

**MANUAL OF ACADEMIC REGULATIONS
AND PROCEDURES 2024-25**

MANAGEMENT OF STANDARDS AND QUALITY

(APPLICABLE FROM OCTOBER 2024)

Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct

Student and Education Services

MARP 2024-25

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MARP 2024-25
MANAGEMENT OF STANDARDS AND QUALITY

SQ 1 UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

SQ 1.1 The University aims to offer its students:

- (a) a diverse choice of flexible programmes which are responsive to student need and demand, based on sound principles of design, and that are explicitly informed by, and benefit from, Lancaster’s strong research culture;
- (b) high quality and innovative programmes that enable students to develop knowledge and skills that promote personal development, make a positive contribution to society and are valued by external agencies including other universities and employers;
- (c) an environment where the diversity of students’ backgrounds and experiences is considered in curriculum development and the delivery of courses and transparent admissions procedures that do not unfairly discriminate between prospective students;
- (d) academic and pastoral support which aids and encourages students to fulfil their academic and personal potential and benefit from University.

SQ 1.2 The University encourages staff at all levels to take an active responsibility for the quality of its academic offer. Nevertheless, it is the University that has ultimate responsibility for:

- (a) the standard of its academic awards and for the quality of all its educational programmes wherever delivered;
- (b) the quality of the educational experience given to students;
- (c) ensuring that standards and quality are comparable to similar awards and programmes elsewhere in the HE sector and internationally;
- (d) ensuring the fair, equitable and consistent treatment of students across all provision, wherever delivered in terms of:
 - (i) admissions;
 - (ii) learning, teaching and assessment opportunities;
 - (iii) academic discipline;
 - (iv) results and awards.

SQ 1.3 To this end, the University’s framework for the management of academic standards and quality is designed to foster debate on academic and pedagogical issues within academic peer groups in order to:

- (a) appoint appropriately qualified academic staff and support them in the design, delivery and continuous evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment provision;
- (b) ensure that programmes leading to Lancaster awards are at an appropriate level and make appropriate demands on students, tested by reference to the educational norms and values of the relevant academic discipline, the department, the Faculty, the University (and its collaborative teaching partners), and the international HE community;
- (c) take account of relevant UK HE external reference points, including: knowledge of how the subject is taught in other HEIs; external examiners' comments; the Office for Students' Conditions of Registration, specifically the 'B' Conditions; advice from subject-based learning and teaching support networks, the requirements of PSRBs, employers, relevant QAA subject benchmark statements, the QAA Quality Code and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and any credit frameworks to which the University subscribes;
- (d) set admissions criteria that will secure a good match between the abilities and aptitudes of applicants and the demands of the programme, enabling the admission of students who can be reasonably expected to attain the required standard for the award;
- (e) design assessment processes that can demonstrate that students have attained learning outcomes and levels of achievement appropriate to the award they will receive, and which also facilitate student learning and progression;
- (f) ensure that programme proposals and related-developments are consistent with institutional plans and with strategic academic and resource planning criteria;
- (g) ensure the availability of the level and types of teaching, learning and support resources and facilities necessary to deliver programmes consistently to the required standard and to support student achievement;
- (h) provide for institution-level reviews of the ways in which quality and standards are assured, including quality assurance processes and quality management and enhancement systems, in order to ensure that they are working properly and effectively and are fit for purpose;
- (i) ensure that appropriate administrative and professional support is in place to enable learning, teaching and assessment activities to flourish and develop and to be responsive to change.

SQ 1.4 All University staff have a responsibility to treat all students fairly and equitably on the basis of capacity and potential and to ensure that no students are discriminated against on any grounds irrelevant to academic study.

SQ 2 ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE

SQ 2.1 UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY COMMITTEES

SQ 2.1.1 [The Senate](#) is the body with overarching responsibility for the academic strategy of the University, and the approval of policies and procedures to promote and ensure the academic quality of teaching and research. Chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, membership includes academic and academic-related staff and student representatives.

SQ 2.1.2 Senate is empowered to make binding decisions on matters relating to the direction, regulation and promotion of the teaching of the University, the conduct of examinations, and the award of degrees. In practice [Senate delegates responsibility](#) for quality assurance and enhancement to a range of groups and [committees](#) with specific terms of reference and individual officers.

SQ 2.1.3 The main committee responsible for the assurance of quality and standards is the [Academic Standards and Quality Committee](#) (a sub-committee of the Senate Education Committee).

SQ 2.1.4 The [Academic Standards and Quality Committee](#) (ASQC) is chaired by the University Academic Dean, its membership includes central and Faculty staff and student representatives. Its institutional responsibilities include:

- (a) ensuring comparable academic standards and equivalent educational experience across the University's programmes;
- (b) providing advice on programme and module approval;
- (c) reviewing data on all programme provision;
- (d) approving academic regulations governing all taught and research degree programmes;
- (e) overseeing the University's relationship with external bodies with respect to learning and teaching and quality assurance and enhancement.

SQ 2.1.5 Arrangements for managing teaching partnerships, including operational requirements and responsibilities for quality and standards, are detailed in the [Collaborative Teaching Partnerships](#) chapter.

SQ 2.1.6 Faculties have named principal committees with responsibility for academic standards and quality.

SQ 2.1.7 Departmental committee arrangements vary according to the nature and complexity of their provision but in each case there is at least one body with responsibility for learning, teaching and assessment.

SQ 2.2 PRINCIPAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT PROCESSES

SQ 2.2.1 The main quality assurance and enhancement processes. Details of these processes are covered in the following chapters of MARP:

- (a) [Course Design, Development and Approval](#) for:
- (i) programme and module design and development;
 - (ii) programme and module approval;
- (b) [Course Evaluation and Review](#) for:
- (i) annual reviews of teaching (by departments with faculty input);
 - (ii) periodic reviews of departmental provision (by the institution with external input);
- (c) [External Examiner Procedures \(Taught Programmes\)](#) for the regulation of assessment including the use of external examiners; and
- (d) Please see section SQ 5 (Student Engagement and Representation In The Area Of Quality Assurance and Engagement) below for details on Student Feedback mechanisms.

SQ 2.3 POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- SQ 2.3.1 The University monitors and manages the standards of its academic provision and discharges its responsibilities in respect of awarding degrees through an institutional framework of regulations, policies, procedures, codes of practice, student charters and contracts and disciplinary rules.

SQ 2.4 STUDY AND ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

- SQ 2.4.1 Detailed regulations governing study, assessment and award are set out in the:

- [Study Regulations](#)
- [General Regulations](#)
- [Undergraduate Assessment Regulations](#)
- [Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations](#)
- [Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations](#)

These are implemented through the governance mechanisms referred to above.

SQ 2.5 COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

- SQ 2.5.1 The University currently has a variety of domestic and international access, exchange and external programme collaborative partnerships, with both public sector and private institutions, which range from single programmes to full-scale inter-institutional relationships. These partnerships are at different stages of development and maturity.

- SQ 2.5.2 [Collaborative Teaching Provision](#) sets out the procedures and responsibilities relating to this area of work.

- SQ 2.5.3 Senate is the University body with ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the standards and quality of the University's collaborative provision are equivalent to those of the

University's own internal programmes, and it discharges that responsibility through named officers.

- SQ 2.5.4 Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct is responsible for maintaining an overview of the University's collaborative provision. It ensures that the University's collaborative provision is conducted in line with agreed policies and procedures, recommends to Senate approval of any new partnerships, and maintains regulations for collaborative provision and quality assurance and enhancement processes. It also acts in an advisory capacity, and/or as arbiter authority for faculty committees, boards and groups established to manage specific aspects of the University collaborative provision.

SQ 3 ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SQ 3.1 UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

- SQ 3.1.1 The Vice-Chancellor is the chief administrative and executive officer of the University. They chair the Senate and are an *ex officio* member of all of the main committees of the University. They are assisted and supported by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, four Pro-Vice-Chancellors (the PVC (Education), PVC (Engagement), PVC Global (Digital, International, Sustainability) and PVC (Research and Enterprise)), a Deputy Chief Executive (Operations), a Director of Finance, and a Chief of Staff and Director of Strategic Projects.

SQ 3.2 FACULTIES

- SQ 3.2.1 Each of the four Lancaster faculties: the Lancaster University Management School (LUMS), the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST), the Faculty of Health and Medicine (FHM) and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) is headed by a full-time Executive Dean, who is responsible for managing the budget, staffing and academic activities of the faculty. Each faculty manages responsibility for the quality of provision in a way most appropriate to its disciplinary mix and academic ethos. The Executive Dean of each faculty has formal responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement, but in practice this is devolved to undergraduate and postgraduate Associate Deans.

- SQ 3.2.2 Faculties are responsible for:

- (a) approving academic strategies for departments;
- (b) formally approving and monitoring the structure and content of programmes and modules (on behalf of the institution), and where relevant referring on programme recommendations for institutional approval;
- (c) monitoring, evaluating and enhancing quality and standards across the faculty;
- (d) ensuring that appropriate and sufficient resources are available for the delivery of agreed provision.

SQ 3.3 DEPARTMENTS

- SQ 3.3.1 Each [Faculty comprises a number of academic departments](#) (or equivalents).
- SQ 3.3.2 Departments (or equivalents) are the primary academic and organisational unit in relation to learning, teaching and assessment. For administrative purposes, all

postgraduate and undergraduate degree programmes are attributed to individual departments or sections, along with responsibility for the students registered on each degree programme.

- SQ 3.3.3 Heads of academic departments are senior members of academic staff, are appointed by the Vice-Chancellor for a fixed term, and appointments are reported to Senate. Heads of Department are responsible for the strategic direction of the department in order to achieve Faculty and University objectives, and for the line management of staff, the quality assurance and enhancement of programmes, and the management of resources (including finances) within their departments. In practice, Heads of Department have flexibility in creating management and administrative structures that are best suited to meet their own and University requirements for the management of learning, teaching and assessment.
- SQ 3.3.4 Specifically in relation to learning, teaching and assessment, Heads of Department are formally responsible for:
- (a) the quality of learning, teaching and assessment provision, including the diffusion of good practice and the supervision of research students;
 - (b) student welfare and guidance, including dealing with students concerns and complaints;
 - (c) staff welfare, career development and career progression, including staff induction, mentoring, training, development and appraisal;
 - (d) staff workloads with regard to teaching, research and administration;
 - (e) ensuring that departmental staff undertake assessment activities, including the setting of examination papers and participation in boards of examiners.
- SQ 3.3.5 Departments are responsible for:
- (a) designing the structure and content of courses (degree programmes and contributory modules);
 - (b) designing and delivering teaching and assessment;
 - (c) supporting the student learning experience;
 - (d) taking all relevant external reference points into account as appropriate;
 - (e) monitoring and evaluating quality and standards;
 - (f) engaging with and responding to student feedback;
 - (g) ensuring that information and guidance is available to students on departmental structures and committee arrangements and on provision for student representation.

SQ 3.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

SQ 3.4.1 Responsibility for the implementation of quality assurance and enhancement procedures resides with academic departments and Faculties, led by the relevant Associate Deans and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Managers in each Faculty, and monitored by the appropriate faculty committees.

SQ 3.4.2 The Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct team in Student and Education Services is responsible for supporting teaching quality and standards management across all Lancaster's provision wherever it is delivered, including regional and international teaching partners. Working closely with academic departments and other professional and support services, AQSC has specific responsibility for:

- (a) keeping the overarching quality management framework and the constituent elements under review, including maintenance of the relevant sections of the Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures (MARP);
- (b) ensuring that the programme and module approval process is working properly;
- (c) organising validation and re-validation events for the University's Regional Teaching Partners;
- (d) appointing and paying External Examiners, External Assessors and Programme Consultants;
- (e) drafting legal agreements for collaborative teaching partnerships;
- (f) ensuring that the Annual Programme Review process is happening in line with agreed procedures;
- (g) overseeing and supporting the organisation of the Strategic Teaching and Learning Review process;
- (h) maintaining and promulgating academic regulations for all provision;
- (i) liaising with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and being the primary point of contact within the University for QAA audit activities;
- (j) servicing academic standards and quality related committees;
- (k) servicing ad-hoc working groups and project groups;
- (l) providing advice and guidance about all of the above-mentioned to staff across the University and its collaborative partners.

SQ 4 TEACHING STANDARDS AND QUALITY

SQ 4.1 All learning and teaching activities and all assignments must be approved, overseen and supported by a member of the University's current academic staff. Where other people are teaching (beyond the occasional guest contribution) or marking, their use must be approved in advance by the department and reported to the relevant faculty committee,

taking account of their experience, expertise and (where relevant) English language ability.

- SQ 4.2 All staff new to teaching must undertake appropriate training and development provided by the University's Organisation and Educational Development section, or equivalent, if they have not already engaged in equivalent development activity, except that other forms of support may be more appropriate for specific types of contributor, e.g. professional practitioners such as clinicians.
- SQ 4.3 The University supports the peer observation of teaching staff and has a minimum set of principles for this, which should be adopted by departments, as set out in the [Peer Observation Policy](#).
- SQ 4.4 Academic contact time for Part I students will be at least nine hours per week on average over the teaching period.

SQ 5 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND REPRESENTATION IN THE AREA OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

SQ 5.1 STUDENT REPRESENTATION

- SQ 5.1.1 Students play an active role in the University's quality assurance and enhancement processes. Formal student representation includes:
- (a) at departmental level:
 - (i) course representatives (who represent particular programmes or year groups in departmental discussions, including serving on staff-student committees);
 - (ii) departmental staff-student committees (some departments have separate staff-student committees for undergraduates and postgraduates, others have representatives on departmental committees);
 - (iii) use of student feedback in course design, Annual Programme Review (APR) and Strategic Teaching and Learning Review (STLR) processes;
 - (iv) meeting the panel during a departmental STLR;
 - (b) at faculty level as student representatives on relevant faculty committees;
 - (c) at institutional level:
 - (i) a comprehensive system of Lancaster University Students' Union representation on all significant University committees including the University Council and Senate and their sub-committees, and UMAG;
 - (ii) inclusion on STLR panels;
 - (iii) inclusion on panels hearing student complaints;

- (iv) student membership of, and input to, Thematic Review panels;
- (v) Student and Graduate Ambassadors play key roles in recruitment activities such as outgoing visits to schools and colleges and University Open Days and Visit Days;
- (vi) participating in the development of Summer Schools with the University's International Teaching Partnerships (ITPs).

SQ 5.1.2 The Students' Union is responsible for the co-ordination and training of student representatives who serve on all the University committees involved in teaching, learning and assessment and quality assurance and enhancement. All departments at Lancaster have a system of [student representation](#) on departmental committees or special staff/student committees. The Students' Union trains and supports student representatives, including working with them to ensure that they know how to access the views of the broader student population in their department or college and how to present collective rather than solely personal views on issues of concern to a wider audience.

SQ 5.2 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

SQ 5.2.1 In addition to making provision for student representation in academic and decision-making processes, the University ensures that students are involved as active participants in the learning process through consultation and the collection of feedback that is analysed and acted upon. Consultative and feedback mechanisms must be timely and sufficiently frequent to allow students to make a worthwhile contribution to developing and enhancing their learning experience and the purpose of consultative and feedback mechanisms must be made clear and communicated effectively to all students.

SQ 5.3 STUDENT FEEDBACK

SQ 5.3.1 Departments are required to use the on-line Lancaster University Module Evaluation Survey (LUMES) to collect module-level feedback from students. In addition, feedback from students is also available through external surveys such as the NSS, PRES and PTES. Departments can also decide to use additional local procedures for securing feedback from students on their experience at programme level or on other aspects of their educational experience. Departments are responsible for analysing and acting upon student feedback on individual modules and degree programmes and also for communicating the outcome back to students. Student feedback is also analysed, considered and acted upon at faculty and institutional level.

SQ 5.3.2 Arrangements for requesting feedback from students on modules and programmes must be appropriately co-ordinated and students should be informed of action taken as a result of the feedback provided (or the reasons for taking no action).