions are taken from the Credit Framework for England:*

<b>Credit</b>	Credit is awarded to a learner in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level.
<b>Credit level</b>	An indicator of the relative complexity, demand and/or depth of learning and of learner autonomy (see below)
<b>Credit value</b>	The number of credits, at a particular level, assigned to a body of learning. The number of credits is based on the estimated notional learning hours (where one credit represents 10 notional hours of learning) (see below)

<b>Notional hours of learning</b>	The number of hours which it is expected that a learner (at a particular level) will spend, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes at that level.
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### Credit value

- 2.2.20 Normally, one full-time equivalent year of study carries 120 credits. The major task that forms the final part of an MA, the Sustained Independent Project, is always 60 credits (or 120 credits for an MFA).

### Notional Hours

- 2.2.21 The credit value of each unit is linked to the notional number of hours a typical student is expected to spend learning to achieve the learning outcomes for that unit. There is broad agreement amongst institutions in England that one credit represents 10 notional hours of learning. This includes not only contact hours, but also preparation, private reading and study, group work without the tutor, and the completion of formative assessment tasks and revision.

#### 2.2.22 The hours are notional .

There is no School-wide norm for contact hours: they depend on the nature of the course. The hours are defined as part of the feasibility study. Changes have resource implications and need to be discussed with the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Students). In most cases, freeing more hours for one unit needs to be matched by economies elsewhere – in some cases possibly through sharing a unit with another course.

#### 2.2.23 For students, unit outlines show how the notional hours are subdivided – e.g.

<b>Credit Value:</b>	20
<b>Notional student study hours:</b>	200
Hours of teaching or supervision:	20
Student Managed Learning:	180

In line with Unistats requirements (formerly the Key Information Sets, KIS) student managed learning will be reframed to scheduled hours.

In some cases, particularly in production units, the number of contact hours may vary according to the student's role in the production, and the unit outline may note this.

### LEVEL

2.2.24 Credit levels are typically aligned to the levels of the FHEQ (Framework for Higher Education Qualifications). These commence at level 4 (in succession to levels 1-3 which precede higher education) and extend to level 8. HE providers use **credit level descriptors** to assist in determining the level of credit assigned to individual modules and units which comprise programmes of study.

2.2.25 Credit level descriptors are **guides** that identify the relative complexity, intellectual challenge, depth of learning and learner autonomy expected at each level and the differences between the levels. They reflect a range of factors including:

- the complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding
- links to associated academic, vocational or professional practice
- the degree of integration, independence and creativity required
- the range and sophistication of application/practice
- the role(s) taken in relation to other learners/workers in carrying out tasks.

### BOLOGNA CYCLES AND THE EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER SCHEME

2.2.26 The School “labels” courses additionally to show their place in the “cycles” of higher education used within the European Higher Education Area, and also using the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). This is encouraged, nationally, and can help students who progress to further study or work in other European countries. ECTS is a measure of notional time spent, and does not use the concept of level. A full-time equivalent year of study represents 60 ECTS points so ECTS credits are generally half the total of English credits. The Academic Registrar's Office will assign the ECTS values.

### ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

2.2.27 All courses at Masters level have a common set of assessment criteria. All courses at undergraduate level have a common set of assessment criteria.



## REGULATIONS ON UNIT STRUCTURES

2.2.28 Part 3 of the Handbook of Academic Regulations sets out some general principles about course structures:

- a level and credit value should be assigned to every unit;
- there should be no units carrying fewer than 10 credits;
- the unit title should make sense as a standalone name, and not depend on the title of the course it is designed for (or we might otherwise have ten units called "Performance 1");
- learning outcomes should be defined for each unit;
- pass/fail or percentage mark outcomes should be based on assessment of the unit (the title of the unit in the course handbook and the programme specification should will also be held on the student record system and will appear on the examination board spreadsheet - with more than one element in the assessment of the unit where relevant - and on the student transcript).

## INTERMEDIATE AWARDS

2.2.29 Unless there is good reason not to include them, courses should incorporate intermediate qualifications below the level of the final qualification. If they are not available, the feasibility study should explain the reasons for this decision.

2.2.30 The credit requirement for qualifications should be as follows:

Qualification	Credit
CertHE	120 credits at level 4
DipHE	240 credits, including 120 at level 5
BA (Hons)	360 credits, normally including 120 at level 4, 120 at level 5, 120 at level 6
PGCert	60 credits at level 7
PGDip	120 credits at level 7
MA	180 credits at level 7
MFA	240 credits at level 7

- Undergraduate degree programmes should include provision for a CertHE and DipHE (based on the credit indicated above) unless a reason not to provide for this is approved at validation. The CertHE or DipHE may have a title different from that of the degree, subject to approval at validation, for example because specialism reflected in the degree title relies upon learning undertaken at level 6.
- Undergraduate honours degree programmes should normally provide for the award of a degree without honours on the basis of a minimum of 300 credits, including at least 60 at level 6. Course-specific regulations may specify level 6 units which students must pass for the award of the degree without honours.
- Masters courses should include provision for a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) based on a minimum of 120 credits, unless a reason not to provide for this has been approved at validation. The programme may also provide for the award of the PGCert on the basis of 60 credits at M-level, but this is at the discretion of the course development team, subject to validation.

## REFERENCE POINTS FOR USE IN PROGRAMME DESIGN

## **SCHOOL REFERENCE POINTS**

2.2.31 Useful sources of reference in course design include:

- The Academic Strategy
- The Handbook of Academic Regulations

All these are available on the School's website, or from the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

## **EXTERNAL REFERENCE POINTS**

2.2.32 In defining aims and learning outcomes, course developers should draw on their own subject and pedagogic expertise, on experience of similar and precursor courses, and on lessons drawn from monitoring, audit and review. It is also important to draw actively and explicitly on relevant external reference points. These may include:

- guidelines or requirements from Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies;
- QAA Subject Benchmark statements;
- the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland –
- Some staff may find the “Dublin Descriptors” used in the European Higher Education Area guidelines a helpful alternative source of reference.
- Relevant sections of the Quality Code (such as the section on programme design, development and approval, on learning and teaching, and on assessment). However, these are normally encapsulated in School policies and procedures.
- The Office for Students Regulatory Framework

2.2.32 These external reference points can be used as working aids to expressing aims and learning outcomes, and also to check whether draft aims and outcomes are compatible with wider expectations. The document should read in such a way that external reference points are bedded in rather than bolt-on.

## **THE PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION – GUIDANCE**

2.2.33 Programme Specifications (published on the website) need to be in a common style for all School courses, and facilitate comparison with other institutions. The template can be obtained from the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

## **UNIT OUTLINE**

2.2.34 Contact the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement for the template. Items below must always be included in the unit specification:

Unit Title	Transferable skills developed
FHEQ Level	Indicative unit content
Notional Student Study Hours	How you learn
UK and ECTS Credit Value	Assessment methods
Unit Leader	Assessment criteria
Course(s) for which the unit is mainly intended	External requirements
Prerequisite Learning	Key Texts
Aims	Supportive Reading
Learning Outcomes	

2.2.35 Bibliographies should be set out according to the Harvard referencing style. For more information, look at the Library resource '**Cite Them Right**'.

### **THE DUBLIN DESCRIPTORS**

2.2.37 The Dublin Descriptors are generic statements of the achievement typically associated with qualifications at the end of each Bologna "cycle". They form part of the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Educations Area. The FHEQ for England, Wales and Northern Ireland is compatible with these. The FHEQ makes clear the parallels between the English and the European descriptors. It is not necessary to use them, but some course teams may find them useful as an alternative approach to reviewing the level of a course.

2.2.38 The Dublin Descriptors are based around the following elements:

- knowledge and understanding
- applying knowledge and understanding
- making judgements
- communications skills
- learning skills.

A Masters award is an end of second cycle qualification, in Bologna terms. The Dublin Descriptors 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle summary is as follows:

#### **Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle are awarded to students who:**

- have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research<sup>23</sup> context;
- can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;
- have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;
- can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;
- have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.

The Dublin Descriptors are given in full in the 2008 issue of the FHEQ for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which you can get from the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement or from the QAA website. The following chart shows the progression of level from one cycle to the next, in each element of the descriptors:

	<b>Knowledge and Understanding...</b>
--	---------------------------------------

<b>[short cycle</b>	...in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education and is typically at a level supported by advanced textbooks]
<b>1<sup>st</sup> cycle</b>	[that is] supported by advanced text books [with] some aspects informed by knowledge at the forefront of their field of study...
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> cycle</b>	provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing or applying ideas...often in a research context...
<b>Doctorates</b>	[includes] a systematic understanding of their field of study and mastery of the methods of research associated with that field...
<b>Application of Knowledge and Understanding...</b>	
<b>[short cycle</b>	often in occupational context ]
<b>1<sup>st</sup> cycle</b>	[through] devising and sustaining arguments...
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> cycle</b>	[through] problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts...
<b>Doctorates</b>	[through the] ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity...[that has] made a contribution that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work some of which merits national or international refereed publication...
<b>Ability to make Judgements...</b>	
<b>[short cycle</b>	to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems]
<b>1<sup>st</sup> cycle</b>	[through] gathering and interpreting relevant data...
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> cycle</b>	the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete data...
<b>Doctorates</b>	[through] critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas...
<b>Ability to Communicate...</b>	
<b>[short cycle</b>	their understanding, skills and activities, with peers, supervisors and clients]
<b>1<sup>st</sup> cycle</b>	information, ideas, problems and solutions...
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> cycle</b>	their conclusions and the underpinning knowledge and rationale to specialist and non-specialist audiences...
<b>Doctorates</b>	with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise...
<b>Learning Skills...</b>	
<b>short cycle</b>	to undertake further studies with some autonomy]
<b>1<sup>st</sup> cycle</b>	needed to study further with a high level of autonomy...
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> cycle</b>	to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous...
<b>Doctorates</b>	expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement...

## **MASTERS (M) LEVEL PROVISION**

- 2.2.39 The School's Masters (M) Framework, published within the appendices to this document, sets out the principles and key attributes underpinning all Masters (MA/MFA) courses at Central. It should be referred to by anyone involved in the development or review of the School's postgraduate taught provision.

## **2.4 COURSE AND UNIT MODIFICATIONS**

- 2.3.1 Once a course and its constituent units are approved and validated by Academic Board it remains validated. Central does not operate a process of time-validation unless the validation panel has specifically recommended this and it has been approved by Academic Board.
- 2.3.2 If a course and/or unit needs to be modified then this can normally be done through the committee process. Amendments are not implemented for the current year of operation. Staff do not need to wait until periodic review to amend courses and are advised to submit modifications as when needed to ensure that courses remain current, valid and that any areas of concern that may affect standard are addressed as soon as is practical.

### **AMENDMENTS APPROVED (OR DELEGATED) BY THE LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE**

- 2.3.3 Editorial changes are defined as updating, but not altering, the curriculum of a unit and therefore do not require approval by committee (but are considered internally through annual updating of programme specifications).
- 2.3.4 Minor modifications are normally defined as changes to individual units as currently defined, though larger single units may be considered major .
- 2.3.5 Possible changes that would be considered a modification and approved by the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee only are below:
- Amendment to assessment strategy of unit
  - Change in title of unit
  - Amendment to the aim or learning outcome of course or unit
  - Amendment of content of unit
  - Change in level or credit weighting of a unit
  - Change in admissions criteria of a course
  - Removal, addition or replacement of a unit
- 2.3.6 All proposals for changes to a course or unit should be discussed informally with the relevant members of staff. This includes:
- Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
  - Director of Learning, Teaching and Inclusion
  - Heads of Department
  - Other unit or Course Leaders that may be affected.
- 2.3.7 Any proposal must clearly state the rationale for the change and provide in detail the proposed changes. A new, amended (with tracked changes) course or unit specification

will be provided by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement as part of the annual updating of programme specifications.

- 2.3.8 The relevant External Examiner should be consulted regarding any proposed changes.
- 2.3.9 The relevant course committee should also be consulted on any proposed changes, particularly if the proposed change will affect current students.
- 2.3.10 The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will keep a record of all changes made to all units and courses.
- 2.3.11 Course Teams should ensure that when revising future course documentation approved modifications are incorporated into any revisions.
- 2.3.12 Any modification is based on the **existing** allocation of resources for the course. Approval of a modification does not guarantee that any additional resources will be provided. Any modification requiring additional resources (this includes staff contact hours) must therefore be discussed with the Faculty Office before being discussed more widely. Following discussion a feasibility study may be required as determined by the Faculty Office. If a feasibility study is required this will be circulated to Heads of Departments for comment and then approved by SMG. The revised course specification or unit outline must still be provided to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee for approval.
- 2.3.13 Modifications that may result in timetable changes to the use of teaching space or productions should also be discussed in advance with the Head of Central and Academic Facilities and where appropriate the Head of the Technical and Production.
- 2.3.14 Changes to unit outlines will often require some changes to the overall course specification. For example, a change in the assessment strategy in a unit outline will require a corresponding change in the assessment summary table of the course specification. Once the change in the unit outline has been approved any changes required in other documents will be made automatically. Such administrative changes to documents are approved by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.
- 2.3.15 Version control. All programme specifications will contain a version control identifier, usually in the 'key information' page of the programme specification. This identifier will be the academic year, and will relate to all years studying in that year of enrolment.

#### **MODIFICATIONS AND ACCUMULATION OF CHANGE**

- 2.3.16 Over successive academic years, ongoing changes to courses can result (if not monitored) in a drift of curriculum from the philosophy, aims and learning outcomes of a course. Cumulative changes to a course more than 40 credits per academic year, or 80 across multiple years (BA) or 40 credits (MA/MFA) are reported to Academic Board for information, as multiple minor changes.
- 2.3.17 Cumulative changes (as outlined above) to a course more than 120 credits (BA) or 120 credits (MA/MFA) are considered at LTSEC (or its subcommittees) and sent to Academic

Board for approval as major modifications. Other modifications would be classified as major modifications for Academic Board Approval, as below.

### **TIMINGS OF MODIFICATIONS**

- 2.3.18 Modifications should always be made in the interest of enhancing the existing learning opportunities provided to students. Modifications should be informed by feedback from course team members, students, external examiners and relevant members of industry and related professions. In order to ensure that modifications are made in a timely manner in response to this feedback:

#### **Changes for the next academic year**

- 2.3.19 Proposals for implementation in the subsequent academic year should be approved by Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and Academic Board (as required) in the Autumn term of the preceding academic year (i.e. Autumn 2023 for 2024/25 implementation).

#### **All other changes**

- 2.3.20 Proposals submitted in the Spring and Summer will be implemented in the next academic year following (i.e. Spring 2024 for 2025/26). This is to ensure that applicants are provided up to date information about the programmes they apply to, and students are up to date information which relates directly to the experience they should expect to receive. If this is not practicable, then students will require consulting on any proposed changes that affect them.
- 2.3.21 Non-standard changes may be made in accordance with the Emergency Academic Development procedures appended to this handbook.

### **AMENDMENTS APPROVED BY ACADEMIC BOARD**

#### **New pathways within existing courses**

- 2.3.22 New pathways within existing courses will be received and discussed at the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and then finally approved at Academic Board by the receipt of an amended course specification.
- 2.3.23 As part of the process the External Examiner for the course should be consulted and given the opportunity to feed in comments.
- 2.3.24 Any changes to the course as a whole through the addition of a new pathway must go via the modification process as outlined above and so include Course Committee and External Examiner involvement.
- 2.3.25 New awards within existing programmes may also be approved by Academic Board. For example, where an MA programme already exists an additional award of MFA may be approved. If the addition of a new award to an existing programme has any effect on the allocation of resources then a feasibility study will need to be approved.

#### **Change of Course Title**

- 2.3.26 Any amendment to the title of a course and its award name is approved by Academic Board following discussion at and recommendation by Committee. This will include consultation with the relevant External Examiner.

### **REQUIRED CONSULTATION FOR MODIFICATIONS**

- 2.3.27 The OfS regulatory framework and UK Quality Code advice and guidance highlight the importance of involving students actively within programme design and review. Where proposed modifications may impact on current students, consultation should take place. This can be facilitated via email, specifically organized meetings or via Course Committees, or other appropriate fora.
- 2.3.28 Normally, we do not allow modifications to be made that will impact on a students' expected course of study (where they are already enrolled) where this is seen to compromise the core offer made to that student as part of their applicant journey. Some exceptions to this include:
- Where a modification increases student choice (e.g. the addition of an assessment option for a unit);
  - Where there is a risk to standards which can be evidenced.
- 2.3.29 Consultation should enable students to consider a summary of the proposals, respond with feedback (both developmental and critical) and course teams should provide a response to this. Where broad support can be demonstrated, the modifications may be approved. Evidence of consultation should be provided as part of the modification proposal.
- 2.3.30 In exceptional circumstances, where modifications affect a programme of study for which applicants have already accepted offers, the School should enable students the opportunity to consider the proposed change and whether students would still wish to retain their offer accepted offer of a place.

### **COURSE CLOSURE AND SUSPENSION**

- 2.3.31 Occasionally a course may need to be closed or suspended. There are a variety of circumstances that may lead to a member of the Executive Management Group proposing the suspension or closure of a course of study, including (by way of example):
- Vice Principal (Curriculum & Students) as a result of consistently low student recruitment;
  - Director of Finance where programmes or courses demonstrate continued evidence of ongoing financial deficit;
  - Academic Registrar as a result of serious QA concerns.
- 2.3.32 In any case where there are serious concerns about a course, this should first be discussed thoroughly with the relevant academic and administrative offices, ensuring the involvement of the relevant academic Head of Department and Vice Principal (Curriculum & Students) or other senior officer (as appropriate).
- 2.3.33 Where these discussions result in a proposal for the closure of a course, this proposal must (a) be authored by a member of the SMG and (b) submitted to SMG, via its secretary.



2.3.34 The following process will then be triggered:

(i) SMG receives and considers the proposal;

(ii) if SMG supports the proposal, it will then authorise consultation with Academic Board for a period of one month\* to consider the academic consequences and ratify the decision or otherwise;

*\*where the Head of HR has confirmed that there are no HR consultation issues, the consultation period may be reduced.*

(iii) where ESMG supports a proposal for course closure, simultaneous to its referral to Academic Board the relevant Dean (supported by the Head of HR) will meet any relevant staff to:

(a) inform them of the proposal and explain that the matter is therefore being passed to Academic Board for further consultation and discussion;

(b) invite them to make a response to the consultation document which will be considered by Academic Board and SMG before any final decision is taken; and

(c) discuss with them any possible rebalancing of their duties should the final decision be made to close the course.

2.3.35 At the end of the consultation with Academic Board:

(i) the decision is made not to close the course and the matter is either referred back to EMG and/or the Governing Body or the proposal is abandoned;

or

(ii) the decision to close the course is ratified by the Academic Board and

(a) formal QA procedures begin to enact the decision; and

(b) either the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Students)'s Office rebalances the staff members' duties as agreed during the consultation or formal HR procedures begin to reduce the FTE or dissolve the post.

### **Suspension due to student recruitment**

2.3.28 Where the recruitment for the forthcoming academic session has been formally agreed as unsuccessful, then the intake for that year may be suspended.

2.3.29 In such cases applicants who had accepted should be automatically offered a place for the following cohort (which should include the continuation of any bursaries or scholarships which they have been awarded at that point) or the possibility to discuss transfer to another course within the School.

2.3.30 Any student that has paid tuition fees or deposits for a course that has its intake suspended will have those monies reimbursed if they do not wish to take deferred entry or transfer to another course at the School.

2.3.31 Following discussion SMG may approve the suspension of a course on recruitment grounds for one recruitment cycle. This should be notified to Academic Board.

2.3.32 It is expected that permanent staff would be retained when an intake is suspended in order to not jeopardize the future sustainability of the course, however staff duties may be reallocated accordingly for that year, although all student recruitment operations would expect to be continued in full.

2.3.33 If after delaying the intake of the course by one year the course is still unable to recruit sufficiently then SMG would normally propose the closure of the course to Academic Board as above.

## **2.5 REVALIDATION**

2.4.1 Revalidation of existing courses is a process which may be sought or recommended in a number of circumstances:

2.4.2 If modifications proposed are so broad ranging involving content, learning outcomes across the whole course that it is judged by the Quality and Standards Committee to be a *new* and different course to that currently at the School then it will be referred for validation as a NEW course and so follow the validation procedure.

2.4.3 Any amendment or series of amendments that would result in 50% or more units that are new and/or new course learning outcomes or aims will be proposed by Academic as for revalidation.

2.4.4 If the Quality and Standards Committee recommends that a course be revalidated, revalidation will follow the same procedure as for validation above and therefore, a full feasibility study is required followed by a validation event and a new course specification.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY UNITS**

2.4.5 Units within existing programmes may be delivered outside of the course. For example a unit may be delivered in a stand-alone capacity during a vacation period as a 'summer school'. This will normally involve additional resources and therefore a Feasibility Study must be circulated to Heads of Departments for comment and then submitted to SMG for approval.

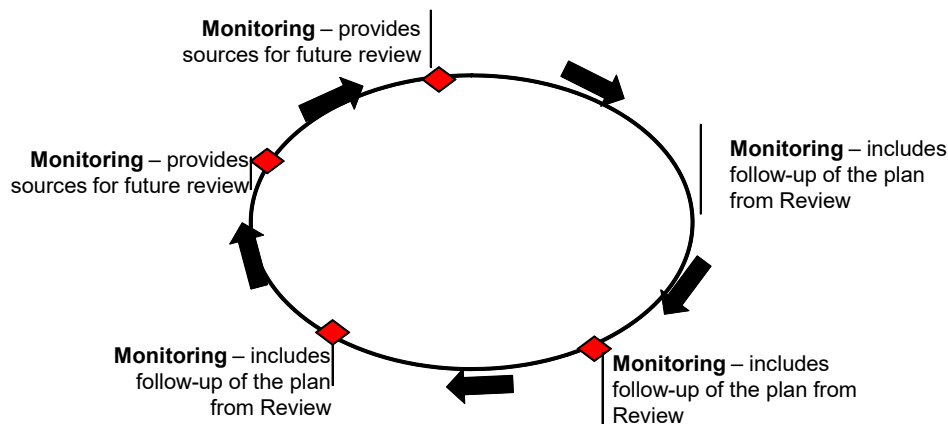
### 3 ANNUAL MONITORING AND PERIODIC REVIEW

### 3.1 OVERVIEW

- 3.1.1 Once validated, awards at Central are normally in continuous approval subject to monitoring and periodic review. Their validation does not expire after a fixed period.
- 3.1.2 Monitoring is enacted annually. Periodic review is normally undertaken every five years.
- 3.1.3 Programmes may be monitored and reviewed discretely or in groups. The Quality and Standards Committee advises the Academic Board on course groups for these purposes, and may recommend adjustments to the five-year review schedule to facilitate coherent groupings.
- 3.1.4 Monitoring and periodic review are related and interacting processes, as shown in figure 1 (below) Key purposes common to both are:
- to cause course teams systematically to draw together and consider evidence relevant to assuring standards, good practice worthy of wider attention, and opportunities for improvement;
  - to enable the Academic Board to fulfill its responsibilities in relation to the academic and professional quality of the School's taught courses and the standard of awards conferred in the name of the University of London;
  - to identify matters of common interest, some of which may best be carried forward collectively.
- 3.1.5 In general, monitoring is a snapshot of the preceding year, and is normally a "light touch" health check. It is also an opportunity to celebrate and make known successes or good practice specific to the year. Periodic review is a deeper reflection on the course(s) over time and in context, looking at trends, subject developments, the external environment including other courses in field, the place of the course(s) in relation to the School's portfolio, the currency of the curriculum and scope for improvement in its delivery and assessment. Both processes to some extent use a combination of "hard" (sometimes quantified) information and informal feedback and impressions.
- 3.1.6 In both cases, information will, where possible, be gathered centrally and made available to the course team. Capacity to do this depends on the maintenance of relevant records centrally. In both processes, the role of the course team is intended to be focused mainly on synthesis, evaluation, interpretation and planning, rather than the transmission of facts.

Figure 1

## The monitoring and review cycle



### 3.2 ANNUAL MONITORING

#### NATURE AND PURPOSE OF MONITORING

- 3.2.1 Monitoring by the course team is an ongoing process, involving reflection informed by evidence. The annual process of preparing a report is the occasion to bring the strands of evidence together and draw conclusions or lessons, propose actions arising from these, and inform the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.
- 3.2.2 Annual course reports are intended to prompt reflection on the year – including matters for celebration, good practice worthy of wider dissemination, the progress of planned development or enhancement, and the identification of matters which may call for attention either immediately or in the longer term.
- 3.2.3 The annual monitoring round is the process by which the course team shares the conclusions of reflection with students, and (through the scrutiny of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee) with colleagues similarly engaged in other courses.
- 3.2.4 Scrutiny of the reports by students and by the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee, results in feedback to the Course Team on their conclusions and plans.
- 3.2.5 Monitoring reflects on and tracks progress with enhancement plans agreed at review.
- 3.2.6 Monitoring reflects and tracks the impact of School strategies, and of research and staff development, on courses.
- 3.2.7 The Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee's summary of conclusions allows the Academic Board to discharge its responsibility for ongoing oversight of quality and standards, but the full reports do not go to Academic Board. The Research Degrees report also reports to the Research Degrees Committee.

- 3.2.8 Monitoring reports are short, and focused on evaluation, findings and plans more than on narrative. The reporting template (to be drafted by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, and approved by the Quality and Standards Committee aims to foster this approach, in some cases through a tick-box element in addition to structured questions.

### **THE ANNUAL MONITORING PROCESS**

- 3.2.9 Academic Registry will provide the data needed for monitoring (see section on evidence, below).
- 3.2.10 The Academic Registry will prepare a reporting template, incorporating relevant evidence.
- 3.2.11 The Academic Registry will circulate the timetable, templates, and available centrally produced evidence/analysis.
- 3.2.12 Annual monitoring reports will be made available to and discussed with students.
- 3.2.13 The Director of Learning, Teaching and Inclusion or relevant academic Head of Department may decide to extend the duration of a meeting, or invite additional staff to be present, to facilitate a productive discussion of monitoring.
- 3.2.14 A summary of annual monitoring will form part of the annual QA report to Academic Board.
- 3.2.15 Course Leaders will be informed of any decisions taken by the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee or Academic Board on the basis of monitoring, typically to extend good practice or to initiate remedy enhancement on a School-wide basis.

### **THE PROVISION OF EVIDENCE FOR MONITORING**

- 3.2.16 Where information is available centrally, it will be provided to course teams with basic analysis, inviting brief comment in the report. The intention is to minimise course team workload in fact-finding and narrative.
- 3.2.17 Academic Registry will provide:
- An annual monitoring dashboard, which will include:
    - Summary data for the year, on applications, new enrolments, entry profile (home/EU/OS; ethnicity; disability; gender); continuation on course and award outcomes).
    - Summary of student survey scores and findings of any centrally conducted on-line surveys, by course including UKES, NSS, PRES and PTES.
    - External examiner findings concerning the maintenance of academic standards
  - External Examiner reports.
  - The most recent version of the course's enhancement plan.
  - Course committee minutes for the year.

### **EXTERNALITY**

- 3.2.18 Monitoring is primarily an internal process, however the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee may decide to appoint a member from another institution with a clear brief to observe, comment upon or engage in consideration of monitoring reports.

### **3.3 PERIODIC REVIEW**

#### **DEFINITION**

- 3.3.1 Periodic review is the process of evaluation of a course or group of courses based on evidence accumulated over time about the quality of the learning opportunities available to students and the standards achieved by those students. Review is prepared for by the team of staff responsible for the delivery of the courses, in dialogue with students, external peers and External Examiners. The findings of the team's review event, together with plans arising from it, are made by a panel of academic and (where relevant) professional peers, including at least one external member.

#### **NATURE AND PURPOSE**

- 3.3.2 Review is an opportunity to plan systemic enhancement informed by analysis and interpretation of experience over a period of approximately five years.
- 3.3.3 Review is also informed by analysis of the external environment – including subject development, relevant industry developments and needs, other related courses at Central and elsewhere, developments in pedagogic and assessment practice, relevant professional body requirements, and the QAA UK Quality Code. Review brings these sources together to contribute to plans for improvement.
- 3.3.4 Review is set in the context of the School's main academic strategies. Review is an occasion both to evaluate progress in applying those strategies at course level, and also to use the strategies in framing future plans.
- 3.3.5 Review is one of a suite of processes by which the Academic Board satisfies itself that curricula are coherent, current and relevant, and accord with the QAA UK Quality Code.
- 3.3.6 Review aims to identify and address risks to quality and standards, and also to identify and pursue opportunities for improvement.
- 3.3.7 In steady state, when there has been an initial disability impact assessment of all course units and impact assessment is incorporated into the approval of new units, review is an occasion systematically to pursue improvement in the inclusivity and accessibility of learning outcomes, delivery, communication and assessment, provided that this can be done without compromising the standard of the award or the learning opportunities open to students who have no disability.
- 3.3.8 Note: Review looks back over the preceding 3-5 years. The purpose is not mainly to demonstrate the quality and standards achieved over that period or to secure the panel's endorsement of these (although a track record of managing quality and standards effectively may contribute to confidence in future planning). The expectation is that course management, annual monitoring and interaction with external examiners will have ensured the basic academic health of each course. The purpose of looking back is

to effect improvement. Review should combine an evaluative retrospective approach with a strategic developmental approach.

### **KEY COMPONENTS OF REVIEW**

The key components for a periodic review are:

- 3.3.9 A self-evaluation prepared by the team of staff responsible for the course(s);
- 3.3.10 A body of evidence and contextual information accessible to the course team and in most cases also to members of a panel whose members are not involved with the course(s) and who engage with the team in considering past experience and future plans for the course(s);
- 3.3.11 Dialogue with a review panel whose members have no direct involvement with the course(s) under review, and which includes at least one external member with academic and - where relevant - also professional credibility;
- 3.3.12 A plan for the future development of the course(s). The plan may include some elements for approval at the time of the review panel meeting and/or plans for implementation over a more extended period following the review.

### **UNITS OF REVIEW**

On the basis of the current and foreseeable programme portfolio:

- 3.3.13 Each undergraduate course will be reviewed separately
- 3.3.14 The Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee will recommend and determine the groups of taught PG courses to be reviewed together, with review focused primarily on curriculum currency, coherence and relevance within the Masters Framework, and on alignment with agreed Framework policies and practice.
- 3.3.15 The Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee may recommend that an externally accredited course be reviewed outside the group, to allow a joint exercise with the accrediting body, or maximum reuse of documents.
- 3.3.16 The research degrees programme will be reviewed separately.

### **THE TIMING OF REVIEWS**

- 3.3.17 In steady state, courses are normally reviewed every five years. In addition:
  - Academic Registry maintains a rolling 5 year schedule of reviews, updated and endorsed by Academic Board.
- 3.3.18 The usual reasons for adjustment are to facilitate the grouping of related courses for review or to improve alignment with external accreditation visits or known changes in professional or other external requirements.
- 3.3.19 A scheduled review will not normally be deferred for more than one academic year, and may be deferred only if the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee is satisfied by the record of annual monitoring of the course.



- 3.3.20 The timing of the review panel meeting within the scheduled academic year will be determined in discussion with the designated panel chair, the course leader(s) and a representative of the Academic Registrar's Office at the start of the academic year.

### **WHO IS INVOLVED IN REVIEW?**

#### **The Self-Evaluation Team**

- 3.3.21 Review is mainly conducted by the team of staff responsible for the courses, or an agreed subgroup thereof. This is the self-evaluation team. The team uses the evidence provided, gathers supplementary evidence where necessary, and produces a self-evaluation in line with the guidance. The self-evaluation team should have a chair, and the editing of the self-evaluation should rest with one defined person. The team should agree a contact with the Academic Registrar's Office (who may or may not be the same as the chair).
- 3.3.22 The Faculty Office has the right to approve, or to require change to the composition of the self-evaluation team.
- 3.3.23 The self-evaluation team may include one or more external consultant member, agreed by the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Students) or their nominee.
- 3.3.24 The review team may include students or recent graduates from one or more of the courses under review.
- 3.3.25 No external, student or graduate member of the review team may also be a member of the panel for the review.

#### **Students**

- 3.3.26 Though normally represented on the review team, and in addition to use of student feedback as evidence, representative students should be directly consulted during the review process, particularly in relation to any substantial plans for change.
- 3.3.27 A representative group of students will always meet the review panel.

#### **Neuro-inclusion and Disability**

- 3.3.28 The review team will normally consult a representative of the Neuro-inclusion and Disability Service to advise on accessibility and inclusivity, during preparation and before the meeting with the panel.

#### **Support and resource departments**

- 3.3.29 Library, IT and T&P heads may be invited to attend review team meetings and must be consulted on proposed modifications or enhancement plan which change resource needs.

#### **The Review Panel**

- 3.3.30 The main role of the review panel is to engage with and constructively critique the self-evaluation and plans presented by the review team. The review panel's report advises the course team and the Academic Board on the current health of the course(s) (including

standard, the quality of learning opportunities, and on the coherence and currency of the curriculum) and the appropriateness and academic feasibility of future plans.

- 3.3.31 The panel may endorse plans or counsel against elements of the plan for the course(s), advise on academic risks, and indicate priorities. The panel may report on essential action which is not within the review team's plan. The panel may also approve or reject modifications presented to it in detail.
- 3.3.32 The panel formally advises the Academic Board. The Academic Board is charged to give due attention to the recommendations of review panels, and will only very exceptionally and for clearly identified reasons set them aside.
- 3.3.33 The detailed remit for the panel will be outlined in operational guidelines, and may vary in detail according to the circumstances of the review (e.g. if the review is combined with professional accreditation, or if the courses are in the M Framework).
- 3.3.34 The membership of the Review Panel will be confirmed by Academic Board, in liaison with the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.
- 3.3.35 Panel members must have no involvement with the current delivery and assessment of the course(s). Internal members are drawn from academic and/or senior support department staff.
- 3.3.36 Every review panel must include at least one member external to the School, with academic and/or professional credibility, who is not a current External Examiner and has not within the last three years been an External Examiner for any of the courses under review. There must be externals with awareness of higher education standards, pedagogy and assessment. Panel members should have broadly relevant subject expertise, but a detailed match to all subject areas in the curriculum of the course(s) is not expected.
- 3.3.37 The panel may include a student from another course in the School, or a Students' Union Officer or a recent graduate of one of the courses under review, but this is not a requirement. The recent graduate may not be the sole external member of the panel, although it is possible that externals may be alumni who have graduated from the School more than ten years ago.

### **The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will support the review process throughout, from planning through to follow up after the panel meeting. This involves support for the Review Team, and also for the Review Panel and its chair. The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will:

- provide evidence to the Course Team and Panel;
- provide guidance, templates and contextual material;
- provide School-wide information for the "School Context" document;
- convene the preparatory meeting, liaise with panel chairs and review team contacts to agree the schedule, and comment on drafts during the process if asked;

- liaise with the Dean of Studies to decide the School members of the Review Panel;
- liaise with the Dean of Studies or their nominee to decide on external membership of the Review Panel, normally from those nominated by the review team;
- contact agreed external members of the review panel;
- draft a programme for the meeting with the review panel, agreed with the panel chair and the review team chair;
- Sends the hard copy documentation to the panel;
- Arranges room, catering, and hard or electronic copies of “raw” evidence (e.g. course committee minutes) to be available on the day.

3.3.38 If documentation is late or appears inadequate, the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will consult the Dean on whether the event should be postponed.

3.3.39 On the day of the panel meeting, the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will:

- Act as secretary to the meeting
- Work in partnership with the panel chair to advise the panel on its options and the scope of remit. (This may include advice on areas NOT within the remit of the panel)
- Participate as appropriate in the meeting – typically to provide institutional information, explain aspects of the process, or help to resolve misunderstandings.

3.3.40 After the panel meeting the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will:

- Send a draft report to the Panel for comment within one month;
- On receipt of the comments, or within two weeks (whichever is the sooner), send the draft report to the Chair for comment (to be made within a further two weeks);
- Send the report to the other members of the panel for any further comments;
- Send the report to the Course Team to be checked for factual accuracy;
- Send the confirmed report to the secretary of the Academic Board;
- Liaise with the panel chair and the relevant course leaders to ensure follow-up: in particular, the responses of the course team(s) must be approved first by the panel chair before being provided to Academic Board;
- Ensure that the confirmed plan enters the annual monitoring cycle.

## **THE REVIEW PROCESS**

### **Agreeing the schedule for the year**

3.3.41 The Academic Board will receive and approve details of the courses due for review in the next academic year according to the five-year schedule.

### **Deciding on panel chairs and internal panel members**

3.3.42 When Academic Board has approved the outline schedule, the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will liaise with the Dean's Office to assign panel chairs to each review and validation panel. In steady state, panel chairs will be selected from a pool of trained chairs.

3.3.43 At the end of the summer term the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will plan and notify School staff likely to be allocated to a review or validation panel in the forthcoming academic year, in order to plan training. Their allocation to specific panels may not be finalized until after the preparatory meetings.

### **Training**

- 3.3.44 The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, in association with relevant senior academic staff, will organise training for panel chairs and internal members. A training session will be offered at least every other year, depending on the scale of the review programme.

### **Preparatory meeting**

- 3.3.45 At the start of the academic year in which the review takes place (or earlier where possible and by arrangement) the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will arrange meetings with:
- the designated Panel chair;
  - the Course Leader.
- 3.3.46 The meetings will discuss what the course team(s) expect, at this stage, to achieve through the review, and the scale of the change initially expected. One aspect of the meeting is to establish whether plans are likely to entail significant changes in resource requirements, and whether a full feasibility report to EMG is required.
- 3.3.47 An outline timescale for timetable for the reviews will be developed in the light of the preparatory meetings. A named **review team contact** will thereafter liaise with the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

### **Evidence for use in review**

- 3.3.48 As close as possible to the start of the Academic Year, the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will make available to the review team chair as much as possible of the evidence for the review which is available centrally. It will include:
- Entry profiles and progression and achievement data over 5 years with analysis (the final PG outcomes are not available until after the autumn Examination Board);
  - External Examiner reports over 3 years;
  - Course Committee Minutes over 3 years;
  - Student Survey results;
  - Destination of Leavers (DLHE) survey data;
  - Annual Monitoring reports for past 3 years.
- 3.3.49 The course team(s) and appropriate academic Head of Department will use and reference this evidence in preparing the self-evaluation. It is not necessary to produce summaries of the evidence, the bulk of which will also be available to the panel electronically in advance of the review panel meeting.
- 3.3.50 Generally, material for review which concerns subject development, industry needs, employer feedback, external pedagogic development, and courses elsewhere can only be gathered by the course team. With sufficient advance warning, the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement can undertake some fact-finding on relevant courses elsewhere.
- 3.3.51 In addition to centrally available evidence the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will, at the start of the academic year, provide a pack of supporting information including:

- The current course specifications of the course(s) under review
- Previous review/validation report for the course
- The School's Academic Strategy
- Handbook of Academic Regulations
- Handbook of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- Placement Handbook (for courses with placements/work-based learning)
- For PG courses, the agreed Framework structure and associated strategies and procedures which apply across the whole Framework
- The QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- Any report on the course by an accrediting body
- Relevant subject benchmark statements for UG courses
- A guidance note on preparation of the self-evaluation
- A template for an action plan arising from the review

3.3.52 The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will provide all the evidence electronically, via OneDrive or email.

3.3.53 Documents for the meeting with the review panel are:

- The Self-evaluation
- The Enhancement Plan for future development

3.3.54 Guidelines and templates will be provided by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and introduced in training. Only general principles are given here:

## **DOCUMENTS: the basics**

### **The Self Evaluation**

- No fixed word length, but should not be excessive (c.3-5,000 words).
- If several courses are grouped within a programme, as much as possible of the SED will be thematic across the group, although elements may be specific to a single course.
- The guideline outlines the scope and key topics to be addressed.
- Evaluative rather than descriptive, referring to evidence and conclusions drawn from it, but not paraphrasing information which the panel will be able to look at
- The SED should incorporate the conclusions of the team who prepared it, and explain the context of the associated plan for enhancement and any proposals for formal modification which are planned.

### **The Enhancement Plan**

- Follows a template
- Arises from the Self-evaluation.
- May include proposals which entail formal changes to the course (e.g. structure, amended learning outcomes, some new units, assessment changes etc) and also plans to enhance delivery and assessment which will do not change the course definition but are addressed in practice and in student information.
- May include proposals for the next academic year, and also developments phased over 2-3 years.

3.3.55 The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement sends the core self-evaluation document to the Review Panel 2-3 weeks before the meeting and will provide all the supporting documentation and evidence electronically on a dedicated VLE page for the panel.

### **The Review Panel meeting**

3.3.56 For a single undergraduate course or a substantial PG group, the review panel will be present for a day (e.g. 10.00-17.00). Some reviews may be shorter. An indicative programme is given below:

- The panel will meet the Head/Programme Leader/Course Leader, alongside a representative from the Deanery;
- group of students from the courses under review (normally together);
- The panel will meet the course team to discuss the SED, the evidence and the plan and the plan. Where possible, this will be a single meeting for the group of courses, but exceptionally and by prior arrangement the panel will subdivide to consider courses separately;
- The panel will meet privately to formulate conclusions;
- The panel will give brief feedback to representatives of the review team, the detail to be available in the report on the review.

### **Indicative Meetings for a Review Panel Event**

Meeting with the Course Leader or Senior Course Team with a member of the Deanery;

Meeting with current students and recent alumni;

Meeting with the course delivery team (including VLs if appropriate).

### **Outcomes of Review**

3.3.57 The Review panel will normally:

- Summarize commendable aspects of the course(s) which are clearly contributing significantly to providing a high quality student experience;
- Highlight areas and specific examples of good practice, which may be generic to the group of courses under review or transferrable to other programmes;
- Comment on the enhancement plan. The review report will normally indicate what aspects of the plan are strongly supported, endorsed, referred back for further consideration or rejected.
- Advise upon specific course modifications presented;
- Comment on priorities;
- Comment on the review team's use of the School's Academic Strategy and where programmes are contributing to its achievement.

3.3.58 The panel may make conditions or recommendations in relation to the plan, or in other matters not within the plan. Recommendations may be:

- **Conditions:** used only if there is a clear risk to quality of standards unless action is taken, or where alignment with a standard process/procedure including providing missing information
- **Recommendations:** matters which the panel considers important contributions to the future quality of learning opportunities, secure standards **or which may enhance the course(s)**

## 4 OTHER AREAS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

## **4.1 ADMISSIONS**

4.1.1 The admissions process is governed by the School's Admissions team.

4.1.2 The quality of admissions is assured by:

- The provision of an institution wide guidance on admissions governing the admissions processes (for instance through an Admissions Handbook);
- An institutional wide Handbook of Academic Regulations;
- Oversight of the Admissions process by the Heads of Student Admissions and Student Recruitment in liaison with academic Heads of Department and the Faculty Office;
- Admissions entry criteria in the programme specification are clear and transparent and are used to underpin the admission decisions;
- Admissions statistics are considered as part of annual monitoring and periodic review;
- Entry criteria may only be changed through modification of the course, normally via Quality & Standards Committee.

## **4.2 STUDENT INDUCTION**

4.2.1 In addition to an introduction to the Students' Union and a welcome from senior staff, all students will receive an induction on commencement of the course. The induction may be carried out over the course of a number of events and specific themes may be introduced gradually over the duration of the course as and when needed.

4.2.2 However, all students should expect to receive:

- an introduction to the programme, stating the structure of their course of study;
- an introduction to library services;
- an introduction to IT services;
- an introduction on health and safety;
- an introduction to the relevant student policies, including the Student Charter.

4.2.3 Further induction and training is then embedded within the course curriculum as appropriate.

## **4.3 STUDENT REPRESENTATION, FEEDBACK AND ROLE IN QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT**

4.3.1 The School places a high value in obtaining feedback from its student population in order to assure and enhance the learning opportunities that it delivers. Feedback can contribute to the development of the curriculum and assessment practices, the enhancement of learning resources and student support as well as other areas of the student experience and how the School delivers its mission. Students are consequently represented in three main processes:

- Committee system
- Student Surveys
- Periodic review/Revalidation



## **COMMITTEE SYSTEM**

- 4.3.2 Students are represented on a variety of committees in the School through either course representatives or via the Students' Union. Via the Course Teams, students are invited annually to appoint representatives for their course. Undergraduate programmes may also include year and, where appropriate, course representatives. Volunteers will normally be requested and where more than one volunteer comes forward an election will be held within the course.
- 4.3.3 Student course representatives are members of their respective Course Committees. There is one course committee for each undergraduate course, and four postgraduate committees representing the areas of Applied Practices, Performance, Production, and Research.
- 4.3.4 Student Course Representatives are also present on other School Committees: this includes Academic Board, Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee, Quality and Standards Committee and Research Degrees Sub-Committee
- 4.3.5 Through the Students' Union, the student body further represented within our overall governance structures.
- 4.3.6 Student Representatives are invited to an induction meeting at the start of the academic year to brief them on their role and on the committee system. A Student Representative handbook is also produced annually by Academic Registry.

## **STUDENT SURVEYS**

- 4.3.7 The School normally participates in the following external surveys, however sometimes internal surveys are run for current students:
- Postgraduate Taught and Research Experience Surveys
  - National Students Survey
  - Graduate Outcomes Survey (after graduation)
- 4.3.8 The School also operates a number of internal student surveys:
- in-year surveys
  - Decliners' Survey (pre-enrolment)
  - Student Withdrawal Survey (post-enrolment)
  - New Student Survey (post-induction)
- 4.3.9 The results of student surveys are received by course committees, course teams, and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. The National Student Survey is also received and discussed at Academic Board.
- 4.3.10 Course Teams reflect on the results of the surveys and feedback on them as part of the annual monitoring process. When reviewing them, however, the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and Academic Board may request specific course level actions or responses or School wide action to be undertaken.

- 4.3.11 Student surveys listed in 4.3.7 and 4.3.8 (excluding the Decliners' survey) are undertaken on behalf of the School by the Academic Registrar's Office.
- 4.3.12 Courses may choose to conduct unit level surveys to obtain student feedback from units. Such surveys can be implemented in paper form (usually distributed and collected in the final session of the unit) or on-line using the Jisc Online Surveys tool.
- 4.3.13 The following two text answers are also considered good practice for inclusion.
- Use the box below to provide any positive comments on the unit (text)
  - Use the box below to provide any comments on where the unit could be improved (text)

#### **PERIODIC REVIEW**

- 4.3.14 As part of the Periodic Review process, review panels will meet a group of students that represent both the current cohort but also alumni of the course in order to get feedback on their experience of the course.
- 4.3.15 Students are also invited to be members of the review panels. Student members of the review panels will not be from the course under review.

### **4.4 ASSURING AND ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **THEMATIC REVIEW**

- 4.4.1 In addition to the periodic review process the School has mechanisms to undertake a review of a particular theme. The thematic review is to assure and enhance practice and where necessary make recommendations to amend policy.
- 4.4.2 Normally the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee, the Academic Registrar's Office or Dean's Office will highlight the need for a review into a given theme. A lead will be appointed by the Dean and the terms of reference/process of the review will be compiled by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will normally provide administrative support.
- 4.4.3 The review can occur over the course of one day, or as a working group. It will consist of a panel of staff (academic and administrative and include where appropriate student or external members as advised by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement) that will review current practice and policy surrounding a given theme in order to enhance its quality, efficiency and effectiveness.

#### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.4.4 The School also operates a programme of staff development sessions in the area of learning, teaching and assessment (ISTLA). These are convened once or twice termly. Staff may also submit applications for individual staff development via the HR Office.

### **ANNUAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT**

4.4.5 It is envisaged that at the pre-term meeting of Academic Board, a report will be presented which summarises the results of the previous year's quality assurance processes. The report will confirm the compliance of all provision to the School's QA processes and will highlight areas of good practice and enhancement as well as areas of concern. This report will be provided to the Governing Body, to confirm the School's ongoing compliance with the Office for Students conditions of registration.

4.4.6 The report will therefore summarise the results of the previous year's QA processes:

- Annual Monitoring
- Periodic Review and validation
- Modification to course and units
- External Examiner reports
- Course committees
- Student Surveys

## **4.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMME**

4.5.1 The research degree programme is quality assured and enhanced via the following processes:

- Student Surveys
- Research Student course committee
- Annual monitoring submission of the research degree programme
- A periodic review of the research degree provision
- Examiner reports from the thesis and viva examination process
- Research Degrees Committee
- Dedicated section of academic regulations to the provision of research degrees.
- Reference to external documents such as the UK Quality Code's chapter on research degrees.

4.5.2 In addition the Research Office publishes a Supervisors Handbook as well as the annual student PhD Programme Handbook.

## **4.6 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHING**

4.6.1 Teaching is assured and monitored through a number of quality assurance processes already detailed above such as student surveys, annual monitoring, external examiner reports and course committees all of which feed into the on-going assurance and enhancement of the quality of the teaching provided by the School. In addition, however, the School operates a biannual peer observation of teaching programme (see below).

### **PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING**

4.6.2 Peer observation of teaching has a range of uses:

- The process is collegial and supportive and should lead to improved practice;
- It facilitates dissemination and sharing in teaching, learning and subject knowledge;
- It increases opportunities for discussion about teaching and its efficacy;

- It helps to ensure teaching quality;
  - It assists staff members in maintaining a teaching record or portfolio useful for many reasons such as working towards the UK Professional Standards Framework levels of fellowship;
  - It encourages experimentation and risk.
- (adapted from sources such as the HEA website)

### **Details of POT protocols**

- 4.6.3 Every two years each permanent member of academic staff is observed in their teaching by another member of staff. Support staff (e.g. TSD, Library, Learning Centre) are invited to undertake peer observation of teaching at the discretion of the head of department.
- 4.6.4 All new academic staff should expect to receive two peer observation sessions within their first year of teaching.
- 4.6.5 You are asked to select an observer whose pedagogy is highly respected in the School. (Confer with the Faculty Office if you would like advice about whom to ask.) You are asked, also, to select a colleague from a different course. This is in the spirit of some of our POT aims: to disseminate practice. Where there are particular reasons, colleagues more closely aligned may be asked.
- 4.6.6 Observer and observed are expected to share feedback within a week of the observed session, with the written summary submitted to the staff member within a month. The observed member of staff will discuss matters arising from the observation at their next annual appraisal as part of discussing learning, teaching and assessment.
- 4.6.7 The member of staff teaching or facilitating learning will outline in advance the purpose of the class to the observer. This may be any form of learning mode familiar to Central staff: studio teaching, formal lecture, practical class, PhD supervision and others.
- 4.6.9 The observer will remain in the session for an agreed period.
- 4.6.9 The observer's role is to assist the lecturer in reflecting on their pedagogical processes, not to impose a differing view on how a class should have been taught.
- 4.6.10 The observed member of staff identifies what it is they wish to be specifically considered within the observation. All staff are encouraged to take risks in their choice.
- 4.6.11 The following offers ideas for a list of areas to consider. It is perfectly in tune with POT to ask one question, however, such as 'Am I intelligible?' if this is felt appropriate. This list is to prompt thoughts:
- the identification and communication of the objectives of the session to students
  - the content was relevant and appropriate
  - engagement and good rapport with students
  - involvement of students with their learning
  - forms of questioning: were they appropriate?
  - was the session challenging, stimulating?
  - clear explanations and a good command of the subject knowledge

- student contributions: were they valued and used?
- respect for diversity
- structure e.g scaffolding and time allocations for the session
- use of visual aids, IT and additional learning materials

- 4.6.12 You will be asked to identify if you have been POTted, when and by whom towards the end of the year. In addition, we wish to build up an archive of models of POT practice and, along with your observer, you will be asked if you feel able to share yours in the archive. This is optional. You are expected to share your reflection on your POT with your line manager at appraisal however.
- 4.6.13 Central uses many quality mechanisms to assure the quality of its teaching (e.g. Course Committees, yearly surveys, unit feedback mechanisms, external examiner reports, Annual Monitoring reports). Where an observer has concerns about the teaching s/he sees, you are not expected to 'report' this but to advise the observed to discuss with their line manager and having done so, arrange for an additional teaching session to be observed that addresses the concerns expressed.
- 4.6.14 A report is sent to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee each autumn, confirming the numbers that have undergone POT with relevant actions. The report will highlight good practice.

### **Academic Staff Mentoring**

***Please also refer to Human Resources' arrangements for staff induction.***

- 4.6.15 Central runs an efficient and useful line manager system supported by a mentoring system to be applied when necessary. There are four mentoring schemes that might be useful for staff:
- **Research:** to advise on research matters e.g. sabbatical application forms, research journals for publishing, practice as research discussions, read material ...
  - **Teaching and Learning:** to advise, as a peer, on learning and teaching matters e.g. undertake peer observations, advise on challenging teaching situations, suggest how to plan for sessions, point out useful subject material, reflect and discuss pastoral care issues.
  - **Research Degree Supervisors:** to advise and support new supervisors who have not supervised a research degrees student to completion before. Mentors for PhD supervisors will be arranged via the Research Office and Research Degrees Programme Convenor.
  - **New staff buddy:** to advise on systems and methods of practices at Central e.g. if a new Course Leader, to be mentored by an existing course leader at the same level through at least a year of Central systems e.g. Annual Monitoring, budget queries, how other departments work.
- 4.6.16 Staff should discuss with their line manager in the first instance their mentoring needs for research or teaching and learning and then liaise with the Research Office or the Faculty respectively.
- 4.6.17 For new staff the Faculty will liaise with the line manager and the new staff member to ascertain an appropriate member of staff to act as a staff buddy.

### **New Course Leaders**

4.6.18 New Course Leaders should ensure that they receive a briefing meeting from the following:

- Head of Admissions and Student Recruitment for admissions processes
- Head of Academic and Student Services for course budgets and assessment
- Placement Co-ordinator (where appropriate) for placements/attachments.
- Student Recruitment Manager for course marketing, recruitment and open days
- Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement for quality assurance.

4.6.19 The School also provides a Visiting Lecturers and Visiting Professionals Handbook to assist visiting staff.

## **4.7 QUALITY OF PLACEMENT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

4.7.1 The School assures the quality of placement and work-based learning opportunities via:

- A dedicated member of staff with responsibility for Placements
- A Placements Handbook, outlining roles, responsibilities and procedures for students, staff and placement organizations.
- Oversight from Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee
- Feedback from students and hosts on placement activity.
- The provision of information to both students and placement organisations outlining roles and responsibilities.

4.7.2 The overarching purpose of this section of the handbook, Placement Learning Handbook and the Code of Off-site Conduct is:

- to safeguard the student (e.g. issues such as Health and Safety, insurance, disclosure of confidential information, clear guidelines on student responsibility and entitlement, and on what to do if there is problem);
- to safeguard the learning opportunity by ensuring that the opportunities the student gets on placement will contribute to achieving the learning outcomes of the course or unit;
- to achieve reasonable consistency of opportunity and to ensure that no-one is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged.

4.7.3 For the purposes of this document the broad term 'placement learning' will be used to cover both the traditional 'placement' and 'work-based learning' terms as well as 'attachment' unless otherwise specified. The School defines 'placement learning' as 'an agreed period of learning that is integral to a higher education programme and is usually achieved and demonstrated through engagement with an organisation outside of the course'. In such activity, the course team are not present or directly conducting the learning opportunities. Normally, placement learning will be with an external organisation; however there are a number of internal placements within the School.

4.7.4 Placement learning varies. It may go by different names (creative apprenticeship, school placement etc) and some of the principles governing the management of placement learning would also apply to other off-site fieldwork or to collaborative work with an external organisation. (For such work, it is expected that tutors use this handbook appropriately.) Workplace or any other external experience which a student finds in 'off

duty' and vacation time is not placement learning, even if it is broadly relevant to the course – the school does not insure students for this kind of activity.

- 4.7.5 Placement Learning may be in a work-based environment (work-based learning). Activity in a work-based environment will normally be linked to the learning outcomes of a specific unit and will be directly assessed. Other (placement) activity may complement the programme and the experience delivered in the placement will feed into other units and hence assessments of the programme though may not be directly assessed. However, irrespective of how the activity is assessed, it is expected that students undertaking any placement learning must complete the period of activity to the satisfaction of the School (this will normally involve confirmation from the host).
- 4.7.6 All courses using placement learning must clearly articulate this in the course specification. It must also be clearly articulated in the appropriate unit outline. All work based learning activity must be linked to a specific unit, its learning outcomes and be assessed.
- 4.7.7 All Placement learning must be arranged via the School's Placement Officer.
- 4.7.8 All students engaged in any off-site work whether it be a placement, work-based learning or other activity must abide by the School's code of conduct for off-site work.
- 4.7.9 The term 'attachment' refers only to and should only be used for the MFA second year. It signals a more autonomous relationship than placement where the MFA student will be more independent and less guided. 'Attachments' can be work-based (i.e. paid). If the attachment is work-based, this would be work the student already does. Central does not source paid work for attachments. Course tutors and the Placement Office would need to agree this work as appropriate for the attachment.
- 4.7.10 Where placement hosts are involved in assessment this must be agreed in advance of the commencement of the learning and should be clearly defined.
- 4.7.11 A host should be provided with a document clearly stating their responsibilities in terms of supporting the student as well as their specific responsibilities in terms of teaching and training.
- 4.7.12 The student should remain in contact with the course team during the learning and may be visited on site by the course team. The School will continue to provide information to the student during their placement in support of the placement experience.
- 4.7.13 Students will be informed of their specific responsibilities towards the host and the School whilst on learning.
- 4.7.14 There will be a Placements Group in order to provide a forum for discussion on issues, policy and procedures in relation to placements. Some courses such as BA Drama, Applied Theatre and Education and the PGCE courses may have their own specific placement host groups.

- 4.7.15 The School will obtain feedback from both students and placement organisations to assist in enhancing and developing the quality of the School's placement provision and associated policy and procedures.

### **PLACEMENT LEARNING – GUIDANCE ON DESIGN AND SPECIFICATION**

- 4.7.16 The following points should be considered when designing a new course:

#### **AIMS AND OUTCOMES**

- How does placement learning contribute to achieving the overall aims and learning outcomes of the course as a whole; what will it add, enrich and reinforce?
- What is the purpose of a placement in this degree?
- What is the best point in the degree for the placement, and why?
- How long is it? (How much of a contribution to learning on the course?)
- How far away is it/how culturally different?
- What is realistically achievable with the placements we can find? Set the outcomes of the placement sufficiently flexibly for them to be equivalently achievable in all the placement environments you are likely to be able to offer.

Placement learning outcomes need to be expressed broadly enough to accommodate the fact that different students on the same course may be in very different placement environments and undertake varying work. The School, or in some cases the individual student, may negotiate with the placement provider about the type of work the student will undertake and this may include agreeing specific outcomes – but the core learning outcomes for all students with all hosts undertaking a placement as part of the same unit of the same course will be defined in the course specification.. Depending on course requirements, the learning outcomes can be broad (e.g. to gain experience of community based work) or more specific (e.g. to develop a defined skill-set). It is clearly important for the placement host, as well as the student, to know what the student is expected to learn.

#### **ASSESSMENT**

- The placement learning opportunity is pitched at an appropriate level, in relation to the student's progression through the course and the level of credit given.
- Is the learning undertaken through the placement assessed and what is the best way of assessing students' learning from the placement?
- Is it graded or assessed at pass/fail?
- Is it wholly assessed within the School by Central staff, or does the host play a part in assessment?
- Does it contribute to classification?
- If the placement learning is assessed for credit, the criteria determining whether the student has passed are clearly stated, and the rationale for the nature of assessment is clear;
- If placement hosts are involved, what do they need to know? How can we ensure they understand criteria sufficiently well to ensure fairness and consistency in assessment?
- How can we involve external examiners?
- What happens if a student fails the placement? (Must the student repeat a placement? Can the same placement learning experience be reassessed? Is alternative assessment,



not involving placement, acceptable? What discretion does the Examination Board have?)

- What happens to the student's assessment if, through no fault of the student, the placement breaks down or has to be terminated?

### **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

- Is the placement a core element of the programme, required of all students, with no possibility of alternative provision to cater for special needs? [Why?]
- If not, in what (general) circumstances might a student undertake an alternative to the placement, and how could this be agreed to ensure compatible credit, or the achievement of comparable learning outcomes?
- Are there risks that minority groups may be disadvantaged in placement settings? How, in general, will such risks be managed?
- May a student be permitted to omit the placement on grounds of prior work experience? How will this be decided?

## **4.8 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

- 4.8.1 The School takes seriously any complaint or appeal made by its students. The School has a complaints and appeals procedure which is published in its Handbook of Academic Regulations. The School aims to be transparent in all matters pertaining to complaints and appeals.
- 4.8.2 The School's processes will allow and encourage informal resolution of areas of concern before the pursuit of a formal complaint or appeal. Students can informally query areas of concern via the relevant member of staff, their line manager or head of department or through the relevant course committee student representative.
- 4.8.3 An annual report on the number of complaints and appeals made during the course of the previous academic session is presented annually to the Academic Board for consideration and action where common themes emerge.
- 4.8.4 Advice on how to access the complaints and appeals process is available via the Student Centre. Individual case support can be obtained from the Students' Union
- 4.8.5 The School's complaints and appeals procedures can be found in the Student Charter and via the School's VLE: Learnzone.

## **4.9 PUBLIC, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES (PSRBs)**

- 4.9.1 The School currently has one programme that is approved by a PSRB. This is the MA Drama and Movement Therapy course which is approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Successful completion of the course allows registration with the HCPC and therefore eligibility to work as a professional.
- 4.9.2 The programme undergoes the same quality assurance procedures as other courses, but will also have additional quality assurance procedures that are prescribed by the HCPC. These include Performance Review and other processes, which are managed through

liaison between the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, the relevant Course Leader, and an appointed HCPC contact.

## **4.10 STUDENT CHARTER**

4.10.1 The School's Student Charter is reviewed annually by the Academic Board. It is introduced as part of student induction.

## 5 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND GOOD PRACTICE IN ASSESSMENT

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 Currently, the Handbook of Academic Regulations defines the regulations relating to assessment. This is the primary document governing the conduct of the assessment process. The regulations are approved and amended by the Academic Board. However in addition the following (contained within this handbook) are also relevant as assuring the quality of the standard of the award made:

- External Examiner process
- Marking and Moderation Policy
- Examination Board
- Good practice in assessment (see below)

This section aims to provide academic staff with supplementary information on assessment to complement the Handbook of Academic Regulations.

## 5.2 THE FORMAT AND TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

5.2.1 Assessment may fall into one or more of the following categories:

- diagnostic - to determine the learner's aptitude and preparedness for a programme of study or a strand within a programme, and to identify strengths and skills likely to assist learning or difficulties to be addressed. Diagnostic assessment may be used in selecting applicants and to help students make informed choices or focus their efforts in areas where improvement is needed;
- formative - to provide learners with feedback on their progress in meeting learning outcomes;
- summative - to provide a measure of achievement or failure in relation to the intended learning outcomes of a programme of study or a specific element in that programmes of study.
- An individual assessment task may fall into more than one of these categories and may also be an activity through which students are intended to learn. If an assessment task is designated **only** as "formative", students are required to make a serious attempt at that task but failure in a retrieval assessment of that task will not cause the student to fail the unit.

### **Formative assessment tasks**

5.2.3 The designation of an assessment task as "formative" in information to students, means that students are required to make a serious attempt at the task and that the task is designed to assist students in developing the skills or understanding required for subsequent assessment tasks, in the same unit or another unit. If an assessment task is designated in student information only as "formative", failure in a retrieval assessment in that task only will not cause the student to fail the unit as a whole. For a task designated only as formative, the unit tutor has discretion to decide whether the student must repeat the assessment, or whether it is more appropriate to use the feedback given for the formative task to inform work in subsequent assessment tasks.

### **Definition of Essays, Reports and Dissertations:**

5.2.4 The above terms are frequently used in regulations for awards of the University and, except where the regulations for any particular award otherwise provide, have the following meanings:

- (a) an essay: a brief description and discussion (normally not exceeding 7,500 words), probably based on secondary sources, of a particular topic within a field of study.
- (c) a report: an account (normally not exceeding 10,000 words) of the study of a specified topic based on experiments, observations or review of literature. A relevant bibliography would normally be expected.
- (d) a dissertation: an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge in any field or part of a field of study. It may vary in length but should not normally exceed 30,000 words unless otherwise stated in the regulations for a specific degree. There should be evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly. A full bibliography and references would normally be required.

5.2.5 The table below is an indicative guide to the skills and abilities that might be acquired by a student through undertaking different types of assessment.

TYPE OF ASSESSMENT	RANGE OF SKILLS ACQUIRED
Essays, critical reviews, journal articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Organization of materials</li> <li>• Self-editing skills</li> <li>• Coherence of argument</li> <li>• Critical independent thinking</li> <li>• Written presentation</li> <li>• Ability to focus</li> <li>• Depth of subject knowledge</li> <li>• Breadth of perspective</li> <li>• Selection and attribution of sources</li> <li>• Research and collation of information</li> </ul>
Reports and case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Organization of materials</li> <li>• Self-editing skills</li> <li>• Coherence of argument</li> <li>• Critical independent thinking</li> <li>• Written presentation</li> <li>• Ability to focus</li> <li>• Depth of subject knowledge</li> <li>• Breadth of perspective</li> <li>• Selection and attribution of sources</li> <li>• IT skills</li> <li>• Professionalism of presentation showing familiarity with report format</li> <li>• Awareness of end user</li> <li>• Analytical and evaluative skills</li> <li>• Research and collation of information</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral presentation skills</li> </ul>

TYPE OF ASSESSMENT	RANGE OF SKILLS ACQUIRED
Seminar Presentations, posters, presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed use of body language</li> <li>• Interactive communication skills</li> <li>• Use of audio-visual aids</li> <li>• Group work skills</li> <li>• Planning and time management</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Planning and organization</li> <li>• Team work</li> <li>• Editing</li> <li>• Interactive presentation skills</li> <li>• Imaginative breadth</li> <li>• Integration of image and text</li> </ul>
Group Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team work and collaborative responsibility</li> <li>• Delegation</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Negotiation</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Application</li> </ul>
Logs and journals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation of material</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Self critical awareness</li> <li>• Succinct recording technique</li> <li>• Ability to focus</li> <li>• Reflective analysis</li> </ul>
Creative studio based projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conceptual skills</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Imaginative breadth</li> <li>• Knowledge of materials and techniques</li> <li>• Technical skills</li> <li>• Contextual knowledge</li> <li>• Visual aesthetics and expressiveness</li> <li>• Planning and organization</li> <li>• Professional presentation skills</li> <li>• Progressive development of ideas and their realization</li> <li>• Integration of theory and practice</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research skills</li> </ul>

TYPE OF ASSESSMENT	RANGE OF SKILLS ACQUIRED
Dissertation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection and attribution of sources</li> <li>• Written presentation</li> <li>• Collation and organization of material</li> <li>• Coherence of argument</li> <li>• Development of hypothesis</li> <li>• Critical independent thinking</li> <li>• Breadth of perspective</li> <li>• Depth of subject knowledge</li> </ul>

## 5.3 THE CONDUCT OF ASSESSMENT

### Assessment Tasks

- 5.3.1 The form and components of assessment for each programme of study are specified at the time of course validation, although the actual tasks may vary year-on-year within the specification. Assessment tasks in the School's programmes typically include:
- Fulfilment of a project brief, independently or as part of a group. This might involve, for example, involvement in a performance or production of an artefact;
  - practice in a professional setting, either individually or within a team;
  - written work, whether in conventional essay or dissertation form or in such forms as self-appraisals, workbooks or journals;
  - oral examination;
  - process-driven “continuous” assessment. This is normally in the early stages of a course, when the summative element of any such assessment may relate to active engagement with, and demonstrable progress towards, learning outcomes which contribute to a subsequent course unit in which they are further developed and summatively assessed.
- 5.3.2 A single unit of a course may be assessed by more than one assessment task. In such cases, the relevant weightings accorded to separate tasks will be specified.

### Setting and Supervising Assessment Tasks

- 5.3.3 The form, content, weighting, timing and level of assessment tasks should be in accordance with the validated course document.
- 5.3.4 Assessment tasks should be **fair**, in that they consist of requirements that are appropriate to the aims and learning outcomes of the programme/unit, and should be **reasonable** in that they should allow students of all abilities to demonstrate their strengths and weaknesses.
- 5.3.5 Assessment tasks should be designed and conducted to be as accessible and inclusive as possible, avoiding (for example) unintentional disadvantage on grounds of disability, gender or cultural difference. Where the normal assessment task may pose such disadvantage, reasonable adjustment may need to be made but attention to making the normal assessment inclusive should reduce the need for alternative arrangements. It is the responsibility of students to ensure that staff are aware of any mitigating circumstances which might affect their ability to undertake otherwise fair assessment.

- 5.3.6 As far as possible, without jeopardising the primary purpose of the assessment or diminishing its value to students, assessment tasks should be designed and supervised in such a way as to minimise the risk of academic misconduct by students, whether deliberate or accidental.

## **PROCEDURES AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES IN ASSESSMENT**

### **Approval and moderation of assessment tasks**

- 5.3.7 The External Examiner should receive an agreed sample of assessment briefs before they are issued to students, and should also receive the briefs for all assessment tasks for which work is also sampled. It is part of the remit of the External Examiner to review and moderate the tasks set, and the standards which they require, as well as to review and moderate marked work.
- 5.3.8 Explicit marking/grading criteria (including guidance regarding any relative weighting) must be drawn up to accompany each assessment. In the case of group projects, these criteria should indicate clearly how individual marks (or pass/fail judgements) are to be assigned to individual students. When the External Examiner samples assessment briefs, he or she should also receive the marking scheme.
- 5.3.9 All dissertation or independent study topics must be subject to an approval process as agreed with the External Examiner(s).

### **Student information**

- 5.3.10 Course Leaders must ensure that students are given clear advance information, at the beginning of the programme of study and at least annually thereafter, regarding the nature and schedule of the assessment tasks, the criteria that will govern assessment, and the place and weighting of each task within the assessment scheme as a whole.
- 5.3.11 Tutors should draw students' attention to the information, in course documentation and in the student handbook, about the assessment of their courses, and about the procedures for requesting an extension and for requesting that account be taken of mitigating circumstances which may have adversely affected assessment.
- 5.3.12 Tutors should draw students' attention to the School's policies and regulations on academic misconduct, the potential penalties for academic misconduct, and appropriate protocols for referencing sources.

### **Support for students during assessment**

- 5.3.13 Staff overseeing an assessment task must be appropriately qualified and briefed, in relation to the task, the learning outcomes to be assessed, and the general principles outlined in this handbook. In particular, visiting professionals involved in supervising students undertaking tasks which are assessed should be made aware of the relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria – normally by the Course Leader.
- 5.3.14 Tutors should ensure that all students are informed of the extent of support which they can reasonably expect whilst undertaking work for assessment. Tutors have a responsibility to ensure that any feedback on preliminary drafts and/or tutorial



interventions do not exceed the accepted bounds of academic supervision. Protocols in this regard should be periodically reviewed within course teams, and discussed with staff new to the team.

- 5.3.15 Tutors supervising group work for assessment should monitor students' attendance and participation, and be prepared to intervene – in consultation initially with the relevant Course Leader and if appropriate also with the External Examiner and the Chair of the Examination Board – if the conduct of an individual student appears likely significantly to jeopardise or advantage the assessed performance of others in the group.
- 5.3.16 Tutors overseeing work for assessment in placements or external professional settings should monitor that appropriate supervision and feedback is being provided by placement hosts, as agreed at the outset of the placement, and be prepared to intervene – in consultation with the appropriate external examiner and the Chair of the Examination Board – if this is not the case.

### **5.3 MA/MFA and BA ASSESSMENT: use of assessment criteria, descriptors and learning outcomes**

- 5.3.17 We have School-wide assessment criteria, descriptors and feedback forms at different levels.<sup>4</sup> Level 6 and 7 assessment criteria are based upon the FHEQ descriptors and the subject benchmarks in Dance, Drama and Performance (the latter particularly for UG) as well as existing practices in courses

#### **Learning outcomes, assessment tasks, assessment criteria, assessment descriptors**

- Each degree has learning outcomes that demonstrate what a student has learnt by successfully completing the degree. Each unit within the degree is mapped to the degree's learning outcomes (not every unit to every learning outcome, but approximately 3-5 in each case). By the end of the degree, students will have undertaken assessed learning activities that enable them to meet the degree's learning outcomes in one or more units.
- Each unit has assessment tasks - with a specified 'magnitude' (i.e. amount or size of task) - which summatively capture the student's attainment as they work towards the learning outcomes of the degree, and which provide opportunity for feedback.
- Assessment criteria show students how they are able to pass assessment tasks and how they are marked (e.g. progress in relevant practice-based techniques and skills)
- Marking descriptors indicate the different level of student achievement. Most of the marking descriptors will be within the grade level you are awarded.
- Assessment feedback forms will demonstrate the level to which students have achieved the assessment criteria as well as give written feedback.

#### **Assessment criteria:**

Assessment criteria enable assessors to make an informed judgement on the level to which learning outcomes have been achieved.

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<sup>4</sup> BA DATE were the last degree in the School to bring in UG assessment criteria and descriptors as part of its Review for use from 2013-14.

Not all assessment criteria will apply to each unit but all assessment criteria will be incorporated at some point within the degree.

The *form* of assessment might include:

- essay
- practical project (process, product and/or reflection)
- performance
- documentation
- presentation
- placement

The assessment criteria can be used for all these forms of assessment.

5.3.18 The undergraduate and postgraduate assessment criteria and marking descriptors are appended (Appendix 1 and 2 respectively)

## **5.4 FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS ON ASSESSMENT TASKS BEFORE THE EXAMINATION BOARD**

- 5.4.1 Feedback to students should be informative, giving them the opportunity to gain insight into their strengths and weaknesses, and timely enough to assist them improving their future learning and performance. Course leaders should ensure that staff and students are given indicative timescales within which feedback will be normally be given.
- 5.4.2 Feedback should not compromise Examination Board decisions. Students should be advised that any mark or grade given is provisional.
- 5.4.3 Students should be given feedback on all assessment outcomes before end-of-year assessments, unless a validated course document specifies – with reasons – that no interim feedback will be given in relation to a particular assessment task.
- 5.4.4 Feedback before the Examination Board should normally be in the form of qualitative comment, an indicative letter grade (the meaning of which should be known to students) or a provisional numerical mark. Students should be made aware that marks may be adjusted during the process of moderation. Narrative feedback should reflect any criteria published to students.
- 5.4.5 Students must not be advised of any difference of opinion between first and second markers, nor between internal and external examiners.
- 5.4.6 Students should be given written and/or oral feedback in relation to their performance. Where appropriate, this may be in the form of a commentary on issues arising in the work of the group, circulated to all members of the group, rather than detailed individual feedback.

5.4.7 Where course regulations allow for re-assessment prior to the Examination Board, students should be given appropriate advice in order to assist them in seeking to retrieve their failed work.

## 5.5 GUIDANCE FOR STAFF ON GIVING FEEDBACK

The example here is based on written feedback. It applies, too, to verbal feedback given after an assessed element. Please ensure that when verbal feedback is given to an assessment element that there is evidence of this feedback e.g. in student notes taken at the time and subsequently e-mailed to the academic tutor.

Each unit has a number of learning outcomes. A student needs to demonstrate that they have achieved these learning outcomes to pass the unit. The following is an example of how the learning outcomes, assessment criteria and assessment descriptors come together on an assessment form:

The LOs for the unit, as stated in the course specification, might be:

- (B4) gained practical skills to professional performance level
- (C2) gained an understanding of the creative choices required in the development of a fully realised production
- (A1) recognised the uncertainty of knowledge in the performance of classic texts

The assessment criteria, as stated in the course specification, might be:

- Progress in relevant practice-based techniques and skills
- Taking creative risks as appropriate
- Effective use of research

Here is an example of **staff feedback**.

Grey shading refers to the assessment criteria and uses the language of the highest level of assessment descriptor.

Yellow shading refers to languages of the LOs.

Green shading gives examples of how specific examples in the work demonstrate what the student has achieved. Where there are dots ... specific examples from the student's work would follow.

For an exceptional student, this might read:

Your progress in relevant practice-based techniques and skills is at an exceptional level. You have demonstrated, for example, an excellent awareness of practical skills such as voice fundamentals to a professional performance level. Vocal quality, including breath control, support, voice production, diction, intonation and accent has been excellent at all times in the rehearsal process. Your voice has been used in a highly adaptable and flexible way, rigorously maintained through disciplined regular vocal exercises. This was evident, for example, when you

...

In taking creative risks you stretched the discipline in unpredictable and highly exciting ways demonstrating that you have understood how to make creative choices in professional production contexts. Your work on the text led to an original, unusual and highly effective performance. For example, the section when you... At other moments you...

You have engaged in unusually detailed and highly focussed research with most rewarding consequences that are rare at this level. You showed an extraordinary articulation in drawing scholarship and research into your performance demonstrating your knowledge of relevant theories and research method of the field but also recognising that such knowledge is fluid and not static. The use of Jardine's thinking about an interpretation of ..., for example, led you to question how you might...

## 5.6 'UNFAIR ADVANTAGE' AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

5.6.1 The academic regulations provide for penalties to be applied when the Examination Board is advised that investigation has revealed evidence of academic misconduct constituting an attempt to secure unfair advantage in assessment for an individual or a group of students. During the conduct of assessment, course teams have responsibilities both to detect and to pre-empt academic misconduct as far as possible. The following are examples of the steps which should be taken in this regard:

- Course Leaders have a responsibility to ensure that students receive explicit advice on referencing sources. This should cover the referencing of ideas as well as of direct quotation, and the referencing of internet sources and sources which are not written. This guidance should extend beyond the issue of the Student and Course handbooks. Students' attention should be explicitly drawn to such guidance at intervals during the course (for example in introducing an assessment brief, or in feedback on marked work). Students should be aware that lack of attention to referencing could be construed as an attempt to gain unfair advantage.
- Where assessment is based on group work, students should be advised on the parameters of cooperation, and on the elements of the work which should individually done. This may include advice to students on the need to keep their individual work secure.
- As far as possible, assessment tasks should be designed in such a way that it is difficult to achieve a pass standard through plagiarism.

5.6.2 In marking work, examiners should be alert to

- written work markedly different in character, language or quality from that previously submitted by the same student;
- an identical sequence of points, not necessarily in the same words, in the work of more than one student;
- close similarity with work submitted by another student in a previous year;
- identical mistakes (including typographical mistakes) or identical unusual use of language in the work of more than one student;
- a marked difference in quality between work seen in draft or prototype and that finally presented for assessment.

- 5.6.3 It is the responsibility of internal markers to refer suspected academic misconduct to the Examination Officer for the course for investigation.
- 5.6.4 Guidelines on the use of Turnitin software are available on the intranet, under "IT Services".

## **5.7 GUIDANCE ON THE AWARD OF INDIVIDUAL MARKS IN GROUP WORK**

5.7.1 Following comments made in some External Examiner reports, the School approved guidance for academic staff on the determination of individual marks in group work. A number of principles have been established and a range of methods of determining individual marks from group work approved for use.

### **5.7.2 Main Principles:**

- All units should clearly indicate in the assessment strategy for that unit if there is to be group work as part of the assessment for that unit.
- Unless otherwise stated in the assessment strategy of the unit specification/syllabus all students within the group should be awarded the same mark.
- If the award of an individual mark for each student is preferable then the method used should be clearly stated in the unit specification and in the Course Handbook.
- Only the methods outlined below would *normally* be employed.

### **Use of one mark in the assessment**

5.7.3 Where only one mark is to be awarded for the piece of work, it is recommended that individual marks for group work be determined through marking the work as a whole and then moderating the mark so that the mark of individual students can vary where appropriate from the original overall group mark. This should be done on the basis of either:

- observation,
- further individual written work or
- peer self-assessment

### **Use of two or more marks in the assessment**

5.7.4 Where two separate marks are to be awarded it is suggested that a *shared* group mark be given for the final product and then a separate individual mark be given for process and/or critical reflection. This can be done through any of the methods below. However, the use of peer self-assessment as a tool is recommended in the absence of course team observations or further written assessment that could determine an individual's contribution to the group work.

Where there is considerable variance between the group mark and that of an individual, the student should receive additional feedback.

### **Methods for assessing student group work**

5.7.5 The method employed should be considered against the depth and complexity of the group work set as well as its overall contribution to the unit mark. The more simplistic assignments or those which contribute little to the overall unit mark may therefore only require the award of the same mark to all students in the group. Whereas assignments

that are more complex or contribute a significant proportion of the overall unit mark should use the more sophisticated methods of deriving marks.

### ***Group mark***

The work of the group product can be assessed and then the same mark awarded to each member of the group. This rewards effective collaboration, but workers may feel it unfair that passengers are similarly rewarded. Unless otherwise stated all group work shall use this method.

### ***Divided group work and contracts***

Each group member can bid for, or be allocated, and then be assessed on, a defined part of the work. This may feel fairer but scarcely encourages collaboration.

### ***Divided group mark***

The group work can be awarded a single mark, and the group can agree on the number of those marks gained by each individual. This allocation of marks to individuals is best done against previously agreed criteria. Use of a divided group mark can disproportionately reward assertiveness or negotiating skills, although the requirement that marks are justified, with evidence and with reference to criteria, reduces this danger.

### ***Contribution through observations and critical reflection***

Students can each receive the same mark for the product of the project and an individual mark for their contribution to the project. Their contribution can be assessed by your observations of the group at work, and/or from a brief individual critical reflection by each group member on the project and the process and what they learned from it.

### ***Individual viva***

A short viva with each group member will give you a good idea of the nature and extent of each student's contribution to the work of the group. You could moderate the group mark up or down by, say, up to 10% on the basis of this viva.

### ***Project exam***

As well as (or indeed instead of) marking the project by one of these means or by some other, you can set an examination in which students describe and analyse the project and their contribution to it.

### ***Peer self-assessment of contributions***

Students can receive a group mark, which is allocated among various stages or elements of the project. The group can then award, say, one or two percentage points more or less than the group average on each stage or element. The group average must remain the same, so they are genuinely comparing and weighting their contributions.

In order to avoid variance between units and courses a common peer assessment method should be used on all courses.

Students should not be informed of the group mark until after peer assessment has been conducted.

Peer assessment is used as a guide only and should not override academic judgement.

Students assign a value between -5 and +5 for each given criteria for each student including themselves. The sum of the averages is then calculated for each individual student which is then used to lower or raise the group mark on an individual basis.

The number of criteria can vary and can relate to either the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria of the unit or can be bespoke to the particular assessment.

### Example 1

Students are made aware of the assessment criteria/learning outcomes of the group and reminded to assess their peers based on all of these together:

Student	
Myself (A)	+5
Student B	0
Student C	-3
Student D	2

### Example 2

Students are made aware of the assessment criteria/learning outcomes of the group and reminded to assess their peers based on all of the separate criteria (*normally* no more than 5 separate criteria):

Student	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Average
Myself (A)	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5
Student B	0	5	-2	4	2	+1.8
Student C	-3	-2	0	-4	-3	-2.4
Student D	2	2	2	3	2	+2.2

Student	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Average
Myself (B)	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5
Student A	0	5	-2	4	2	+1.8
Student C	-3	-2	0	-4	-3	-2.4
Student D	2	2	2	3	2	+2.2

Student	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Average
Myself (C)	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5
Student A	0	5	-2	4	2	+1.8
Student B	-3	-2	0	-4	-3	-2.4
Student D	2	2	2	3	2	+2.2

Student	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Average
Myself (D)	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5
Student A	0	5	-2	4	2	+1.8
Student B	-3	-2	0	-4	-3	-2.4
Student C	2	2	2	3	2	+2.2

## Overall Individual Marks

Student	Sum of averages	Group Mark	Individual Mark
Student A	10.4	67	77.4
Student B	2	67	69
Student C	2.4	67	69.4
Student D	11.6	67	78.6

## 5.8 MARKING AND MODERATION POLICY

### THE MARKING OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

- 5.8.1 Marking should be fair, in that it should demonstrably be conducted in an equitable and non-discriminatory manner.
- 5.8.2 The Course Leader will ensure that marking is undertaken by those who are qualified to make academic judgements in relation to the broad subject field, the specified learning outcomes, and relevant external academic and professional reference points. Visiting professionals who have an input to marking assessment tasks should be provided with details of assessment criteria, and normally asked to use a structured marking grid. Graduates of a course at the School may not normally act as assessors on that course within three years of graduation.
- 5.8.3 All staff responsible for the marking of an assessment task must follow the published marking scheme and marking criteria. Marking schemes must be clear enough to support consistency between markers, but should reflect the criteria and outcomes and not just the examples used in the delivery of the course.

### Moderation and second marking

- 5.8.4 Marking judgements should be informed by appropriate internal moderation using agreed formal moderation systems understood by all members of the relevant course team and explained to visiting staff involved in assessment. The nature of internal moderation may vary in relation to the number of students, the nature and scale of the assessment task and to its credit value or the weight of its contribution to the award. Moderation of a sample of work may be appropriate in some cases. "Blind" double marking (in which the second marker is unaware of the judgement of the first) may be used for some assessed tasks. The role of first and second markers should always be made clear.

### Marking ephemeral work

- 5.8.5 The marking of ephemeral assessment tasks – typically in practical, oral or performance situations – must always be undertaken by two (or more) staff, who may choose for convenience to assess simultaneously. Each person involved in the marking process should decide separately on his/her initial recommended mark in advance of subsequent discussion or moderation. These initial marks should be recorded, as well as the finalised mark. The course leader should retain the record for six months after the examination board which considers the relevant assessment. The agreed mark should be entered on



the student record system (when in place) or examination board spreadsheet. This requirement does not apply to ongoing class-based assessment which is conducted over a period of sessions and on which regular feedback is given.

### **Agreeing marks where there is disagreement**

- 5.8.6 First and second markers should make every effort, in discussion, to arrive at an agreed mark, through reference to learning outcomes and assessment criteria. If the divergence is great and agreement cannot be reached, a third member of the examining team for the course may be consulted if there is a member with broadly appropriate expertise. If it proves impossible to resolve the disagreement, the external examiner may be asked (by the Examinations Officer for the course) to advise. However, the External Examiner should not be placed in the position of third marker.
- 5.8.7 Markers are required to complete all assessment tasks in accordance with the timings set down in the agreed schedule, to sign mark sheets and to ensure the correct transcription of marks against examination numbers/names onto mark sheets. All markers of summative assessments are required to provide written comments relating to assessment criteria in support of their marks, normally using a standard feedback sheet. Comments should be demonstrably in accord with the marks awarded.
- 5.8.8 In relation to practical, oral or performance assessment tasks identified as critical, appropriate audio or visual records should be provided for the external examiner by prior arrangement, if the external examiner is unable to attend in person. External examiners do not themselves mark students' work.
- 5.8.9 Markers should mark or make pass/fail judgements on work submitted by all students. If the work is incomplete, this should be noted. The Examination Board will consider students' requests for mitigating circumstances to be taken into account. Individual markers should not make allowances for known or suspected mitigating circumstances when deciding the mark or pass/fail judgement.
- 5.8.10 Normally, markers will not take account of students' special needs on grounds of disability. Additional support or time may have been agreed for such students, in the light of their needs, during completion of the assessment task but the completed assessment will then be marked in relation to intended learning outcomes and on the same basis as others. Exceptionally, for specific assessment tasks, the arrangements formally agreed for a student with special needs may include allowance in marking, for example for communication or presentation defects, arising from a disability, which do not materially affect demonstration of achievement in relation to the learning outcomes.

## **5.9 Team Marking**

- 5.9.1 Team marking approach to the assessment of units may be used if appropriate, for example in some practice based assessments, providing there are at least two markers within the team who assess work presented independently of each other. Appropriate records should be kept to enable the External Examiners to understand how the mark/grade was determined.

- 5.9.2 Any change in the existing approach to marking should involve the External Examiner(s) for the programme.

## 5.10 INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT

- 5.10.1 Central is committed to an inclusive approach to assessment capable of assessing learning outcomes in a number of ways whilst maintaining parity. Central's intention is to embed inclusive assessments at the point of design. In this way we aim to develop and maintain a range of accessible assessment modes.
- 5.10.2 Assessment refers to all evaluations of student learning:
- Formative and summative
  - Formal or informal
  - Group exercises
  - Written, vive voce, oral, aural or practical including placements and producing artefacts, etc.
- 5.10.3 By embracing the notion of inclusive assessment we are:
- moving away from alternative assessment designed for individual learner needs
  - Complying with legislation as outlined under the Equality Act (2010).
  - Facilitating effective pedagogic, assessment and feedback practice for the benefit of students and staff
- 5.10.4 When designing assessments course teams are asked to consider the following:  
In Assessment inclusivity:
- Write clear learning outcomes that can be flexibly assessed to allow learning to be tested in a variety of ways. **Competence standards are non-negotiable learning outcomes, necessitating a particular ability; requiring disabled students to undertake assessments that do not assess abilities stated as learning outcomes could be deemed to be illegal under the Equality Act (2010).**
  - Critically examine your existing forms of assessment and consider whether they meet different learning needs
  - Provide clear assessment briefs that outline what the assessment is designed to assess and include the criteria by which the assessment will be marked.
  - Design into your programme the option of a choice of assessments.
  - Consider forms of e-assessment
- 5.10.6 In Assessment feedback:
- Timely, detailed, and substantive feedback on assessment outcomes should be provided to facilitate student understanding and learning.
  - Link feedback to assessment choice and involve students in evaluating whether their choice of assessment was appropriate to them.
- 5.10.7 In Assessment Scheduling:
- Offer students the opportunity to practice different assessment modes early on in the course; in particular offer a formative written assessment.

- Aim to ensure that teaching related to assessment stops two weeks before the assessment is to be submitted, where appropriate, so that all students have the information they require in order to complete their work.
- Schedule assessment deadlines across the programme to avoid having more than one assessment due in at the same time and ensure that they are published at the beginning of the programme to allow students to plan their work.

## 6 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

- 6.1.1 This section of the Handbook is intended for those who have been appointed as External Examiners at the School, and also for academic staff within the School who are involved in the assessment of students and administrators who are involved in liaison with External Examiners. It aims to provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of External Examiners and how that role relates to the School's other processes for ensuring quality and standards. It also summarises what External Examiners are asked to do before, during and after Examination Boards, and includes practical information about liaison with the School, about reporting, and about payment.

## 6.2 THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER ROLE – OVERVIEW

- 6.2.1 Like other Higher Education Institutions in the UK, Central appoints External Examiners to “provide [...] impartial and independent advice, as well as informative comment on [the School's] standards and on student achievement in relation to those standards”<sup>5</sup>. The role is primarily *advisory*: External Examiners are not themselves asked to assess students or mark their work. The advisory role of External Examiners relates mainly to *assessment* – including, for example, the clarity, appropriateness, standard and fairness of the assessment tasks set and moderation (mainly through sampling) of how they have been marked. The external examining role is one of several ways in which the School draws on advice and constructive criticism of external academic and professional peers. The School values – and often invites – comment from External Examiners on aspects of course curricula, but does not rely primarily on them for this, since other external academic and professional peers take part in the processes of course approval, monitoring and review.
- 6.2.2 External examining requires both broadly relevant subject expertise at the level of the relevant course, and also familiarity with assessment and with the standards expected at that level. The standards required for awards must also be compatible with, and informed by, various published national reference points such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland<sup>6</sup> and the Subject Benchmark Statements. Many of Central's degree courses incorporate – and assess – professional and practical skills. It is not essential for each individual External Examiner to offer both directly relevant subject expertise and familiarity with published Higher Education reference points – but both perspectives need to be represented in assessment design and decisions. Each degree or diploma must have at least one external examiner. Courses of more than one year's duration normally have at least two External Examiners. In some cases, two External Examiners may be appointed with complementary relevant expertise to provide advice on the assessment of a course. A single External Examiner may be appointed to more than one taught postgraduate course.
- 6.2.3 The School's Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (or a sub-committee) appoints External Examiners.

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5 UK [Quality Code Expectations](#) and [Advice and Guidance on External Expertise](#)

6 [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England Wales and Northern Ireland, 2014.](#)

## **6.3 THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS AT CENTRAL**

### **Principles**

6.3.1 The Key Functions of External Examiners are:

- to verify that the standards set and achieved are appropriate for the level and award for which the student is being assessed;
- to ensure that the assessment process is fair, that decisions are made in accordance with published regulations and with due process, so that justice is done to each student;
- to assist the School in ensuring that standards are compatible with relevant national frameworks and with those expected in other higher education institutions.

6.3.2 Additionally, the External Examiner has a role as a “critical friend”, offering constructive comment and suggestions for improvement in the area of assessment practice. External Examiners are expected to provide an independent view, informed both by practice elsewhere and by engagement with a course team at Central over time. For example, External Examiners may advise on issues such as:

- the relationship between assessment and learning outcomes;
- the clarity of assessment criteria and marking schemes;
- the information given to students about assessment (both in advance and as feedback);
- factors which the course team should consider in evaluating or improving assessment;
- the operation of Examination Boards.

6.3.3 In all these areas, the role of the External Examiner remains advisory. External Examiners do not have the power to require changes to curricula or to assessment regulations, but the School undertakes to ensure that the advice of External Examiners is taken seriously, and that External Examiners are always kept informed of the School’s response to that advice.

## **6.4 THE DUTIES OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

### **Commenting on the assessment set**

6.4.1 External Examiners are asked to comment in advance upon an agreed sample of assessment briefs at levels 5, 6 and 7. The purpose is to verify that the standard set is appropriate and that the task is specified in a way which is clear to students, and which allows examiners to judge whether students have met the intended learning outcomes and reached the required standard and, where relevant, to grade different standards of achievement.

6.4.2 The External Examiner is not expected to consider every assessment brief in every academic year. It is recognised that some assessment tasks are the same, in principle, year on year, and that some carry little weight towards students’ overall results. However, it is part of the responsibility to the External Examiner to verify that the assessment set is appropriate, and to draw attention in a timely way to assessment tasks

which may be inappropriate in standard or insufficiently discriminating. External Examiners may recommend changes in the assessment brief.

- 6.4.3 The School's regulations allow alternative assessment to be set for individual students. Alternative assessment may be set because a student has been unable, for example on grounds of illness or injury, to undertake the assessment set for a cohort. In some cases, alternative assessment is permitted to allow a student to take up the opportunity of appropriate learning in a professional setting. External Examiners must approve all alternative assessment briefs before they are given to students.

### **Sampling marked work**

- 6.4.4 External Examiners are asked to consider an agreed sample of student work marked by internal examiners. Academic Heads of Department should be able to access information about agreed approaches to sampling. Except in the case of a new course offered for the first time, External Examiners will not normally sample work from level 4 of a first degree course. The sample will normally span the range of work received, including work which internal examiners consider outstanding, work considered to be at the borderline for first class honours or for a Masters distinction, work considered to be borderline fail, and work failed by internal examiners.
- 6.4.5 Samples will normally involve up to one third of the cohort, although this proportion may be higher in relation to courses with very small cohorts, and smaller in the case of a large cohort, and in the case of pass/fail work. The extent of External Examiner involvement in sampling work at level 5 and above which is assessed on a pass/fail basis may be determined in discussion with the course Examination Officer, but it is part of the role of the External Examiner to verify that the assessment appropriately measures the achievement required to pass. External Examiners are expected to consider all assessment undertaken as a Retrieval following failure at the first attempt.
- 6.4.6 The role of the External Examiner is not to re-mark work sampled, but to verify that the standard is appropriate and the internal marking consistent. The External Examiner may advise the Examination Board on changes which need to be made, either for a specific set of marks or for future assessment of the unit. Occasionally, internal examiners may ask an External Examiner to review a mark where internal examiners have been in doubt, or have significantly differed, but every effort should be made to reach agreement internally by reference to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- 6.4.7 The External Examiner should NOT change individual marks or pass/fail results which have been seen as a sample (since this could advantage or disadvantage the students who happen to be in the sample).
- 6.4.8 If the External Examiner's view of the marks differs substantially from that of the internal marker, the board may agree to scale the marks for the unit up or down, or to ask the external examiner to look at a larger sample, perhaps together with the internal marker. The last approach would be appropriate if the External Examiner is concerned about lack of consistency.

### **Sampling work in progress**

- 6.4.9 Practical work is often assessed in part on the basis of process as well as end product. Where this is the case, External Examiners may be asked to sample work in progress, view students' working notes, or interview students on work in progress. As with all other sampling, the purpose of this is to verify the standard and consistency of the internal marking, rather than to assess the students.
- 6.4.10 In particular, for certain courses, External Examiners may be asked to attend performances, observe students in performance or in production roles, and moderate the judgements of internal markers, or to view work presented at an exhibition. It is the responsibility of the Course Leader to ensure that External Examiners have as much notice as possible of the dates of assessed productions. When this is the case, External Examiners will receive details of the outcomes being assessed, and a grid to assist them in making comments.
- 6.4.11 The means by which External Examiners sample work in progress may be negotiated with the Examinations Officer at the beginning of each academic year. However, the School also welcomes visits which External Examiners may offer, sometimes at shorter notice, when they are in London for other purposes, and will where possible seek to facilitate sampling on such occasions.

#### **Sampling the assessment of placement learning**

- 6.4.12 Some courses include placement learning assessed mainly through written assignments which draw on the placement experience. Others, however, include assessment of practice in external professional settings, and in such cases External Examiners may be asked to observe students in those external settings. As with all other sampling, the purpose of this is to verify the standard and consistency of the internal marking, rather than to assess the students.

#### **Attending the Examination Board**

- 6.4.13 The External Examiner must normally attend all meetings of the Examination Board where recommendations are made for final awards. Exceptionally, where a previous board had recommended a specific award subject to the outcome of a single item of assessment which an External Examiner may consider without attendance, a final award may be recommended by a sub-set of the Examination Board not including the External Examiner. This may be agreed only on the basis of a minuted contingency decision at the previous board, in respect of no more than four students. The External Examiner must, however, always be involved in the decision to recommend a final award. A decision that a student has failed the course and must withdraw may only be made by a Board attended by an External Examiner.
- 6.4.14 If an External Examiner is unavoidably prevented from attending a meeting of the Examination Board, he or she should notify the Chair in advance (via the Secretary to the Examination Board). Unless emergency circumstances prevent this, the External Examiner should also write (or e-mail) within 48 hours of the Board confirming their agreement with the recommendations made, or reasons for dissent from them, on the basis of the External Examiner's prior involvement in discussion and/or sampling.



- 6.4.15 The External Examiner shares in the remit of the whole Examination Board. The Board must always take the advice of the External Examiner very seriously, and must not lightly decide not to heed that advice. Decisions are, however, to be taken collectively by the Board, and not by the External Examiner alone.
- 6.4.16 The role of the External Examiner at or in advance of the Examination Board meeting include:
- advising the Board on marks and pass/fail results on the basis of sampling the marked work and work in progress;
  - offering advice on fairness and consistency, within the School's regulations but informed by an understanding of practice elsewhere;
  - advising on consistent action within the School's regulations where students have submitted evidence on mitigating circumstances affecting assessment;
  - commenting on standards set and achieved, where possible relating these to relevant national reference points and to the relevant Course Specification;
  - advising the Board on action to be taken within the regulations where investigation has shown evidence of academic misconduct.
- 6.4.17 The External Examiner may comment on the School's regulations, but may not require the Board to disregard them.
- 6.4.18 At the Board, External Examiners are asked to sign a conferments sheet recommending awards to the Academic Board. By signing the conferments sheet, the External Examiner is confirming that the Board's decisions have been made fairly and with appropriate consultation with the External Examiner.
- 6.4.19 External Examiners must observe the confidentiality of Examination Board discussions.

#### **Providing an annual report to the School**

- 6.4.20 The School provides a proforma for External Examiner reports. The report includes a summary of judgements on standards, fairness and the operation of the Examination Board, and also opportunity for more qualitative comments. External Examiners are free to comment on other aspects of the course to which they are appointed. It is particularly important to note that reports should not name any individual student or member of staff.
- 6.4.21 External Examiners are required to submit a report annually, normally after the main meeting of the Examination Board which recommends final awards. Some External Examiners prefer to make subsidiary reports after other meetings of the Board, and this is welcome, but not a requirement. The External Examiner fee is, however, not paid if an External Examiner does not submit any report covering the ground set out in the guidelines.
- 6.4.22 Additionally, External Examiners have the right to report directly to the Principal of the School on any matters of serious concern arising from the assessments, which put at risk the standard of the awards being recommended.

#### **Participating in the review of assessment decisions**

- 6.4.23 External Examiners may be asked to participate in the review of assessment decisions following academic appeals.

### **Meeting Students**

- 6.4.24 External Examiners do not normally meet students in the context of assessment of work or determining degree classification. External Examiners may be invited - either at the time of the Examination Board or separately - to meet groups of students to familiarise themselves with a course and with the experience of students, but the meeting does not affect the outcome of assessment. External Examiners are not expected to conduct a viva to determine either a unit mark or a student's classification but may be involved (see below).

### **Participation in viva voce examinations**

- 6.4.25 The Regulations on the assessment of students provide for an exceptional viva voce examination, and outlines the circumstances in which this may be conducted. A viva voce examination is normally held in the presence of the External Examiner. The External Examiner will not normally conduct the examination or determine its outcome. As with other forms of assessment, the role of the External Examiner is to verify the integrity and fairness of the process, and not to assess the student.

### **Consultation on proposed modifications**

- 6.4.26 External Examiners may be asked to agree to any proposed changes to assessment regulations which will affect students currently on the course. They may also be asked to comment on modifications to course units or overall learning outcomes proposed other than in the context of review or validation.

## **6.5 ROLES WHICH EXTERNAL EXAMINERS MAY NOT UNDERTAKE**

- 6.5.1 In order to maximise the independence of External Examiners, so that the School benefits from their professional objectivity, External Examiners will not be eligible for membership of validation/review panels until three years after the end of their service as an External Examiner.
- 6.5.2 External Examiners may not undertake teaching duties at the School (including Master Classes) during their period of tenure.
- 6.5.3 External Examiners who, by chance of external circumstances, have become familiar with any individual student should declare this interest prior to moderating work submitted by that individual or to any Examination Board discussion of that work. Where possible, moderation relating to that student will be passed to another member of the external examining team.

## **6.6 INFORMATION FOR AND LIAISON WITH EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

- 6.6.1 Newly appointed external examiners will receive a letter of appointment from the Academic Registrar's Office, stating the period of tenure. New External Examiners will

also be sent a briefing on the role, this Handbook, and details of fees, and how to claim expenses.

- 6.6.2 The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will send each new External Examiner a copy of the relevant Programme Specification(s).
- 6.6.3 A briefing meeting open to all the School's External Examiners will normally be held periodically. Typically, the briefing meeting will include an introduction to any School-wide developments relevant to assessment or to the role of External Examiners, and also an opportunity for detailed liaison with the Course Leader and/or Examination Officer about course-specific issues, and to agree the schedule of involvement during the year.
- 6.6.4 During the year, assessment briefs and marked work for sampling will be sent to External Examiners by the Examinations Officer, often through the relevant administrator in the Course Support Office. Samples will normally be accompanied by marking schemes and by a summary of assessment outcomes for the students assessed, showing the place of the sample in the profile of marks for the cohort assessed.
- 6.6.5 Similarly, arrangements for External Examiners to visit the School or to observe performances will be made by Course Support Office.
- 6.6.6 Each Examination Board meeting will normally set the date of the next meeting, if necessary on a provisional basis. Before the meeting of the Examination Board, the Secretary to the Examination Board (from the Course Support Office) will send an agenda for the meeting, and will arrange accommodation if required. Following an examination board meeting, the secretary to the Examination Board will send draft minutes for comment.
- 6.6.7 The Academic Registrar's Office will provide the templates for External Examiners' reports, and expense claim forms. External Examiners return both reports (normally in electronic form) and claims (on paper, with receipts) to the Academic Registrar's office.
- 6.6.8 In summary, the External Examiner's main contacts through the year will be:
- The Course Examinations Officer
  - The Course Support Office: sending samples of work, arranging visits, and organising the Examination Board.
  - The Academic Registrar's Office: in matters concerning appointment, reporting and payment of fees.
- 6.6.9 The Academic Registrar's office will contact all External Examiners in the first term of the course to ensure that lines of communication are working.

## COMMUNICATION WITH EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Programmes Office	Examinations Officer (normally a Course Leader)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term and scope of appointment</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Institutional procedures and regulations</li> <li>• Reports and the reporting template</li> <li>• General queries or concerns</li> <li>• Fees (payable following the submission of a report)</li> <li>• Reporting conflict of interest or to and resignation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sending assessment briefs and work for moderation, as requested by the Examinations Officer</li> <li>• Arrangements for the Examination Board – dates, papers</li> <li>• Accommodation and expenses (or Head of QAE)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreeing a routine schedule for visits and despatch of work</li> <li>• Discussion of the assessment briefs and samples which will be shared, and (where relevant) visits to productions, placements or works in progress)</li> <li>• Discussions about assessment during the year</li> <li>• Requests approval of alternative assessment tasks</li> </ul>

### PAYMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

6.6.10 External Examiners will be paid annually following receipt of their annual report. The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will authorise payment to External Examiners by the Finance Office. The fees payable, and the rates payable as expenses, will be detailed in initial letters of appointment, and subsequent revisions circulated to all External Examiners.

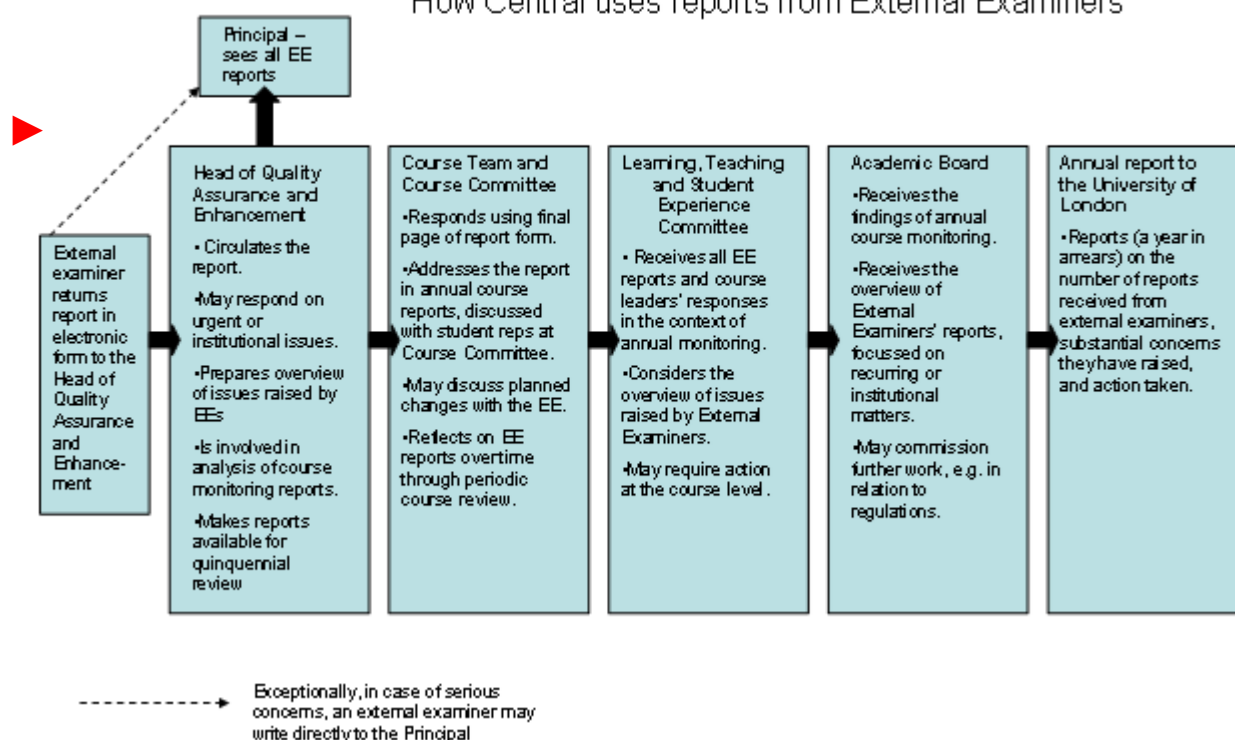
## 6.7 HOW THE SCHOOL USES EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

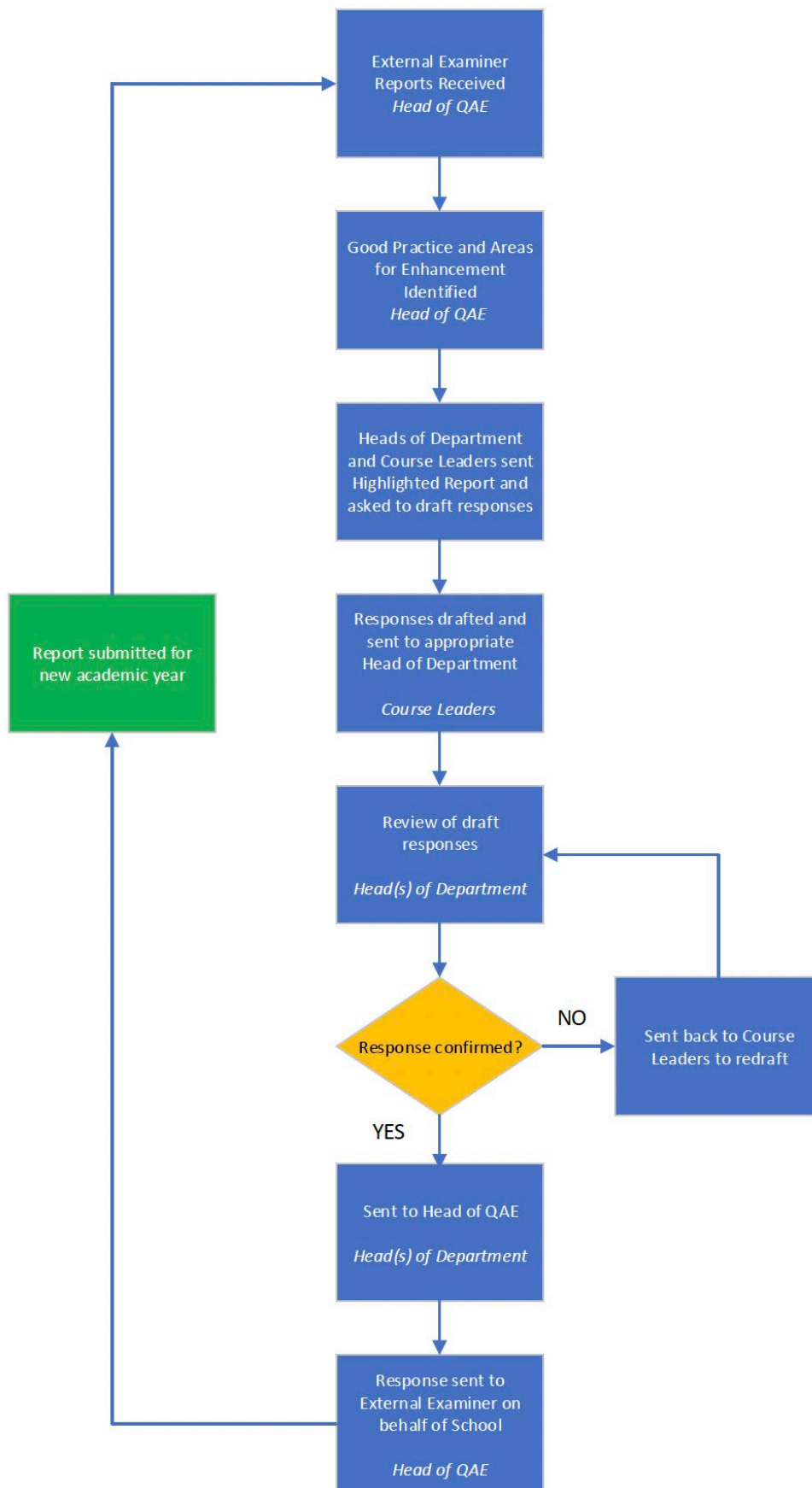
6.7.1 External Examiners are asked to send their reports to the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement. Reports are seen by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Director of Learning and Teaching, the Course team and the student representatives on Course Committees.

6.7.2 The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, having liaised with the Course Team, will on behalf of the School make a brief written response, normally within a month of receipt of the report. The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will keep a log of responses and actions made in relation to External Examiner reports.

- 6.7.3 Each year, External Examiner reports form part of the evidence which informs the annual monitoring process. Annual monitoring reports including External Examiners' reports are considered by Course Committees, which include students.
- 6.7.4 Each course is reviewed periodically. The course team uses reports from External Examiners over the final three years of the review period as part of the evidence for a self-evaluation, which is expected to make proposals for future enhancement. The reports are also available to the review panel, which includes an external member.
- 6.7.5 Each year the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will prepare a report for the summarising issues from External Examiners across the School. This report will focus mainly on recurring issues or those that may best be addressed through School-wide initiatives. The report also forms the basis of the School's annual reports to the University of London. The diagram below illustrates how we consider External Examiner reports.

## How Central uses reports from External Examiners





## 6.8 THE APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

6.8.1 The key principles governing the appointment of External Examiners are that:

- they should be competent in assessing students' knowledge and skills at higher education level; and
- they should be able to judge each student impartially on the basis of work submitted for assessment, without being influenced by previous (or current) association with the course, the staff, or any of the students;
- they should be familiar with relevant and current external reference points in relation to the standard of awards in Higher Education in the UK.

### CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

An External Examiner's academic/professional qualifications or experience should be appropriate to the course to be examined, in terms both of level and of subject.

An External Examiner should have appropriate standing, expertise and experience to maintain academic/vocational standards in the context of higher education as a whole.

An External Examiner should have enough recent examining experience, or comparable related experience, to indicate competence in assessing students in the subject area concerned. (Wherever possible, someone without direct experience of acting as an External Examiner should only be appointed if there is already at least one other experienced External Examiner on the Board of Examiners for the course.)

If the proposed External Examiner has no previous external examining experience at the appropriate level, the application should be supported by either:

- other external examining experience;
- extensive internal examining experience at the appropriate level in Higher Education;
- other relevant and recent experience and/or significant professional expertise likely to support the External Examiner role, provided that it can be shown that the external examining arrangements for the course include an external examiner familiar with assessment practice in Higher Education and with the external academic infrastructure.

Proposed examiners without experience as externals should, where possible, join an experienced team of externals. Where appropriate, provision may be made for a newly appointed External Examiner to "shadow" either the current External Examiner (in advance of taking on the role) or an External Examiner on a related course.

External Examiners should be drawn from a wide variety of institutional/ professional contexts and traditions in order that the course benefits from wide-ranging external scrutiny. In any event, there should not *normally* be:

- more than one examiner from the same institution in the team of External Examiners, unless the course in question is particularly complex and involves a large number of discrete subject areas;
- reciprocal External Examining between courses or departments in two institutions;



- immediate replacement of an External Examiner who has completed his/her term of office by an individual from the same institution;
- an External Examiner from an institution which has provided an examiner to the same course in the recent past (normally five years).

Examiners should not have too heavy a workload in respect of External Examining duties. As a norm, an examiner should not currently hold more than two substantial undergraduate External Examining appointments.

In courses with more than one External Examiner, there should be an appropriate balance and expertise in the team of External Examiners, including *inter alia*:

- examining experience;
- academic and professional practitioners;
- the range of academic perspectives;
- members from different types of institution of higher education, if appropriate.

6.8.2 Bearing in mind that External Examiners should be impartial in making judgements and that they should not have previous close involvement with the institution which might compromise their objectivity, over the last five years a proposed external examiner should not have been:

- a member of staff, a governor, a student, or a close friend\* or relative of a member of staff in relation to the course;
- an examiner on a cognate course in the institution.

*\*It is understood that many of the School's courses operate within established professional networks and that it is sometimes inevitable that a proposed External Examiner may be known professionally to members of the course team. In considering such nominations for approval, both the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and the Academic Board must consider whether it has been established to their satisfaction that the professional relationship in question is not so close that objectivity would be compromised.*

6.8.3 For similar reasons, an individual proposed as an External Examiner should not be:

- personally associated with the sponsorship of students on the course;
- required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the course;
- in a position to influence significantly the future employment of students on the course;
- likely to be involved individually with student placement or training in the examiner's organisation.

6.8.4 In order to protect their independence, External Examiners should not concurrently act as consultants to the course team on course design, or be members of any panel(s) established to review the course(s) they examine.

#### **PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL OF EXTERNAL EXAMINER NOMINATIONS**

6.8.5 Nominations must be submitted on the appropriate form, available from the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

6.8.6 The Quality and Standards Committee will be responsible for considering nominations for the appointment of External Examiners for courses under their remit, applying the

criteria detailed above. Nomination Forms should be retained alongside the minutes of meetings where appointments are approved.

- 6.8.7 Nominations for courses with September starts will usually be considered by the Quality and Standards Committee at a meeting in the Spring term. Following approval by the Committee, External Examiner nominations should be forwarded to the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, which will verify that the criteria have been met and that there are no 'reciprocal' arrangements with the School's staff examining at the same institution.
- 6.8.8 External Examiners will normally be considered for approval by the Quality and Standards Committee before the end of the Summer term in the previous academic year in the case of September-start courses, and in all cases six months before the examiner is expected to take up his/her duties.
- 6.8.9 External Examiners are normally appointed for a minimum of two and a maximum of four years.

#### **TERMINATION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINER APPOINTMENTS**

- 6.8.10 An External Examiner's appointment will normally be terminated by mutual agreement if:
- they take on a role which is incompatible with that of External Examiner – for example as a member of the School Staff, a student at the School, or a Governor of the School;
  - they develop a personal (beyond professional) relationship with a member of the student cohort or course team;
  - their report is submitted late without mitigation for successive years.
- 6.8.11 The Academic Board on recommendation from the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee may decide to terminate an External Examiner's appointment if:
- they repeatedly fail to provide a report;
  - repeatedly fails to undertake moderation or to attend the Board of Examiners;
  - refuses to work within the regulations of the School;
  - resides outside the UK in such a way that he or she is prevented from fulfilling the responsibilities of an External Examiner.

## 7 EXAMINATION BOARDS

## **7.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF EXAMINATION BOARDS**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

To scrutinise and, if satisfied, endorse recommendations made to it in respect of students' fulfilment of assessment requirements by the internal and external examiners and to pass these recommendations to the Academic Board and to such validating or accrediting bodies as are appropriate.

To ensure that decisions made are in accord with the School's regulations and are consistent and fair to individual students.

To monitor the conduct of assessment procedures and the academic standards required for the award(s) and achieved by students.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Except where defined otherwise in a validated course document, the membership of the Board will be:

- The Chair, appointed by the Academic Board
- Internal examiners with unit assessment responsibilities.
- All External Examiners

Internal examiners are normally permanent members of the staff of the School with responsibility for the assessment of units (for example as unit tutors). Long term temporary or visiting staff who contribute significantly to assessment may also be designated as internal examiners. It is not normally necessary for visiting staff with input to the course, who contribute to first or second marking of individual assessment tasks, to attend the examination board as internal examiners. The preparatory meeting, held in advance of the Examination Board determines whether such staff will be asked to attend the Board.

At least one External Examiner for the relevant course must be present at all meetings of the Examination Board, except where a full meeting of the Board, including an External Examiner, has delegated specific decisions to a defined sub-group of the board.

The Secretary to the Board (from the Course Support Office) is in attendance, and has defined roles in relation to the Board (see below) but is not a member of the Board. The Secretary will liaise with the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, who will normally attend the Board to advise on regulations, consistency and precedent, but who is not a member of the Board.

### **THE DISCRETIONARY POWERS OF EXAMINATION BOARDS**

The Examination Board is required to operate within the School's regulations, which in turn must align with the Academic Framework set out in the Ordinances of the University of London. Within the regulations, however, Examination Boards have some discretion to make exceptional decisions which reflect exceptional circumstances and which ensure fairness as well as consistency.

The Regulations on assessment for awards and progression, in section 3, outline the options open to examination boards, and the decisions which they will normally take in specified circumstances. When an Examination Board makes a decision other than that which the Regulations specify as “normal”, the nature of the exception should be discussed and clearly recorded in the minutes.

The Board may meet in-person or virtually, as determined by the present circumstances, and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Academic Regulations for Significant Disruption.

### **RE-SIT EXAMINATION BOARDS**

The purpose of Re-sit Examination Boards is to consider any further items of assessment (either retrieval or deferred) that were recommended by the previous full meeting of the Examination Board. The terms of reference for Re-sit Examination Boards are identical to those of the full Examination Board.

Membership of Re-sit Examination Boards is as agreed by the full meeting of the Examination Board.

Procedures for Re-sit Examination Boards should be identical to those of full Examination Boards, save that:

- Mark sheets should indicate any students who have declined the opportunity to re-sit.
- External Examiners are not required to submit a further Report.
- Recommended Pass Lists should still be submitted to the Secretary of Academic Board, but will be dealt with by Chair’s Action.

## **7.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO EXAMINATION BOARDS**

### **The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

7.2.1 The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement is responsible for:

- Providing advice to staff involved in Examination Boards, including the maintenance of this Handbook
- Training, as required, for academic and administrative staff involved in Examination Boards
- Liaison with the Examination Board Secretary and other members of the Course Support Office during preparations for the Board and in its immediate aftermath, to verify the integrity of processes in accordance with this Handbook.
- Attending the Examination Board to advise on actions open to the Board within the regulations.

The Head of Academic Data and Systems is responsible for:

- Reporting Examination Board recommendations to the Academic Board.
- Liaison with the University of London conferments office.

The Academic Registrar is responsible for:

- Administration of any Student Appeals against the decisions of Examination Boards, in accordance with the Appeals Procedure

### **The Chair of the Board**

- 7.2.2 Normally, Examination Boards are chaired by the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Students) or their nominee. A member of staff who has been an internal assessor on a course may not be appointed as the Chair of the Examination Board for that course within two years from the end of their role as a member of the Board.
- 7.2.3 The duties and responsibilities of the Chair include:
- Ensuring that the Board is conducted in such a way that justice is done to all students and that the standard of the awards is upheld.
  - Ensuring that the Examination Board is properly constituted in accordance with the School's regulations.
  - Ensuring that all relevant information is fully available to the Examination Board so that its recommendations are properly informed (this includes the 'spot-checking' of mark sheets).
  - Ensuring that the Examination Board is given an appropriate period of time in which to agree recommendations. This usually means that an informal (and unminuted) pre-Examination Board meeting is held before the formal Examination Board, so that some provisional recommendations may be arrived at and potentially difficult cases identified in advance.
  - Ensuring that the Examination Board is aware of the extent of its discretion e.g. in respect of retrieval, deferral, compensation, condonement, borderline cases and mitigating circumstances.
  - Ensuring that a timetable is established for all retrieval ('re-sit') or deferred ('first sit') assessments and that a Re-sit Examination Board is established with an agreed membership to review all such assessments on an agreed date.
  - Ensuring that the signed Recommended Pass Lists (and conferment sheets, where appropriate) are accurate.
  - Ensuring that the approved Examination Board Minutes present a clear and accurate summary of the meeting.

### **The Examinations Officer**

- 7.2.4 All Examination Boards should have, from among the internal examiners an Examinations Officer who is responsible for:
- Informing Students, before the Examination Board, of arrangements for the publication of results.
  - Liaising with External Examiners regarding assessment tasks; sampling of marking; placement visits etc.
  - Liaising with internal examiners regarding assessments and Examination Board attendance.
  - Overseeing the collation of marks and checking them for accuracy of transcription.
  - Ensuring that the Assessment Regulations from the approved course document, if they differ from the standard School regulations, are brought to the meeting of the Examination Board.
  - Ensuring that - where practically possible - the work of borderline candidates is available for reference to external examiners on the day of the Examination Board.
  - Ensuring that any alternative assessments offered to students have been agreed in advance with the Examination Board Chair.

- In association with the relevant administrator from the Programmes Office, preparing and checking completed mark sheets for distribution at the Examination Board, and ensuring that they accord with the guidelines issued annually on format and timescale.
- Liaising with the Secretary of the Examination Board (in the PO) in relation to follow-up letters to students who are required to undertake retrieval or deferred assessment. Retrieval letters are issued by the Course Support Office.

#### **Summary of responsibility for the Accuracy of Examination Board Information:**

- 7.2.5 Internal examiners are responsible for the accuracy of the marks they submit to the Examinations Officer.
- 7.2.6 The Examinations Officer is responsible for verifying the accuracy of all transcriptions of marks, marks entered to the student record system, and of all calculations based on the marks transcribed. Administrative staff from the Course Support Office will be responsible for preparation of mark sheets, but the Examinations Officer remains responsible for checking their accuracy.
- 7.2.7 All mark sheets must be checked independently by a further member of staff, from the course team or the Course Support Office, as agreed, and signed by both the Examinations Officer and the checker.

#### **The Programmes Office**

- 7.2.8 Administrative staff in the Programmes Office are responsible for:
- Preparing a mitigating circumstances folder (arranged in order of candidates), containing all evidence to be considered by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel. This should include any supporting evidence that has been submitted. If a previous Examination Board flagged any candidates for special future attention in previous Minutes, this information should also be included in the mitigating circumstances Folder.
  - Agreeing with Examination Officers when marks will be available for entry to the mark sheet or Student Record System;
  - Preparing documentation for the Examination Board. (Responsibility for verifying the accuracy of the data rests with the Examinations Officer.)
  - Entering the outcomes of assessment to the Student Record System, together with leaving dates and reasons for leaving (as required for HESA). (This data is required immediately for the despatch of result letters by the Academic Registrar's Office)
  - Sending results letters and transcripts to students leaving the course with an award or with credit.

#### **The Secretary of the Board**

- 7.2.9 The Secretary to the Board is normally the Programmes Office Manager. Their responsibilities include:
- Drawing up the Agenda for the Examination Board meeting (in collaboration with the Chair) and circulating it to all members in advance of or at the start of the meeting.
  - Minuting the Examination Board meeting and circulating the Minutes as agreed with the Chair.

- Preparing a conferment list, in liaison with the Academic Registrar's Office as necessary, to be signed by the Chair of the Board and to be forwarded to the Secretary of the Academic Board and to the University of London.
- Maintaining an Examination Board File for each meeting of the Examination Board (including: agenda, attendance register, minutes, mark sheets, pass lists and the mitigating circumstances Folder) and bringing to the Examination Board (for reference purposes) the Minutes of all previous Examination Boards involving students under discussion.
- Ensuring that all papers related to Examination Board business are shredded, save those circulated as above or saved on the Examination Board File.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS AFTER THE EXAMINATION BOARD**

7.2.10 No assessment results may be given to students by telephone. Normally, no assessment results may be given to students by e-mail. Exceptionally, results may be communicated to an e-mail address provided by the student to the Examinations Officer, usually when the student has left the UK and it is known that written communication may be slow or unreliable.

#### **Result Letters**

7.2.11 The Programmes Office will send a result letter, signed by the Academic Registrar or their nominee, to the following:

- Every student recommended for an award;
- Every student who has failed the course and is required to withdraw; (Such a letter may also indicate that the student has been recommended for lower award within the same programme of study. All such letters will advise the student of the Appeal Procedure.)

#### **Retrieval and Deferral Letters**

7.2.12 In liaison with course Examinations Officers as appropriate, the Programmes Office will send letters to students to whom the Examination Board has offered retrieval or deferral, specifying a date by which the task must be complete and where necessary referring the student to the Examinations Officer for details of the assessment task.

#### **Students Recommended to Progress to the Next Level of the award**

7.2.13 The Programmes Office will send a standard progression letter to all students eligible to progress to the next year of a course.

### **AWARD CERTIFICATES**

7.2.14 For all University of London Awards, certificates are issued directly by the University.

### ***EXAMINATION BOARD SECRETARY'S CHECKLIST:***

#### **(Items Needed for Examination Boards)**

- i. Copies of the Agenda
- ii. The Attendance Sheet
- iii. Conferment Sheet(s)
- iv. External Examiners' Report Forms/Notes of Guidance
- v. External Examiners' Expenses Claim Forms



- vi. Minutes of Previous Examination Boards (if appropriate)
- vii. Completed Mark Sheets
- viii. Assessment Regulations from the Approved Course Document
- ix. The mitigating circumstances Folder

### ***SAMPLE EXAMINATION BOARD AGENDA***

*Additional relevant agenda items may be added*

#### **Examination Board for [Programme(s) Title]**

**[Date] [Location] [Time]**

#### **AGENDA**

- 1 Membership/Apologies
- 2 Confidentiality
- 3 Matters Arising since meeting of the Examination Board on \*\*\*\*\* (Minutes and action sheet attached)
- 4 Consideration of Results
- 5 Timing of Publication of Results
- 6 Arrangements for Re-sits/Retrieval Projects
- 7 Appeals Procedures: provisional date for Review Examination Board
- 8 General Observations from Internal and External Examiners
- 9 Matters arising from the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee
- 10 Date of next meeting of the Examination Board
- 11 Any Other Business

## **AGENDA: CHAIR'S NOTES**

### **1 MEMBERSHIP / APOLOGIES**

To include introductions, e.g. of new External Examiners.

### **2 CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is vital that all members of the Examination Board understand that the discussions taking place at Examination Board are completely confidential. Feedback cannot be given to students on why particular decisions were reached, and any member of staff doing so is in serious breach of an institutional code of practice.

### **3 MATTERS ARISING SINCE THE PREVIOUS FULL MEETING OF THE EXAMINATION BOARD**

May include checking the Action List, reporting withdrawals and the outcome of appeals, and reporting action relating to minuted discussion of substantive issues in the assessment of the course.

### **4 CONSIDERATION OF RESULTS**

Students should be considered level by level, individually, in the order in which their names appear on mark sheets (normally alphabetical). Results should also be considered in conjunction with the mitigating circumstances Folder and (where relevant) the previous Examination Board File(s). Assessment regulations must be available for consultation. At the close of this item the Chair should read back for approval the list of agreed decisions.

It is hoped that all decisions will be unanimous. However, where there is dissent, the decision rests with the Board, which must give particular weight to the view of the judgement of the external examiners(s) responsible for the relevant area of assessment. If external examiners with joint responsibility for an area are divided the majority view of the full Examination Board should prevail, or – if numbers are still equal – the Chair's ruling should prevail.

Any dissent from a decision should be recorded in the Minutes, but must not, in any circumstances, be reported to students

### **5 TIMING OF PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

The Board should agree formally when result and resit letters will be sent. Normally, all notification will be within five working days following the day of the meeting of the Final Examination Board.

- 6 ARRANGEMENTS FOR RE-SITS/RETRIEVAL PROJECTS: TIMING AND COMPOSITION OF RE-SIT EXAMINATION BOARD(S)  
In agreeing attendance at Re-Sit Examination Boards, the Chair should note that the minimum attendance requirement is the Chair, an external examiner and the Examinations Officer. Re-Sit Examination Boards dealing with all degree-level awards should normally include all external and internal examiners. The Board may delegate decisions based on clearly defined contingencies specified by the Board with the agreement of the External Examiner, to a subset of the Board which does not include the External Examiner.
- 7 APPEALS: PROVISIONAL DATE FOR REVIEW EXAMINATION BOARD  
If the Board has made any decision which requires a student to leave the course without an award, a provisional date should be established for the Examination Board to reconvene in the event of a Student Appeal in line with procedures, the date for a reconvened Examination Board should be set no fewer than 17 and no more than 27 working days following the publication of results.
- 8 COMMENTS FROM EXTERNAL EXAMINERS  
External Examiners should be invited to comment verbally on any matters relating to student performance and the assessment process. This is an opportunity for externals to make brief comments and to flag issues that they will comment on, in more detail, in their formal written report.  
  
The Chair should also remind them of the requirement to submit written reports to the Secretary to the Examination Board, no later than one month after the Examination Board meeting.
- 9 COMMENTS FROM INTERNAL EXAMINERS  
Internal examiners should also be invited to make general comments in relation to students' performance and the assessment process.
- 10 DATE OF NEXT FULL MEETING OF THE EXAMINATION BOARD  
The date of the next full meeting of the Examination Board should be established now. Unless there are reasons to change the date, the next meeting should normally be scheduled for the same day in the next academic year.
- 11 A.O.B  
Any Other Business may be allowed at the Chair's discretion. The Chair should seek to avoid duplication of items 8 and 9.

## **EXAMINATION BOARD MINUTES**

- 1 Minutes of Examination Board meetings should give the date, time and place of the meeting, and should be headed "Confidential".
- 2 Minutes should include a list of everyone present. The Chair and Secretary should be listed first. Internal and External Examiners should be listed separately.
- 3 Each agenda item should be minuted as a separate section, under the number and heading specified in the agenda.
- 4 Items should normally be minuted in continuous prose and abbreviations should normally be avoided.
- 5 Where possible, members of the Examination Board should be referred to by the post they hold, rather than by name: e.g. the External Examiner for the final project, the Course Leader, etc.
- 6 As an exception to normal practice but in the interests of total clarity, individual students' names must be used. Family names only will be used except where more than one student has the same family name.
- 7 Recommendations should be recorded individually where:
  - substantial discussion has taken place – in which case this discussion should be recorded in some detail and should be clear to an external reader;
  - re-sit/retrieval arrangements will apply.

*e.g. "All students, as detailed on the attached pass list, were recommended to proceed to year 2 of the course except the following:  
X would be reassessed for the movement unit on 22 September 2016.  
Y would submit her project by 15 September 2016 – additional time having been granted because of her recent bereavement.  
After some discussion, the Board accepted evidence that the Z's performance in the unit \*\*\*\* had been adversely affected by illness. The Board agreed to condone her failure in that unit. The Board judged that there was sufficient evidence in other assessed work that she was prepared for work at level 2, and it was agreed that she be permitted to progress to level 2 "*
- 8 If relevant, separate Action Notes should be included to indicate what is to be done, when and by whom.

- 9 The Chair's ruling on whether or not it is appropriate to minute a particular comment is final.
- 10 External Examiner comments should be minuted only very briefly. As circulation of Examination Board minutes is limited, the importance of including all pertinent observations in their formal External Examiner Reports is stressed to all external examiners.
- 11 Minutes should be approved by the Chair before circulation but should still be headed "Unconfirmed" in case any external recipient wishes to offer corrections. Minutes are not circulated generally nor are they received formally at subsequent meetings, so it is the joint responsibility of the Chair and Secretary to ensure that the Minutes held on file are accurate.
- 12 Minutes should normally be circulated within 14 days of the meeting. Copies should be sent to: The Chair, the course's Examinations Officer, the External Examiner(s) and the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement. The minutes are received at Academic Board (under closed business).

## 8 COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

## COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

### 8.1 SCOPE

8.1.1 The following section is devised to comply with national expectations for operating higher education provision with others, in line with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. It also aims to address other areas of academic provision where the School recognises that processes of quality assurance are vital to ensure that the School's academic activity remains of the highest quality and therefore not detrimental to the School's reputation, profile or strategic aims and objectives.

8.1.2 Activity is divided in to two broad areas:

- **Collaborative provision** of the School's higher education award programmes (fulfilling the QAA Quality Code chapter).
- **Partnerships** – an agreement between the School and another organisation to fulfil part of the School's strategic academic aims and objectives, not involving the delivery of the School's higher education awards programmes.

### 8.2 COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

8.2.1 A range of possible formal collaborative arrangements exist that the School may be engaged with in order to deliver its portfolio of HE awards. These are:

8.2.2 **Industry-partnered Delivery** - with a collaborator who will deliver a defined part of a course whose award is solely that of the School. E.g. the delivery of a 40-credit unit on the PG Cert in Applied Theatre with Young People is with the National Theatre.

- The School 'owns' the programme and as such retains direct control of and responsibility for its content, the teaching and learning, assessment and quality assurance.
- Covered by a formal contract, (the memorandum of agreement) between the collaborator and School, which includes the financial arrangements (the financial agreement).
- Students are enrolled by and have a direct contractual relationship with the School.
- Subject to full QA processes including annual monitoring and periodic review of programme(s).
- Board of Examiners meeting chaired by School, and to include an External Examiner appointed by School.
- Collaboration and contract subject to annual/periodic review.
- Monitoring of publicity material.

8.2.3 **Franchise** - A School-designed and -approved programme which leads to an award from Central but is delivered by a collaborator institution.

- The School 'owns' the programme and as such retains direct control of and responsibility for its content, the teaching and learning, assessment and quality assurance.
- Covered by a formal contract, between the collaborator and School, which includes the financial arrangements.
- Students are enrolled by and have a direct contractual relationship with the School.
- Subject to full QA processes including annual monitoring and periodic review of programme(s).
- Board of Examiners meeting chaired by School, and to include an External Examiner appointed by School.
- Collaboration and contract subject to annual/periodic review.
- Monitoring of publicity material.

8.2.4 **Validation** - A programme developed and delivered by a collaborator organisation leading to credit or an award from the School. The programme(s) must fit with the School's strategic, ethical and financial objectives and have been approved as of appropriate standard to lead to an award of the School and/or University of London.

- The programme is designed, developed and owned by the collaborator.
- Approval process assesses the strategic rationale for the collaboration, including its financial viability and sustainability.
- The School must assure itself that the quality and standard of the programme and its management are appropriate to contribute or lead to a School award. This is done through the validation process and on-going quality assurance mechanisms (see sections 2.0 and 3.0 in the QAE Handbook).
- Covered by a formal contract, between the collaborator and School, which includes the financial arrangements.
- Students normally have a direct contractual relationship with the collaborator.
- Subject to annual monitoring and periodic review of programme(s) by the School
- Board of Examiners meeting chaired by School, and to include an External Examiner appointed by School.
- Collaboration and contract subject to annual/periodic review by the School.
- Monitoring of publicity material.

8.2.5 **Dual Award** - The School with one or more collaborating institutions together provide a jointly delivered programme leading to separate awards being granted by both, or all, of them.

- The School is responsible for assuring itself of the quality and academic standards of the overall programme of study leading to the School award.



- The programme is expected to include some value-added or additionality, such as opportunities for staff/student exchange, extra-curricular activity, work-experience, personal development, or additional credit and to demonstrate this in the Programme Specification.
- The collaborator is responsible for assuring the quality and standards of its own award.
- Approval process assesses the strategic rationale for the collaboration, including its financial viability and sustainability.
- Covered by a formal contract, between the collaborator and School, which includes the financial arrangements.
- Students are enrolled and have a direct contractual relationship with the School.
- Subject to full QA processes including annual monitoring and periodic review of programme(s).
- Board of Examiners meeting held and chaired by the School for the School award, and to include an External Examiner appointed by the School.
- Collaboration and contract subject to annual/periodic review by the School.
- Monitoring of publicity material.

8.2.6 **Joint Award** - A programme delivered by the School together with one or more degree-awarding institutions, leading to a single award made jointly by both or all collaborators.

- The School is responsible for assuring itself of the quality and academic standards of the overall programme of study leading to the award.
- Students normally undertake a period of study at the School and a period of study at one or more collaborating organisation/s.
- The Programme Specification is expected to demonstrate the complementary strengths of the collaborators.
- Students enrolled at 'home' institution, i.e. normally the one where they are studying the most credit.
- Other students are enrolled as 'associate' students.
- Arrangements for Boards of Examiners, including the arrangements for External Examiners, must enable the School to assure the quality and standards of its awards and are negotiated and set out clearly in the contract.
- Subject to annual monitoring and periodic review of programme(s).
- Collaboration and contract subject to annual/periodic review by the School.
- Monitoring of publicity material.

8.2.7 **Progression/Articulation Agreement** - An agreement which recognises and grants *guaranteed* admission to a School programme from a programme of study undertaken at an approved collaborating organisation.

- The School reviews and maps the relevant provision at the collaborating organisation and judges that the curriculum, or a specified part of it, provides the basis for entry to a School programme.

- The achievements gained by collaborating students are deemed equivalent to other students entering the programme.
- Students will enter at the start of the programme or at a pre-defined stage, stated in the agreement (e.g. directly into the second year of a programme)
- A discounted fee is sometimes part of the agreement.
- Progression to attend School from overseas collaborators needs to address Home Office requirements.
- The continuing suitability of the collaborator's provision is evaluated through monitoring of student performance as part of annual monitoring and periodic review.
- Collaboration and contract subject to annual/periodic review by the School.
- Monitoring of publicity material.

8.2.8 **Advanced Standing/Recognition Agreement** - an agreement which recognises for admission to a School programme, at entry level or with advanced standing, an approved qualification from another provider.

- This arrangement *recognises* but does **not** *guarantee* entry.
- The School reviews and maps the relevant provision and judges that the curriculum, or a specified part of it, provides the basis for entry or for credit / advanced standing (such as direct to level 5 or 6) to a School programme, i.e. exemption from some part of the School programme.
- The achievements of students completing the provider programme are deemed equivalent to other students entering the programme at the same stage.
- A discounted fee is sometimes part of the agreement.
- Progression to attend the School from overseas collaborators needs to address Home Office requirements.
- The continuing suitability of the collaborator's provision is evaluated through monitoring of student performance as part of annual monitoring and periodic review.
- Collaboration and contract subject to periodic review by the School.
- Monitoring of publicity material.
- The School may make agreements with individual institutions overseas to recognise their qualification as a route to direct entry to the second or third year of an undergraduate programme. This is separate to the individual-based process of Accredited Prior Learning (APL). Where such an agreement is made, the agreement shall clearly state the basis on which direct entry is made and will only be agreed with the provision of course/module syllabi and any other such documentation that the School requires from the other institution. The agreement may be for a specific length of time or permanent, however any changes to the syllabi of the course must be communicated to the School and the School will reserve the right to withdraw recognition.

8.2.9 **Placement Learning** - covers both the traditional 'placement' and 'work-based learning' terms as well as 'attachment'.

- an agreed period of learning that is integral to a higher education programme and is usually achieved and demonstrated through engagement with an organisation outside of the course.
- In such activity, the course team are not present or directly conducting the learning opportunities.
- Normally, placement learning will be with an external organisation; however there are a number of internal placements within the School.
- Covered by a Placement Agreement.

See Placement Learning section in the QA Handbook and the Placement Learning Handbook.

8.2.10 **Student Exchange** - where the School receives students from another institution to undertake part of an existing course or a bespoke course devised specifically for the agreement. For example, the School's agreement with De Paul University.

- The School 'owns' the programme and as such retains direct control of and responsibility for its content, the teaching and learning, assessment and quality assurance.
- Covered by a formal contract, between the collaborator and School, which includes the financial arrangements.
- Students are enrolled and have a direct contractual relationship with the School.
- Subject to full QA processes including annual monitoring and periodic review of programme(s).
- Board of Examiners meeting chaired by School, and to include an External Examiner appointed by School.
- Collaboration and contract subject to annual/periodic review by the School.
- Monitoring of publicity material.
- Student exchange will be with a higher education institution only.
- The exchange must comply with the relevant framework where applicable (e.g. Erasmus).

Where there is an 'exchange' of students, there will normally be no exchange of fees and the 'home' institution will retain the tuition fees. Therefore the School would expect any agreement to be 'neutral' in terms of student exchanges or that the number of Central's students going on exchange should exceed the number coming to the School from other organizations.

Where the School receives incoming students only from a collaborator then a fee will normally be expected to be levied, for example those students who attend a summer course at the School from the Singapore Polytechnic.

8.2.11 **Collaborative provision of research degree awards** – where the School jointly supervises a research degree student, achieving a MPhil or PhD award of either the School or the collaborator.

- Covered by a formal contract, between the collaborator and School, which includes the financial arrangements.
- The student will have a minimum of two supervisors, one each from the School and collaborator.
- The School does not participate in joint or dual research degrees awards. The award will be either that of the University of London or the collaborator (where the collaborator is a University with research degree awarding powers).
- The organisation which makes the award (the School in the case of University of London awards) shall be the 'lead' organisation in the research degree.
- A proposal will be recommended to the Collaborations and Partnerships Committee by the Research Degrees Committee.
- Collaboration and contract subject to annual/periodic review by the School

### 8.3 PARTNERSHIPS

8.3.1 These are categorized as:

- **Outreach partnership** – in pursuit of the School's Access Agreement and/or the facilitation of underrepresented groups into higher education generally.
- **Academic activity partnership** – in pursuit of a specific academic activity, not related to academic curriculum delivery, between the School and another organization, for example in pursuit of research or professional practice or industry engagement.
- **Short Course/Summer School partnership** – in pursuit of the delivery of a non-credit bearing short course or summer school, between Central Connects and an external organization.
- **Staff Exchange** - in pursuit of a specific academic activity or staff development generally. This may be course or non course related, between the School and another organization. This may involve the exchange of both incoming and outgoing staff.
- **Co-operation Agreement** - where the School agrees to promote co-operation, discussions and positive academic relations with another institution for their mutual benefit, without establishing any binding legal relationship between the two institutions. This can be finalised through a general memorandum of understanding. There is no specific activity that is delivered as a result of the agreement.

## **8.4 APPROVAL PROCESS**

### **Initial Approval**

- 8.4.1 Initial approval must be granted in order to commence work on a potential collaboration or partnership. In a small and specialist institution with intensive teaching time it is imperative that staff do not spend time pursuing initiatives that fulfill no strategic purpose or are not of the highest quality. This also requires the involvement of relevant academic Heads of Department. Given the School's profile and location, it has the advantage of being able to choose its partners in a careful and considered strategic way.
- 8.4.2 Staff who wish to develop a collaboration or partnership should therefore seek approval from the School's Quality and Standards Committee, providing details of the nature and scope of the partnership or collaboration in the requisite pro forma.

### **Due Diligence**

- 8.4.4 All new collaborations and partnerships should involve some form of due diligence to ensure the appropriateness of the collaborating or partner organisation and to assess potential risk to the proposed project/collaboration and to the School more broadly.
- 8.4.5 As the nature of a collaboration or partnership will vary, so too will the detail of the level of due diligence required. The Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships Group will approve the level of due diligence required.
- 8.4.6 The generic list of documentation and confirmations (that may be varied and added to as appropriate) is as follows:

#### **Documentation:**

- Mission statement
- Strategic plan
- Founding document (e.g. charter)
- Annual report and financial statement
- Confirmation of insurance (level and type of insurance applicable to collaboration)
- Health and safety policy for organisation
- Equality and diversity policy for organisation
- Staff cvs of those directly involved in the managing and/or delivery of the collaboration/partnership
- Management structure/statement

#### **Confirmation in writing of:**

- the legal status of collaborator or partner organisation (e.g. Registered UK HE Institution, UK based registered company or charity, Non UK based company or charity Public Company, Private Company, Deed of Partnership, Sole trader etc.);

- the organisation's UK company number or UK charity number if applicable;
- the organisation's registered address;
- the length in time the organisation has existed;
- the number of people employed by the organisation;
- whether the organisation has pending or recent legal judgments against it;
- whether the organisation is based in and operates under the jurisdiction of UK law;
- if it operates outside of UK law then provision of written confirmation of the jurisdiction under which it operates;
- that there is no investigation or inquiry by a governmental or official body in to the organisation;
- that the organisation is financially solvent;
- that the organisation does not have any other affiliations or relationships that might be of concern to the School;
- that there are no ethical considerations in the organisation's wider operations that the School should be aware of;
- that the organisation has the resources (including space and personnel) to fulfil their aspects of the collaboration or partnership;
- that the organisation has no other collaborations or partnerships with other higher education institutions that may conflict with the School;
- whether the organisation is dependent on grants, subsidies or allowances without which the proposed collaboration would not be possible.

8.4.7 The approval of the results of the due diligence process will be via the Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships Group. However, one or more nominees of the Panel may scrutinize the material on its behalf.

### **PARTNER VISIT**

- 8.4.8 It is expected that that there would be a visit to the Partner organization for any proposed collaboration or partnership where delivery of part or all of a School award would be conducted off site by the collaborator or partner organization. The visit should establish:
- The quality of teaching through observation
  - The appropriateness and availability of relevant facilities and services as needed for the delivery.
- 8.4.9 The visit should involve the lead member of School academic staff, the relevant academic Head of Department or their nominee in the proposed collaboration or partnership and *normally* a minimum of one member of the Quality and Standards Committee.
- 8.4.10 Those attending the collaborator/partner visit will report to the Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships Group on the visit to the Collaborator/Partner and whether on the basis of the visit (and subsequent quality assurance processes being undertaken) that assurance can be given to the Panel to proceed with the proposal.

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

- 8.4.11 Collaborations and partnerships will normally involve a memorandum of understanding between the two institutions. The memorandum of understanding will be approved by the Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships Group, but will not commit the School to the signing of a memorandum of agreement without due process. The memorandum of understanding will state the intentions of the Collaboration/Partnership, and identify key individuals and their responsibilities.

## **MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**

- 8.4.12 Collaborations and partnerships will normally be formalised within a memorandum of agreement between the two institutions. The memorandum of agreement will be approved by the Executive Management Group. The memorandum of agreement will state the rights and responsibilities of both institutions in delivering the terms of the relationship.
- 8.4.13 The memorandum of agreement may be signed only by the Principal or their nominee.
- 8.4.14 In the case of placement learning activity a formal memorandum would not be required but a record of agreement between the two organizations is still required.

## **FINANCIAL AGREEMENT**

- 8.4.15 Should the collaboration or partnership include the sharing of income and profit or loss from the collaboration or partnership then an additional Financial Agreement must be devised and agreed. The Financial Agreement must be approved prior to the approval of the memorandum of agreement.
- 8.4.16 The Financial Agreement must be approved by the Executive Management Group.

## **FINAL APPROVAL**

- 8.4.17 Final approval of a proposed collaboration or partnership is provided by EMG, acting on behalf of the Academic Board. EMG will approve a proposal on recommendation from the Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships Group following receipt of the memorandum of agreement and financial agreement.
- 8.4.18 Any new award, programme or course developed through a collaboration or partnership must follow the validation and feasibility study procedures as detailed in section 2.1 of the QAE Handbook. The programme specification is approved by Academic Board only.

## **8.5 GOVERNANCE**

8.5.1 There will be a Quality and Standards Committee. This will report to Academic Board.

- The Panel will be responsible for the design of approval mechanisms for collaborations and partnerships.
- The consideration of due diligence
- The consideration of memoranda of understanding, and agreement for recommendation to EMG.
- The review of collaborations and partnerships – the Panel will receive relevant extracts from annual monitoring reports as well as management information data relating to the progressions of students involved in collaborations/partnerships or other data evaluating its effectiveness.
- It will also act as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information regarding potential new projects involving external collaborators or partners.

8.5.2 Any new award or course developed through a collaboration or partnership must follow the validation and feasibility study procedures as detailed in section 2.1 of the QAE Handbook.

8.5.3 As appropriate, the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will liaise with the Chair of and/or members of Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships Group on the development of partnerships.

## **8.6 REVIEW & MONITORING PROCESS**

8.6.1 Collaborative arrangements and their effectiveness on credit-bearing awards will be reviewed as part of the School's periodic review process.

8.6.2 The effectiveness of collaborations and partnerships should be considered before renewing any memoranda of agreement.

8.6.3 Annually, the effectiveness of the collaboration or partnership will be monitored by the Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships Group.

## **8.7 USE OF THE CENTRAL LOGO AND PUBLICITY**

8.7.1 The Central logo is a registered trademark with restricted use.

8.7.2 Use of the logo by third parties will be sanctioned on a case by case basis depending on the nature of the collaboration/partnership. Details will be included in the memorandum of agreement.

8.7.3 All publicity material (both print and web based) must be approved by the School prior to publication.



- 8.7.4 Programmes must be advertised as 'subject to validation' until all of the conditions have been addressed to the satisfaction of the panel and approved by Academic Board.
- 8.7.5 Central will send an approval letter for each programme once this process has been completed.
- 8.7.6 Where a programme has been given recommendations, but no conditions, at the validation meeting, Central will send the approval letter, once the panel's decision has been endorsed by Academic Board. The need to advertise the programme as 'subject to validation' will cease once the approval letter has been issued.

## **8.8 ENQUIRES & FINANCING OF NEW VENTURES**

- 8.8.1 Speculative enquiries from potential new collaborators or partners should be sent to aro@cssd.ac.uk in the first instance who will then normally circulate them electronically to the Collaborations and Innovations Panel.
- 8.8.2 Once circulated to the Panel, it is for individual departments to decide whether they wish to pursue a proposal with a collaborator or partner. The individual department will be responsible for resourcing the developments and obtaining funding from either their own departmental budget, or via an external grant application.

## **8.9 COLLABORATOR/PARTNER LIAISON**

- 8.9.1 All collaborators/partners must have a named member of Central staff as their primary point of liaison for the operation of the collaboration/partnership. Academic Heads of Department should also be involved in the liaison between partners to provide continuity and in recognition of the strategic importance of any such partnerships.

## **8.10 TERMINATION OF A COLLABORATION OR PARTNERSHIP**

- 8.10.1 The Memorandum of Agreement will be for a limited amount of time and unless renewed will expire on the date stipulated in the agreement.
- 8.10.2 Agreements may be terminated in writing before this date. The mechanism and conditions of this will be stipulated in the agreement however in general this may be for one or more of the following reasons:
- The venture is unprofitable
  - There are insufficient students/interest for it to be financially worthwhile
  - There are insufficient resources
  - There is a quality assurance issue with the venture
  - The strategic aims and objectives of either party have changed

- Relevant staff have left either organisation.

## 9 Appendices

## 9.1 Appendix 1: UNDERGRADUATE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND DESCRIPTORS

### Assessment Criteria

Not all the assessment criteria apply to each unit although all will be incorporated across the degree. The assessment criteria to be considered will be clear in each unit outline. Tutors will give feedback relevant to these criteria with references to specific examples from your work.

Work is assessed on evidence of the extent to which you have met the learning outcomes demonstrated through:

- Progress in relevant practice-based techniques and skills
- Collaborative skills
- Autonomous processes
- Intellectual engagement (e.g. devising and sustaining arguments and/or solving problems)
- Analysis and interrogation, demonstrating knowledge and understanding some of which is at the forefront of the theoretical and practical field/industry
- Identifying appropriate opportunities to take creative risks
- Testing the validity of presented facts, opinions and hypotheses
- Self-reflection
- Effective use of research
- Communication (of, for example, ideas and concepts)

### Marking descriptors

Work that is marked near a borderline is likely to have characteristics of work in the next closest bracket, but these are outweighed by characteristics described in the bracket in which the work is placed. The languages of these descriptors will be used by staff in feedback to make clear the level the student has reached. In addition, tutors will make reference to the learning outcomes and whether these have therefore been achieved.

#### 85%-100% **A mark in this range is indicative of outstanding and exceptional work.**

You have demonstrated exceptional intellectual engagement (e.g. devising and sustaining arguments and/or solving problems). Your analysis and critical interrogation demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and practical field is at a most advanced level demonstrating a rare understanding at undergraduate level of, for example, the ambiguity of knowledge. Your demonstration of the skills, practices and/or techniques in this unit is at an exceptional level. In taking creative risks you stretched the discipline or explored the territories of inter-disciplinarity in unpredictable and highly exciting ways. Your self-reflection was rigorous and demanding, demonstrating a rare self-awareness. You have managed your own learning at all times and to an impressive level, engaging in unusually detailed and highly focussed research with most rewarding consequences to an exceptional level. You have

communicated your ideas most impressively, fully engaging your specialist and/or non-specialist audience/reader. You have worked closely with a group of people at a highly commendable level and/or demonstrated an outstanding level of autonomous decision making.

**70-84% A mark in this range is indicative that the work is of an excellent standard for the current level of your degree programme**

You have demonstrated excellent intellectual engagement (e.g. devising and sustaining arguments and/or solving problems). Your analysis and critical interrogation, demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and practical field, is at an advanced level demonstrating an excellent understanding of, for example, the ambiguity of knowledge. Your demonstration of the skills, practices and/or techniques in this unit is at an outstanding level. In taking creative risks you stretched the discipline in unpredictable and exciting ways or explored the territories of inter-disciplinarity. Your self-reflection was rigorous and demonstrated an unusual level of self-awareness. You have managed your own learning, engaging in detailed and highly focussed research with substantial consequences that is impressive for this level. You have communicated your ideas to an outstanding level, fully engaging your specialist and/or non-specialist audience/reader. You have worked closely with a group of people at a commendable level and/or demonstrated an excellent level of autonomous decision making.

**60-69% A mark in this range is indicative that the work is of a very good standard for the current level of your degree programme.**

You have demonstrated a very good level of intellectual engagement (e.g. devising and sustaining arguments and/or solving problems). Your analysis and critical interrogation demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and practical field is at a high level demonstrating a clear understanding of, for example, the ambiguity of knowledge. Your demonstration of the skills, practices and/or techniques in this unit is at very good level. In taking creative risks you engaged with the discipline, or interdisciplinarity, in thoughtful and provocative ways. Your self-reflection was thorough and you demonstrated a strong level of self-awareness. You have managed your own learning, engaging in detailed research which has been evidenced thoughtfully in your work. You have communicated your ideas very well indeed, engaging your specialist and/or non-specialist audience/reader. You have worked closely with a group of people at a skilled level and/or demonstrated a very good level of autonomous decision making.

**50-59% A mark in this range is indicative that the work is of a very satisfactory to good standard at the current level of your degree programme.**

You have demonstrated a reasonably good or good level of intellectual engagement (e.g. devising and sustaining arguments and/or solving problems). Your analysis and critical interrogation demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and practical field is of a sound level. You have

demonstrated a clear understanding of, for example, the ambiguity of knowledge. Your demonstration of the skills, practices and/or techniques in this unit is at a relatively good level. You have taken some creative risks and engaged with the discipline in a reasonably effective way. Your self-reflection was clear and you demonstrated some self-awareness. You have managed your own learning, engaging in some research which has been evidenced in your work on several occasions. In addition, you have communicated your ideas soundly, engaging your specialist and/or non-specialist audience/reader. You have worked closely with a group of people well on the whole and/or demonstrated a reasonable level of autonomous decision making.

**40-49% A mark in this range is indicative that the work is of an acceptable standard at the current level of your degree programme.**

You have demonstrated some intellectual engagement (e.g. devising and sustaining arguments and/or solving problems). Your analysis and critical interrogation demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and practical field is of a satisfactory level. You have demonstrated, on occasion, an understanding of, for example, the ambiguity of knowledge. Your demonstration of the skills, practices and/or techniques in this unit is at a satisfactory level. You have taken occasional creative risks and engaged with the discipline effectively at times. You demonstrated a limited ability in self-reflection and self-awareness. You have managed your own learning on the whole, engaging in some research which has been evidenced in your work to a limited extent. You have communicated several ideas, engaging your specialist and/or non-specialist audience/reader to some extent. You have worked closely with a group of people to a satisfactory level and/or demonstrated autonomous decision making on occasions.

**20-39% A mark in this range is indicative that the work is below, but at the upper end is approaching, the standard required at the current level of your degree programme.**

You have demonstrated little intellectual engagement (e.g. devising and sustaining arguments and/or solving problems). Your analysis and critical interrogation demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and practical field does not reach a satisfactory level. You have been unable to demonstrate, for example, an understanding of the ambiguity of knowledge. Your demonstration of the skills, practices and/or techniques in this unit has yet to reach a satisfactory level. You have rarely taken creative risks or engaged with the discipline. You have demonstrated a very limited ability in self-reflection and self-awareness. You have not managed your own learning satisfactorily and you have not evidenced an engagement in research beyond a basic level. You have had difficulty communicating your ideas and engaging your specialist and/or non-specialist audience/reader. You have not reached a satisfactory level of collaboration with a group of people and/or demonstrated autonomous decision making.

**0-19% A mark in this range is indicative that the work is far below the standard required at the current level of your degree programme.**

You work shows very limited intellectual engagement (e.g. devising and sustaining arguments and/or solving problems). Your analysis and critical interrogation demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and practical field is weak. You have been unable to demonstrate, for example, any understanding of the ambiguity of knowledge. Your demonstration of the skills, practices and/or techniques in this unit is very limited. There has been very little or no evidence of you taking creative risks or engaging with the discipline. Your self-reflection and self-awareness is uninformed and/or is not evident. You have not managed your own learning satisfactorily and you have not evidenced an engagement in research. You have been unable to communicate your ideas or engage your specialist and/or non-specialist audience/reader. You have shown little ability to work in a group and/or you have not demonstrated autonomous decision making.

## 9.2 Appendix 2: POSTGRADUATE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND DESCRIPTORS

### Assessment criteria

Not all the assessment criteria apply to each unit although all will be incorporated *across* each Masters degree. (The compulsory units include all these criteria already.) The assessment criteria to be considered will be clear in each unit outline. Tutors will give feedback relevant to these criteria with references to specific examples from your work. Work is assessed on evidence of the extent to which you have met the learning outcomes demonstrated through:

- sustained, independent written argument;
- progress in relevant practice-based techniques;
- taking creative risks, selecting and implementing from these appropriately;
- originality in the application of knowledge in relation to the matter of the unit;
- analytical and critical awareness of relevant contemporary issues;
- intellectual engagement;
- understanding and effective use of research and advanced scholarship;
- recognising practice that is at the boundaries of the specialism;
- successful collaborative processes;
- tackling and solving problems and dealing with complex situations in professionally-related environments.

### Marking descriptors (relating to the assessment criteria)

Work that is marked near a borderline is likely to have characteristics of work in the next closest bracket, but these are outweighed by characteristics described in the bracket in which the work is placed. The languages of these descriptors will be used by staff in feedback to make clear the level the student has reached. In addition, tutors will make reference to the learning outcomes and whether these have therefore been achieved.

#### 80% and over (distinction)

Your written work demonstrates a fluent, lucid and advanced argument of a near-publishable level. You show exceptional evidence of progress in specific techniques relevant to the practical work of the unit. You have demonstrated a highly impressive exploration of creative risks and options and selected and implemented ideas with acuity. There is clear and sustained evidence of originality in your applications of knowledge in practice. You have demonstrated excellent qualities of analysis and critical awareness of contemporary issues throughout the unit. Your levels of intellectual engagement are exceptional; you have developed original knowledge making use of extensive and highly complex research. You display strikingly effective practice, demonstrating an advanced understanding of the boundaries of your specialism. You work at the highest of standards in group situations (if relevant), exercising most effective collaborative strategies. There is evidence of exceptional ability in tackling and solving problems and addressing complex situations in professionally-related



environments. The work is characterised by its sustained excellence and is of equivalent achievement to striking professional practice at the forefront of its field.

#### 70% and over (distinction)

Your written work demonstrates sustained, advanced argument at an academically high level. You show outstanding evidence of progress in specific techniques relevant to the practical work of the unit. You have demonstrated an impressive exploration of creative risks and options and selected and implemented ideas with acuity. There is clear evidence of originality in your applications of knowledge in practice. You have demonstrated very good qualities of analysis and critical awareness of contemporary issues in the unit. Your levels of intellectual engagement are impressive; you have developed areas of original knowledge, making use of extensive and complex research. You display most effective practice, demonstrating an advanced understanding of the boundaries of your specialism. You work at high standards in group situations (if relevant), always exercising effective collaborative strategies. There is evidence of clear ability in tackling and solving problems and addressing complex situations in professionally-related environments. The work is characterised by excellence and is of equivalent achievement to professional practice at the forefront of its field.

#### 60% and over (merit)

Your written work demonstrates a sustained and clear argument. You show very good evidence of progress in specific techniques relevant to the practical work of the unit. You have demonstrated an effective exploration of creative risks and options and selected and implemented ideas appropriately. There is clear evidence of originality in your applications of knowledge in practice. You have demonstrated good qualities of analysis and critical awareness of contemporary issues in the unit. Your levels of intellectual engagement are good; you have made often made use of detailed research. You display effective practice, demonstrating a good understanding of the boundaries of your specialism. You work well in group situations (if relevant), frequently exercising effective collaborative strategies. There is evidence of good ability in tackling and solving problems and addressing complex situations in professionally-related environments. The work is of a good standard and, on several occasions, is equivalent to professional practice at the forefront of its field.

#### 50% and over

Your written work demonstrates a developed argument that is reasonably sustained. You show evidence of progress in specific techniques relevant to the practical work of the unit. You have demonstrated exploration of creative risks and options and selected and implemented ideas appropriately. There is evidence of originality in your applications of knowledge in practice. You have demonstrated reasonably good qualities of analysis and critical awareness of

contemporary issues in the unit. Your levels of intellectual engagement are adequate; you have made use of research at times. Your practice is at a reasonable standard, and you have demonstrated an understanding of the boundaries of your specialism. You contribute to group situations, adopting reasonably effective collaborative strategies for most of the time. There is evidence of some ability in tackling and solving problems and addressing complex situations in professionally-related environments. The work is of a fair or good standard and, on occasion, is equivalent to professional practice at the forefront of its field. It is likely to be reasonably strong in some areas but less developed in others, and it may be inconsistent.

#### 40-49% (fail)

Your written work demonstrates an argument but one that is only sporadically sustained. You show limited evidence of progress in specific techniques relevant to the practical work of the unit. You have only occasionally demonstrated exploration of creative risks and options and selected and implemented ideas appropriately. There is limited or little evidence of originality in your applications of knowledge in practice. You have demonstrated limited qualities of analysis and critical awareness of contemporary issues in the unit. Your levels of intellectual engagement were not always adequate; you have made little use of research. Your practice is not always of a reasonable standard, and you have rarely demonstrated an understanding of the boundaries of your specialism. You contribute to group situations, although you do not often adopt effective collaborative strategies. There is limited evidence of ability in tackling and solving problems and addressing complex situations in professionally-related environments. The work is only of a fair standard and is rarely equivalent to professional practice at the forefront of its field. You have not sufficiently demonstrated that you have met the learning outcomes of the unit, although it is likely that your work shows potential.

#### Less than 40% (fail)

Your written work does not sufficiently demonstrate an argument. You show insufficient evidence of progress in specific techniques relevant to the practical work of the unit. You have rarely or never demonstrated exploration of creative risks and options and selected and implemented ideas appropriately. There is little or no evidence of originality in your applications of knowledge in practice. You have rarely demonstrated qualities of analysis and critical awareness of contemporary issues in the unit. Your levels of intellectual engagement were inadequate; you have made little or no use of research. Your practice is not of a good enough standard, and you have not demonstrated an understanding of the boundaries of your specialism. Your contribution to group situations is very limited, as are your effective collaborative strategies. There is little or no evidence of ability in tackling and solving problems and addressing complex situations in professionally-related environments. The work is not equivalent to professional practice at the forefront of its field. You have not demonstrated that you have met the learning outcomes of the unit.

## 9.3 Appendix 3: MASTERS (M) FRAMEWORK

### 1. *Aim and Scope*

The aim of the M-Framework is to provide coherence across Masters-level provision at Central, maintain intellectual rigour, appropriate pedagogical methods, assessment (e.g. scale, choice, inclusivity), and academic feedback mechanisms. It seeks to provide stability, flexibility within courses, and allow for efficient staff workload management through possibilities for shared infrastructure and documentation. Central's Masters programmes therefore should enable:

- enhanced learning for students through, for example, the sharing of specialist units across courses;
- greater collaboration and opportunities for interdisciplinarity in course and unit design and development;
- potentials for expansion of provision, and innovation in curriculum design, because course units may be available in more than one course;

### 2. *Principles of Masters Degrees at Central*

Masters level work in Central conforms to national (and, where relevant, international) benchmarks by enabling students to:

- gain knowledge at the forefront of the academic and professional discipline of drama, theatre and performance and, in particular, within their specialist focus;
- take risks, be intellectually rigorous and show originality in their application **of knowledge**;
- **understand how the boundaries of their specialism are advanced**;
- **share learning with students on other courses**;
- **both in collaboration with peers and independently, show originality in tackling and solving problems and dealing systematically and creatively with complex issues in unpredictable environments**;
- **extend** experience and outputs through a prolonged engagement with relevant practice.

### 3. *Key attributes of the Framework*

#### 3.1 Structural Attributes

- The framework is built on blocks of 20, 40, 60 and 120 credits
- All courses in the Framework will include at least one 20- or 40-credit unit focussed on practices in the relevant theatre discipline(s), with aims, learning outcomes and assessment modes as defined as part of the Framework
- Specific units can be incorporated across multiple postgraduate degrees

- The Performing Research unit can be incorporated (subject to the course approval process) in any M-level course

### 3.2 Options Units

MA and MFA degrees should, where appropriate, make available at least one opportunity for student choice among a set of optional units, approved by the School.

### 3.3 Part-time Study

All Masters courses are expected to investigate the feasibility of part-time/flexible modes of study, and to make these available, subject to approval for each course, unless it is inappropriate for the content delivery of the course or the School judges that there is no market for part-time study.

### 3.4 Assessment

- Subject to approval at validation or review, assessment tasks will be designed to ensure inclusivity and variety or to incorporate elements of choice.
- All units will carry a numerical mark (expressed as a percentage), though elements of assessment within the unit may, subject to validation, be assessed on a pass/fail basis.
- Each unit of a validated course will be weighted in proportion to its credit value in determining whether an award may be conferred with distinction.
- Assessment criteria are defined for M-level awards as a whole. A subset of these is defined for each unit: the unit-specific assessment criteria are normally approved via the School's approval and modification processes
- School-wide regulations and guidelines for the conduct of assessment, published in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook, apply.

### 3.5 Potential Awards

In line with the School's regulations, students who leave an approved Masters course having accumulated 120 credits from the taught units are, unless otherwise specified at validation, awarded a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip). The award of a 60-credit Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) is at the discretion of the Examination Board.

### 3.6 Weighting

- Marks are awarded on a percentage basis to each unit;
- Students must pass each unit to achieve the credit required for the award;
- The weightings of each unit in calculating awards will be in proportion to the credit which the unit carries in relation to the award for which the student is a candidate. Thus a 20 credit unit contributes 20/180 of the overall average mark for an MA, 20/240 of the overall average mark for an MFA, and 20/120 of the weighted overall average mark for the award of a

PGDip. Expressed as a percentage, this represents the following weightings:

Unit size	MA	MFA
20 credits	11.11%	8.33%
40 credits	22.22%	16.66%
60 credits	33.33%/	25%
120 credits (MFA Only)	-	50%

Each unit will be marked out of 100%; computer systems will aggregate accordingly.

### 3.7 Quality Assurance

The M-Framework may be amended by the Academic Board to take into account of changes in nomenclature, benchmarks and/or expectations. All degrees of the School must adhere to the Academic Regulations and Handbook of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

### 3.8 Indicative Framework Structures (next page)

## Indicative Framework Structures

CREDIT MODEL	20 credits	20 credits	20 credits	20 credits	20 credits	20 credits	60 credits (MA) / 120 credits (MFA)
A	Course-specific unit	Course-specific unit	Performing Research	Course-specific unit	Practices:... (A)	Option units	Sustained Independent Project (SIP)
B	Course-specific unit	Course-specific unit		Course-specific unit	Practices:... (B)		
C	Pedagogies: ... (D)	Course-specific unit		Course-specific unit	Practices:... (C)		
D		Course-specific unit		Course-specific unit			
E	Course-specific unit	Course-specific unit		Course-specific unit	Practices:... (E)	Practices:... (Q)	
F	Critical Contexts	Pedagogies: ... (F)		Course-specific unit	Practices:... (Z) (40 credit)		
G				Course-specific unit			
H	Practices			Course-specific unit(s), Options units, Performing Research (up to 60 credits)			

	Validated as part of the Framework for use in all or some Framework courses. May not be changed.
	Validated as “skeletons” in the Framework. Aims, learning outcomes and assessment mode may not be changed. Indicative content and delivery modes are approved at course validation. Course validation may specify a subset of the assessment modes indicated in the skeleton. Course-specific variants of these units will be separately sub-titled.

## 9.4 Appendix 4: ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES INFORMATION POLICY

### 1 National Expectations

As a publicly funded provider of higher education in England, Central is committed to meeting the requirements of the Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in England, and the Quality Code for Higher Education. In doing so, it is mindful of the following key expectations:

#### *Regulatory Framework Condition of Registration*

**C1:** The provider must demonstrate that in developing and implementing its policies, procedures and terms and conditions it has given due regard to relevant guidance about how to comply with consumer protection law.

<i>Quality Code Core Practice</i>	<i>Guiding Principle</i>	<i>Considerations</i>
<b>Admissions:</b> 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.	Information provided to prospective students for recruitment and widening access purposes supports students in making informed decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information provided constitutes <u>material information</u></li><li>• Information is accessible and published timely</li><li>• Information should remain accurate and informative</li><li>• Staff should be aware of their responsibilities</li></ul>
<b>Enabling Student Development:</b> The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.	Clear, accessible and inclusive policies and procedures to enable students and staff to identify when support mechanisms may be required for academic and personal progression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Course details and information should be communicated to students in an accessible way</li><li>• Staff should know where to access relevant information</li></ul>

### 2 Principles

Definitive information about the School's academic programmes, and the associated policies and regulations which determine their operation, should be:

- a) Published and openly available to the public;
- b) Accurate at the time of reading;

- c) Proactively maintained and reviewed on an (at least) annual basis.

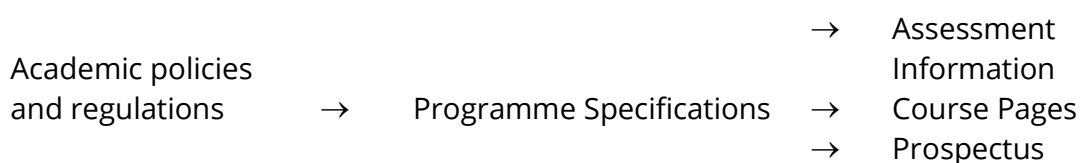
### 3 Published Documents and Definitions

<i>Document Title</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Key Contact</i>
Academic Regulations	Concerning the School's taught and research degree programmes, this document general student regulations, the framework and structure of School programmes, student assessment and progression, formal student procedures and detail the basis upon which student awards are conferred.	Academic Registrar
Additional Study Costs	There may be some limited additional course costs not covered by the tuition fees for materials, equipment, or field trips required for your studies. Information regarding these additional costs will be made available online. You will also receive it with your electronic offer pack.	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
Course Pages	The pages on the website which provide a brief summary of courses, including: their entry requirements, relationships with industry and recent graduate destinations	Student Recruitment Marketing Manager
Handbook of Quality Assurance and Enhancement	Document collating key quality assurance and enhancement processes for taught and research programmes.	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
Programme Specifications	Definitive documents which outline which academic level qualifications are located, how learning outcomes are aligned with qualification levels, the programme structure (including <u>unit outlines</u> ) and its alignment to UK-wide credit frameworks, the content and structure.	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
Prospectus	An overview of the academic programmes being offered to prospective students, printed up to 18	Student Recruitment Marketing Manager



	months prior to the commencement of its programmes.	
Register of Collaborative Provision	Document outlining partnerships between the School and other institutions and organisations contributing to the delivery of credit-bearing programmes	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
Student Protection Plan	Policy detailing for applicants and students the steps the School will take to support them in the event that there is a risk to the commencement or continuation of your studies. The reasons or instances which might cause such a risk are laid out within this plan.	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement
Terms and Conditions	This document sets out the terms and conditions between Central and students on one of our programmes of study, leading to the award of a University of London degree qualification.	Academic Registrar
Tuition Fees	Tuition Fees are charged by the School for undertaking a programme of study. They are published online, alongside information concerning deposits which are paid to accept a place of study.	Heads of Admissions & Student Recruitment / Head of Finance

#### 4 Published Programme Information Hierarchy



Where there are discrepancies in the information about programmes, the programme specification (unless this relates to academic regulations and/or policies) is considered the **definitive** point of reference for the delivery of our credit-bearing higher education provision.

## 5 Responsibilities Under Consumer Law

Under consumer law, the information the School publishes about its programmes forms part of the material information upon which applicants make decisions to enter into contracts with the School, i.e. to apply. Advice provided to higher education providers by the Competition and Markets Authority (2015) highlights:

- Material information must be provided to prospective students about the programmes and courses on offer, their structure and their associated fees and costs **prior** to them making a decision as to whether to apply;
- The information should be accurate, clear, unambiguous and timely, and should be given up front in an easily accessible way;
- Important rules and regulations, as well as those which may be considered 'surprising', should be drawn to prospective students' attention;
- Information should continue to be available to students during the offer stage, including highlighting the full terms and conditions to which they are and will be subject;
- Where any pre-contract information changes, express agreement should have been provided either before or at the time of making the change;
- Information provided to students should continue to be accurate upon their enrolment. If it has been necessary to change this, students should be informed at the earliest opportunity.

## 6 Changes to programme information

Programme specifications act as the definitive, core point of reference for communicating the offer(s) of the School, as well as for delivery of its provision. Changes to programmes are managed through a modifications process, which is further detailed in the Handbook of Quality Assurance and Enhancement. Such changes are made on the basis that they are reasonable amendments to the content and teaching offered in relation to any course for operational reasons and/or on the basis of improving the quality of the curriculum and its delivery. Changes to programmes are used to update the information published about programmes in a timely manner. The scale of these changes are summarised below:

- **Editorial changes:** Editorial changes are the updating, but not altering, of the curriculum of a unit and therefore are managed through the internal oversight of changes to specifications by the Handbook of Quality Assurance and Enhancement;
- **Minor modifications:** Minor modifications are Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee consulted and approved changes to component unit(s) of programmes and courses related to:
  - Amending the assessment strategy of a unit
  - Changing a unit title
  - Amending the aims or learning outcomes of a unit

- Amending the content of a unit
  - Changing the level or credit weighting of a unit
  - Changing the admissions criteria of a unit
  - Removing, adding or replacing a unit within a programme and/or course
- **Major modifications:** Significant changes to programmes require the approval of Academic Board, and concern:
    - The addition of new courses within existing programmes
    - Changing the title of a programme or course
    - The accumulation of changes to programmes, either in the same academic year or over successive academic years

## 7 Publication timescales

The currency of programme information is detailed below:

- Programme specifications, academic policies and regulations all relate to the same year, and are published to represent the curriculum as it is being delivered that academic year
- Course webpages are used to advertise programmes for the next academic year, drawing on the most current information available
- The School prospectus is published up to eighteen months prior to the commencement (i.e. the 2021/22 prospectus will be published in Spring 2020), and presents a top-level overview of programmes and their admissions processes as they are planned to be delivered. Wherever possible, we will always seek to highlight likely changes either in the prospectus or on the School website
- Programme modifications proposed and approved in the autumn term may be introduced in the subsequent academic year, whereas those proposed in the spring or summer are normally introduced for the academic year after next, unless there are serious concerns about maintaining academic standards or in delivering high quality learning opportunities for students. This timeframe also allows for communication of changes pre-enrolment

## 8 Further Information

For further information, please contact:

James Perkins (e) [james.perkins@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:james.perkins@cssd.ac.uk) (t) 020 7559 3922

**Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

## 9.5 Appendix 5: EMERGENCY PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL

### 1 Principles

1.1 Any provision developed in response to the situations outlined in the addendum regulations will continue to adhere to national references for academic standards, and to relevant institutional and University of London policies and regulations.

1.2 Any proposed assessment and/or curricular change **must** ensure:

- The maintenance of academic standards in terms of
  - Intended unit outcomes
  - Assessment measures that accurately and consistently demonstrate the extent to which students have achieved the required learning for the unit
- Sufficient comparable learning opportunities which enable students
  - To engage with the core curriculum
  - To engage with core teaching (though perhaps through an alternative mode of delivery) and related tutorial/supervisory support
  - To have opportunities for collaboration
  - To receiving feedback on assessment and how to improve

1.3 Any proposals will be subject to:

- appropriate external support, whether through existing external examiner arrangements or (where this is impracticable) through relevant advice and guidance from other external sources of advice (e.g. sector agencies, other external academics, industry professionals).
- Student consultation, including during delivery, usually with course representatives. This means that should a risk to standards or student learning opportunities be identified, we can rectify them before they present a detriment to student learning.

1.4 Assessment and/or curriculum developments in circumstances under which these regulations would become effective will be considered as the validated form of this provision until such time as Academic Board confirms that normal delivery may resume.

### 2 Responsibilities

2.1 The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will be responsible for providing academic teams with the necessary documentation to propose emergency programme developments.

2.2 The Director of Learning and Teaching will be responsible for advocating these proposals to Academic Board.

2.3 The Head of Learning and Teaching Services will coordinate relevant support and guidance for academic staff in developing alternative means of delivering the academic provision.

2.4 Academic Board will confirm all proposed emergency developments prior to their delivery. If the full Board is unable to meet simultaneously (either in person or through electronic means), proposals can be approved either by:

a) An approved sub-group of Academic Board to include at least 50% academic representation and 1 student member; or b) An approval window of one calendar week, where any objections or areas for clarification can be formally registered by members of the Board.

c) Exceptionally, the Board may agree that Chair's action can be taken to approve proposals; any decisions made in this way will be reported to the next meeting of the Board.

2.5 Academic Registry will be responsible for ensuring that the new means of delivery is reflected on the student record system and virtual learning environment to enable submission of assessments, student progression, and the conferment of awards.

## 9.6 Appendix 6 MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR BRIGHTSPACE

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Each Programme and/or Course Session will have a Default View. This Default View is specifically designed for each Programme in alignment with the School's Programme/Course structure, see BrightSpace Programme/Course Enrollment Workflow. Following creation of the Programme/Course/Unit, pages will be given over to designated Course Leaders and Designated Owners.

### STANDARDS FOR BRIGHTSPACE

- i. Each Course Leader will designate a VLE Tutor to ensure that all VLE deadlines, updates, data management removal, and current course content is appropriate and in line with the VLE life cycle. The VLE Tutor will review Course pages each end of the life cycle (July/August) to ensure currency of materials.
- ii. Site structure represents Programme structure and is consistent with the registrar.
- iii. All relevant academic staff has access to Programme, Course, and Unit pages. This includes, but is not limited to, Course Leaders, Lecturers, Visiting Lecturers, Tutors, Internal Examiners, and External Examiners. The VLE Tutor reviews access on a yearly basis.
- iv. Each Programme and/or Course Homepage includes current contact details for Course Leaders, Lecturers, Tutors, Visiting Lecturers, etc., and sets expectations of when and how to be contacted.
- v. Each Programme and/or Course includes the following in their Content page: Programme Specification, Reading List (if applicable), and any additional course-specific general information. All school-wide regulations, guidebooks, and handbooks will remain in MyCentral. A link to MyCentral will be standard in each Programme/Course Default View.
- vi. All headings and subheadings are clear and consistent.
- vii. All content, links and uploaded files work, are accessible, and have descriptive titles that align with the School's Programme structure. All files are tagged appropriately. See Digital Best Practices Guidebook for school-wide procedures and how-to information.
- viii. All content, links, and uploaded files which are out of date or no longer in use are removed from the student view and/or deleted. All uploaded files adhere to Copyright laws and are updated accordingly.
- ix. If the Course has decided to integrate learning analytics in assessment, a statement on how the student's data will be utilized for assessment is in both the Assessment Criteria and the Programme and/or Course homepage. The Course Leader and/or VLE Tutor will liaise with their Course Support Officer to ensure transparency and accurate information for all students.
- x. Changes in structure, design, and use of the VLE should be made at the end of the life cycle (July/August) and not in the middle of the academic year. If this cannot be avoided, students should be informed of any major changes to the VLE at least one month prior to the changes being enacted