

REGULATIONS

A1.3 Programme Management

A1.3.1 Subject Committees

Purpose

Every programme of study, whether taught at Brookes or delivered off campus through a collaborative partner, must be monitored by a Subject Committee, responsible to the Faculty Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee for:

- i. promoting productive communication between staff and students on matters relating to the student experience and the quality and standards of the programmes covered;
- ii. overseeing at subject level the implementation of University and Faculty student experience strategies and for promoting and disseminating good practice across the subject and for identifying good practice for wider dissemination;
- iii. ensuring the effective operation of the University and Faculty processes for managing quality and standards at subject level and for ensuring that timely and appropriate action is taken in response to the outcomes of those processes;
- iv. communicating with the Faculty and University via the Faculty Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee and/or Faculty Executive as appropriate.

A Subject Committee may be responsible for the quality monitoring of a single programme or a group of cognate programmes, and will be chaired by the Programme Lead for the programme/s within its remit. Individual Subject Committees for collaborative provision may be referred to as Programme Committees, and will be chaired by the appropriate Programme Manager at the partner organisation.

Subject Committees are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the University's policies and procedures, as approved by the Academic Board and its sub-committees, but have the authority to establish advisory groups, steering groups, and working groups to assist in the management of their business and the fulfilment of their remit, as necessary.

Providing a forum for dialogue between staff and students is a primary function of the Subject Committee. Other consultative forums may be set up for the purposes of gaining student feedback, but the University acknowledges the importance of Subject Committees in ensuring that feedback from students is embedded in the formal quality monitoring procedures.

At least two meetings of the Subject Committee must be held per year, during semester time in order to facilitate student attendance, with an additional meeting held specifically to consider the Annual Programme Review report.

Remit

Subject Committees are expected to undertake the following duties and responsibilities:

- i. To keep the programme structure and curriculum under review and to consider and approve proposals for minor or major changes. (Changes/nominations must subsequently be approved by the Faculty and University Academic Enhancement & Standards Committees.)

- ii. To ensure that the timetabling of modules, assessments and examinations are coordinated in a timely fashion and communicated to both staff and students.
- iii. To contribute to the development of admissions policies for the programme(s) within the Subject, including strategies to widen participation; and to monitor admissions against targets.
- iv. To ensure that a suitable induction programme is in place for new students and to review the effectiveness of the induction programme annually.
- v. To monitor the adequacy of the human and learning resources that support the programme(s) and to take action as required to ensure the maintenance of quality and standards and the student experience.
- vi. To receive the End of Module Reviews/Reports in the semester after the module ends for all modules (that include module evaluation summary reports) and to ensure that appropriate action is being taken in response.
- vii. To receive and approve the Annual Programme/s Review and to oversee the implementation of any actions identified in the annual review report.
- viii. To monitor the quality of the student experience as evidenced, for example, by outcomes from the National Student Survey, the National PGT Experience Survey, University surveys, Student Fora, Student Representatives on the Subject Committee, and to ensure that appropriate action is being taken in response.
- ix. To monitor national developments in respect of quality and standards within the disciplines – for example, changes to PSRB requirements or QAA subject benchmark statements – and ensure that provision remains in line with sector expectations.
- x. To meet the requirements needed to maintain any professional, statutory and regulatory body accreditations and to oversee the implementation of any actions identified in PSRB reports.
- xi. To monitor external examiner provision for the subject (ensuring that all programmes are covered by external examiners, as appropriate) and approve external examiner nominations, applying the appropriate University guidelines and criteria. (Changes/nominations must subsequently be approved by the Faculty and University Academic Enhancement & Standards Committees.)
- xii. To receive external examiner reports for the programme(s) and ensure that examiners' comments are responded to appropriately in a timely manner.
- xiii. To identify themes from the outcomes of internal and external quality assurance processes, such as End of Module Reports, Annual Reviews, Periodic Reviews and PSRB reports, and initiate and monitor action to improve the quality of provision within the subject and/or to disseminate good practice.
- xiv. To promote engagement with national developments in teaching, learning and assessment within the relevant disciplines, and ensure that they are reflected in the (evidence-based) practice of teaching staff within the subject.
- xv. To contribute to the development of Faculty and University policies on teaching, learning and assessment and/or quality assurance/enhancement. This includes, for example, policies on mitigating circumstances, academic conduct, and academic appeals and complaints.
- xvi. To consider and respond to any other matters referred from time to time by the Faculty Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, University Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, or the Faculty Executive Group.
- xvii. The committee may undertake any other business, as appropriate to the stated purpose of the Subject Committee.

Membership

The membership of each Subject Committee must be approved by the Faculty Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, but its core membership is as follows:

- Chair (Programme Lead)
- Head/s of Department
- Subject Coordinator/s
- Module leaders
- Other members of academic staff teaching on the programme/s

- Programme Administrator representatives
- Learning Resources representative
- Student Support Coordinator representative
- Student representatives (at least two)
- Secretary (Programme Administrator)

Up to three other members may be co-opted, as deemed necessary by the Chair in order to provide an appropriate range of perspectives and expertise. The following Faculty staff also have the right to attend Subject Committee meetings:

- Associate Dean (Student Experience)
- Principal Lecturer (Quality Assurance), or Faculty equivalent
- Liaison Manager (collaborative provision)

A [template for Subject Committee terms of reference and membership](#) is available on the University's intranet. The terms of reference and membership for Subject/Programme Committees relating to collaborative provision must be specified in the Operations Manual governing the arrangements.

A1.3.2 Student feedback and representation

- i. The University requires the systematic collection of feedback from students, at all levels of the institution, in order to inform the measures it takes to enhance the quality of the student experience. Students are regarded as partners in shaping and enhancing their learning experience, and the quality of the student experience is a primary focus for quality assurance at the University.
- ii. A range of measures are in place to gather feedback from students, in order that action may be taken as quickly as possible, at the appropriate level. Students must also be informed of the outcomes of any feedback provided by them. These requirements apply equally to modules and programmes delivered by collaborative partners.
- iii. *Module level feedback*
The primary responsibility for implementing action arising from student feedback during the course of module delivery, and informing students of the action taken, lies with module leaders. A University-wide module evaluation system is in place, the results of which are analysed centrally and fed back to module leaders for comment and action. A commentary on poorly performing modules is also required in the relevant Annual Programme Review report. The monitoring of action plans is the responsibility of Subject Committees.

Any issues raised by students during the course of a module which cannot be satisfactorily addressed by the module leader should be referred to the relevant Subject Coordinator or Programme Lead.

- iv. *Programme level feedback*
The primary responsibility for implementing action arising from student feedback, and informing students of the action taken lies with Subject Coordinators or Programme Leads, as appropriate. All programmes of study are subject to the Annual Programme Review procedure, detailed in the University's Quality & Standards Handbook, which requires an analysis of the student experience, and formal approval by the full Subject Committee. Action plans arising from Annual Programme Review are monitored by the Subject Committee.

Any issues raised by students on a programme that cannot be resolved by the Subject Committee should be referred to the Head of Department or Associate Dean (Student Experience), as appropriate.

v. *University level feedback*

The University is committed to working in partnership with the Students' Union, facilitated primarily via the PVC (Student Experience) on behalf of the Senior Management Team, to ensure that student perspectives are considered during the development of all University plans and strategies.

The student body elect four students each year to represent their interests in discussions with the Senior Management Team. These four full-time Students' Union officers are supported by a number of professional staff. The Students' Union officers meet regularly with the PVC (Student Experience) and bring the students' perspective to the Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee and Academic Board. The SU President is also a member of the Board of Governors.

Each academic Department or School has one elected Departmental Rep who meets regularly with the Head of Department, and represents the interests of students as a member of the Department Management Team and on the Faculty's Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee. The Departmental Rep, along with the Students' Union, support and engages with a network of programme-specific Academic Reps. Information about the formal system for Academic Representation is available on the Students' Union website at <https://www.brookesunion.org.uk/yourvoice>

The students also elect representatives of a range of special constituents, such as Students with Disabilities and International Students, as well as special interests, such as Environmental Issues. These, together with the Departmental Reps and the full-time Officers form the Students' Council, providing an additional feedback mechanism on University-wide issues.

The University takes part in a number of national student surveys. The results of, and action plans arising from, national surveys for taught provision [including the National Student Survey and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey] are monitored by Academic Enhancement and Standards Committee and the Faculty AESCs. The results of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey are monitored by the Research Degrees Committee and the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

Surveys of student opinion are also undertaken by a number of support services, who are responsible for the analysis of results and feedback to their customers; and the action plans arising from the results of the nationally benchmarked Brookes Barometer survey are monitored by the Vice-Chancellor's Group (VCG).

vi. *Committee membership*

Provision is made in the membership of all University and Faculty committees (except Examination Committees) for student representatives. Students are full members of all committees where this provision is made. Responsibility for representing the student body at University-level committees is normally taken by the sabbatical officers of the Students' Union. At Faculty Academic Enhancement & Standards Committees and Subject Committee level, student members are drawn from among the elected Department Reps and Academic Reps respectively.

A1.3.3 Programme Handbooks

- i. Every programme of study must produce a handbook for students, updated at the start of each academic year and lodged with the Academic Policy & Quality Office. The Programme Handbook should provide students with detailed information relating to their programme of study, as well as the Department/School, Faculty, and University services and facilities available to support their studies. Handbooks should provide students with accurate, up to date information, written in a transparent, non-biased style in order to give students an accurate picture of the demands of the programme and their entitlements.
- ii. Programme (and module) handbooks may be regarded as part of the 'contract' between the student and the University (and - in the case of collaborative arrangements - the partner organisation), complementing the information contained in the Programme Specification.

- iii. Faculties will wish to design their handbooks as appropriate to the local context, and the format is therefore left for them to decide, however, guidance on the minimum contents for all Programme Handbooks should contain is available in the Quality & Standards Handbook (see regulation A4). For home provision, electronic programme handbooks are provided via the virtual learning environment (Moodle), the template for which has been based on this guidance.
- iv. Programme Handbooks must also be produced for all programmes of study delivered through collaborative partnerships. The Liaison Manager must check these handbooks annually to ensure they meet University requirements. Where the programme is also delivered at Brookes, the content should be comparable. Where handbooks are provided to students in a language other than English, approval is still required through the normal process, and appropriate arrangements for translation into the language of delivery should be made following sign off by the approval panel.

For further information about these regulations, please contact the Academic Registrar.

Approved by:

Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, 27th June 2012

Academic Board 18th July 2012

Updated:

Reviewed and 1.3.3 updated (reference to Moodle) July 2016