



Academic Quality Framework

Section 1: Welcome & Introduction

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework Section 1: Welcome & Introduction

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be read by all members of the UCO.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	<i>To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.</i>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	<i>Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.</i>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	<i>Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy</i>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	<i>Annual Review: Administrative Amendments to update role titles, HE regulatory body and web links.</i>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 Academic Council	<i>Annual Review: Major Amendments to reflect new Regulatory Bodies and general update to information.</i>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Jun 2019 PRAG Chair	<i>Annual Review Administrative Amendments: Correction of typographical errors and updating external weblinks.</i>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V7.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	<i>Annual Review: Administrative amendments to reflect update external agency titles and factual matters.</i>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

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V8.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	<i>Annual Review: Administrative Amendments to update hyperlinks, titles of committees and relationships with external organisations.</i>	<i>Deputy Vice- Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality</i>	<i>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i>	<i>Annually and on an “as required” basis.</i>
V9.0	June 2022 PRAG Chair TQSC	<i>Annual Review: Administrative Amendments of a factual nature to update academic year dates, webpage hyperlinks, titles of committees and relationships with external organisations.</i>	<i>Deputy Vice- Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality & Partnerships</i>	<i>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i>	<i>Annually and on an “as required” basis.</i>
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
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If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

Academic Quality Framework

Section 1: Welcome & Introduction

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1.1 WELCOME TO THE ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK

- 1.1.1 The University College of Osteopathy (UCO) has a long and distinguished history of providing learning experiences for students that are challenging and rewarding. We are strongly committed to maintaining its academic standards and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching provision.
- 1.1.2 Our high standards and ambitions for quality enhancement are achieved through the objectives contained within the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and other initiatives. Our approach is predicated on the professionalism and creativity of our staff, individually and collectively, which enables innovative and stimulating learning. Quality is enhanced through attention to students' experiences as learners, the development of subject disciplines, and engagement with teaching practice. Additional vital resources complement and augment the high standards of provision viz. the clinic, library, IT, general facilities, and the wide range of support services.
- 1.1.3 We also use the activities that are the subject of this Academic Quality Framework to support, assure and enhance quality. This framework brings together into one convenient source comprehensive information about our quality processes. It explains what it is we do, why we do it, and how it is done. It also explains the UCO's place within the wider context of national and professional requirements.
- 1.1.4 This Academic Quality Framework (AQF) is aimed at staff colleagues, students, and external readers. We are pleased to direct student readers to the 'Welcome for Student Readers' section provided below that addresses aspects of the framework that are particularly student related. Quality assurance and enhancement and their associated procedures can be difficult areas to relate to. We therefore hope that this framework makes "Quality Assurance" more accessible to you and that you find it helpful.
- 1.1.5 If you have any questions regarding this framework, please direct your enquiries to the UCO's Quality Assurance Team: quality@uco.ac.uk.

1.2 WELCOME FOR STUDENT READERS

- 1.2.1 The UCO is committed to ensuring that your experience as a student is the best the institution can provide, and that where further improvements can be made, they happen. The UCO has an excellent reputation for the quality of its teaching and the facilities that support learning.
- 1.2.2 To help the UCO be sure that it continues to provide a high-quality student experience, it makes use of the procedures set out in this Academic Quality Framework (AQF). You will see that a wide range of UCO staff as well as other organisations are involved in these procedures. Your role as a student is also critical. The UCO sees students as partners in monitoring and improving what we offer; therefore we ensure that you have access to this framework, which provides you with information about our monitoring processes and why we use a variety of methods to gather your feedback.
- 1.2.3 ***Your feedback is highly important to us; you can instigate change at the UCO that enhances your own and others' Student Experience, as well as that of students who follow you. All your comments and suggestions are welcome!***

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- 1.2.4 The UCO uses a variety of methods to gain your feedback to help us identify what is working well for you and what could be enhanced to ensure that you receive a high-quality student experience. These are detailed further in AQF Section 10, but include:
- a) **Questionnaires, Surveys and Focus Groups:** Student feedback methods include questionnaires for individual units, surveys that cover a year of study and, in some cases, the opportunity to take part in focus groups and similar activities. Final year students also participate in the National Student Survey (NSS) and the results of this are published online through the [Discovering Uni](#) website, the official website for comparing UK higher education course data that helps prospective students to choose where to study by comparing results of student feedback on our courses with others in the UK.
 - b) **Student & Staff Liaison Consultation Groups:** You will see from the AQF that we operate Student & Staff Liaison and Consultation Groups (SSLCGs). These provide opportunities for you to inform us of your views and suggestions, for us to consult with you on institutional matters and to engage in discussions with you about matters of concern and ideas for enhancements.
 - c) **Student Committee Members:** Students are also represented on a range of committees that are mentioned in this framework, from the Board of Directors to individual Course Teams. These enable you to participate fully in consultation and decision-making processes at all governing levels.
 - d) **Student Representation:** You can also make your views known to your Student Representatives, or volunteer to become a representative yourself. Student Representative training is organised by the Head of Student Services in conjunction with the Students' Union. Many students find the experience of acting as a Student Representative a valuable and rewarding chance to influence what the UCO does. As a representative, you are also likely to develop useful transferable skills that enhance your opportunities as you progress from the UCO into employment, including leadership, diplomacy and negotiating skills.
 - e) **Involvement in Review Processes:** There are further ways in which you can inform us about how well the UCO is doing. For instance, each course is reviewed periodically (See AQF Section 6) where panels that review courses normally meet with groups of students to discuss their views and include a student member so that the student voice is directly included in any decision-making. The UCO is also subject to institutional reviews by external bodies to ensure that we meet their requirements for standards and quality as well as governance and management. As you read through this framework, you will also see that the role of the student voice is again central to most of the associated processes undertaken as part of these reviews. The positive collaborative partnership the UCO promotes with its student body is therefore valued very highly.
- 1.2.5 We make every effort to inform you about what actions we take in response to your feedback including informing you about actions taken at induction sessions, via student representatives throughout the year, through posters posted in student areas and on the UCO Portal.
- 1.2.6 We recognise the importance of reporting back to you on actions that we have taken in response to your comments and hope that this encourages you to play your part in identifying further actions that could be taken and participating in the UCO's Quality Assurance processes

to improve your Student Experience. We therefore strongly encourage you to take all opportunities to provide feedback when invited to do so throughout your time at the UCO.

- 1.2.7 We are equally delighted to hear about aspects of the UCO that are particularly good especially if it is something that we can adopt elsewhere so that everyone can benefit!
- 1.2.8 We hope that this AQF will provide you with much useful information about the activities that take place regarding the management and organisation of your course and how you can be involved in this.
- 1.2.9 If you have any comments or questions about the AQF or any of the activities it describes, please do not hesitate to contact the Quality Team: quality@uco.ac.uk.

1.3 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK

- 1.3.1 The Academic Quality Framework (AQF) defines the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO. The UCO has the largest student population amongst the UK osteopathic educational institutions, and we play a central role in driving and delivering osteopathic education in the UK both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The UCO also delivers courses in allied health care subjects in line with its Strategic Plan to broaden and diversify its taught degree provision. A key underpinning core value of the UCO is that students are central to everything that happens within the institution. All teaching and support staff work towards this and have a collective responsibility both for ensuring a high-quality learning experience for students, and for maintaining the standard of the awards conferred.
- 1.3.2 The AQF is informed by the UCO's Strategic Plan, its Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and by key external reference points primarily provided by the [Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body standards and guidance.
- 1.3.3 The AQF refers to procedures, policies, regulations and other core documentation relating to all activities associated with managing and maintaining quality within teaching, learning and assessment. Although this can appear bureaucratic, it is necessary to ensure the transparent, smooth and effective running of the institution.
- 1.3.4 The AQF is comprised of the following sections:
 - 1) Welcome and Introduction to the Academic Quality Framework
 - 2) An Overview of Teaching and Learning at the UCO
 - 3) The Assurance and Enhancement of Academic Quality and Standards in Teaching and Learning at the UCO
 - 4) Course & Unit Approval and Modification
 - 5) Periodic Review
 - 6) Annual Monitoring & Reporting
 - 7) Academic Regulations

- 8) Student Recruitment and Admissions
- 9) Student Guidance and Learner Support
- 10) Student Voice
- 11) External Examining
- 12) Boards of Examiners
- 13) Staff Recruitment and Development
- 14) The Access to Higher Education Diploma (Validated by Laser Learning Awards) & Pre-entry Courses
- 15) Collaborative Activity
- 16) Academic Policies and Procedures
- 17) Glossary of Terms

1.4 HOW TO USE THE ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK

- 1.4.1 The AQF, in its entirety, is made available to all stakeholders through the [UCO's Academic Quality Framework Webpage](#). This provides readers with immediate access to the UCO's academic quality processes, to understand more about the UCO's history and to be well-informed about the context that the UCO currently operates in.
- 1.4.2 Each section of the AQF begins with a 'Suggested Readers' box, which serves to highlight the content that is considered most relevant to different readers.
- 1.4.3 It is recognised that some readers may wish to focus on sub-sections of the AQF therefore some information is repeated throughout the AQF to enable each section to be considered in isolation.
- 1.4.4 Additional information and documentation referenced within the AQF may be requested from the UCO's Quality Team (quality@uco.ac.uk).
- 1.4.5 The AQF is regularly reviewed and at least annually to ensure that the information contained within it remains up to date and that timely amendments are made as appropriate. Regular reviews of the AQF are monitored by the UCO's Policy & Regulations Group (PRG).
- 1.4.6 Readers are recommended to utilise the version of the AQF published on the [UCO's Academic Quality Framework Webpage](#) when referring to any AQF content to ensure that the current information is being referred to.

1.5 RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS AT THE UCO

- 1.5.1 The UCO's Academic Council is the custodian of academic quality and standards at the UCO, and its work is informed by reports from the UCO's Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Chairs of its sub-committees.

- 1.5.2 The UCO's academic governance structure places responsibility for quality and standards on individuals: the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) has responsibility for quality and standards, specifically for undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision; the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) has responsibility for quality and standards specifically for research. The Deputy Vice-Chancellors are supported in these roles by several senior committees with staff and student representation. These committees, via the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, provide regular reports to the Academic Council.

1.6 THE ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK AND EXTERNAL REQUIREMENTS & DEVELOPMENTS

- 1.6.1 External policy and regulatory developments continue to have a significant impact on the policies and procedures contained within this framework. These include those produced and monitored by the UK's independent regulator of higher education in England (the [Office for Students](#)) and the [Quality Assurance Agency](#) (the designated body to carry out quality and standards reviews of UK higher education providers on behalf of the Office for Students).
- 1.6.2 To align with OfS and QAA requirements regarding quality and standards, the UCO has mapped the AQF and its policies, procedures and processes to the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (the Quality Code). which will continue to be reviewed and, where necessary updated, as and when the UK Quality Code is revised and published to ensure that they continue to reflect best practice.
- 1.6.3 The UCO also uses a wide range of external information and best practice in benchmarking our own performance and remains confident that the broad principles which underline our Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy are consistent with the Quality Code.
- 1.6.4 This continual monitoring of external developments and their impacts on the UCO's procedures ensures that our quality assurance mechanisms are robust, take account of the Quality Code and prove to be fit for purpose.
- 1.6.5 We are mindful that there are continual enhancements to Higher Education policies and procedures internally and externally. We therefore keep these procedures under review through regular committee and annual monitoring.
- 1.6.6 The UCO's ability to demonstrate the robustness of these procedures depends on a critical resource: our staff. Colleagues responsible for managing and providing support for taught courses should therefore ensure that they are aware of the procedures and apply them consistently.

1.7 QUALITY AT THE UCO AND WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION

- 1.7.1 In 2015 the QAA granted the UCO Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP).
- 1.7.2 Alongside other Higher Education Providers in the UK, the UCO also participates in the Department for Education's (DfE's) [Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework \(TEF\)](#), which assesses excellence in teaching and how well education providers ensure excellent outcomes for their students regarding further study or graduate-level employment.

The UCO currently has a Silver TEF award¹. In common with other Higher Education Providers in the UK, the UCO ensures that its educational provision operates to appropriate academic standards and offers students learning opportunities of sufficient quality. Our approach to quality recognises the importance of ongoing improvement and enhancement within these areas. To ensure that the UCO meets these requirements and aims regarding academic standards and quality assurance and enhancement, the UCO utilises several quality procedures as described within this framework. Some of these procedures are managed by the UCO itself, whereas others are managed by external approval and validating bodies. Both internal and external procedures operate according to national frameworks.

- 1.7.3 Much of this framework pertains to taught courses that are approved, delivered and awarded by the UCO. Relevant information regarding quality processes for foundation, partner, research, and professionally regulated provision is also included.
- 1.7.4 Key terminology regarding quality in Higher Education is given below.
- a) **Academic Standards:** Threshold academic standards are the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student must demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Academic standards should be at a similar level across the UK.
 - b) **Academic Quality:** Academic quality is concerned with how well the learning opportunities made available to students enable them to achieve their award. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for them.
 - c) **Quality Assurance:** Quality assurance refers to a range of review procedures designed to safeguard academic standards and promote learning opportunities for students of acceptable quality.
 - d) **Quality Enhancement:** Quality enhancement refers to taking deliberate steps to bring about continual improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experience of students.

1.8 RELATIONSHIP TO EXTERNAL BODIES AND QUALITY MECHANISMS

- 1.8.1 The UCO works with a several External Bodies to assure the quality of its provision these as described below.
- A) THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS (OfS)
- 1.8.2 The UCO is regulated as a Higher Education Provider in England by the Office for Students (OfS). The OfS was established in April 2018 superseding the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to regulate English higher education providers on behalf of students. The OfS works closely with the Department for Education to ensure that English higher education is delivering positive outcomes for students – past, present, and future.
- 1.8.3 Further information about the OfS and its work can be found here:
- <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/>

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-outcomes/#/tefoutcomes/provider/10000936>

B) THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY (QAA)

- 1.8.4 The [Quality Assurance Agency \(QAA\)](#) was established in 1997, replacing the former Higher Education Quality Council and the quality assessment divisions of the higher education funding councils for England and Wales. Its mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK Higher Education. The Secretary of State has designated the QAA to carry out the quality and standards assessment functions set out in the Higher Education and Research Act on behalf of the OfS.
- 1.8.5 To support standards and promote quality enhancement, the QAA publishes a range of reference points and guidance. Its [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) is the definitive reference point for all those involved in delivering higher education which leads to an award from or is validated by a UK higher education provider.
- 1.8.6 The Quality Code is one of the main benchmarks to which the UCO sets its quality assurance practices. The Quality Code is complemented by additional guidance on particular topics or qualification types.
- 1.8.7 Further information about the QAA and its work can be found here:
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/home>

C) LASER LEARNING AWARDS (LASER)

- 1.8.8 Laser Learning Awards (LASER) is a national awarding organisation regulated by Ofqual to offer qualifications and is approved by the Security Industry Association (SIA) to offer licence-linked qualifications in the security sector under the brand name Trident Awards. LASER is also a QAA regulated Access Validating Agency for Access to Higher Education qualifications.
- 1.8.9 Access provision is specifically intended to prepare students from under-represented groups for study within the UK higher education sector.
- 1.8.10 The UCO's Access provision (Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care)) is validated by LASER which has responsibility for approving and monitoring the quality of the UCO's Access provision.
- 1.8.11 Further information about LASER can be found here:
<https://www.laser-awards.org.uk/>

D) THE GENERAL OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL (GOSC)

- 1.8.12 In the United Kingdom (UK), osteopaths must register with the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) to practise osteopathy legally in accordance with the Osteopaths Act (1993).
- 1.8.13 The GOsC regulates the practice of osteopathy in the UK as the profession's Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB). It works with the public and osteopathic profession to promote patient safety by registering qualified professionals, and setting, maintaining, and developing standards of osteopathic practice and conduct.
- 1.8.14 Registration with the GOsC requires possession of a Recognised Qualification (RQ) in osteopathy. This is achieved by successfully completing a pre-registration programme of study which has been inspected and accredited by the GOsC and granted approval by Privy

Council. The GOsC contracts [Mott MacDonald](#) to conduct RQ inspections and institutional inspections on its behalf. The UCO has undergone four successful RQ inspections since 2000 (which were previously undertaken by the QAA on behalf of the GOsC) and these [RQ Review Reports](#) are published by the GOsC on their website.

- 1.8.15 The GOsC publishes the [Osteopathic Practice Standards \(OPS\)](#). These set out the standards required of osteopaths practising in the UK to ensure quality care for their patients. These in addition to the UK Quality Code are used as key reference points for the UCO's osteopathic taught degree courses.
- 1.8.16 The UCO is required by the GOsC to complete a Recognised Qualification Annual Report that is considered by their Policy Education Committee (PEC) as part of its quality assurance and annual monitoring processes regarding RQ accredited training courses in osteopathy.
- 1.8.17 The UCO also meets with the GOsC three to four times a year as part of its Osteopathic Institution Liaison (OIL) meetings where all Osteopathic Educational Institutions (OEIs) who have recognised qualifications accredited meet to discuss policy and share good practice.
- 1.8.18 In January 2020 the GOsC recommended to the Privy Council to recognise the UCO's pre-registration osteopathic qualifications (the Master of Osteopathy, Bachelor of Osteopathy and Master of Science in Osteopathy (Pre-Registration)) with no expiry date and with no conditions, further demonstrating the confidence the GOsC has in the UCO as a provider of high-quality osteopathic education.
- 1.8.19 Further information about the work of the GOsC can be found here:
<http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/home/>

E) THE ASSOCIATION FOR NUTRITION

- 1.8.20 The Association for Nutrition (AfN) defines and advances standards of evidence-based practice across the field of nutrition and at all levels within the workforce² and holds the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN), the only register of qualified nutritionists recognised by Public Health England, NHS Choices and NHS Careers.
- 1.8.21 The AfN accredits the UCO's BSc (Hons) in Nutrition with Professional Practice course, providing successful graduates with eligibility for direct entry onto the UKVRN.
- 1.8.22 Accreditation by the AfN demonstrates that the UCO has satisfied the AfN's demanding quality requirements and standards and assures that graduates have covered set competencies making them well-equipped and employable professionals.

AQF01: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
N/A	N/A

² <https://www.associationfornutrition.org/about>



Academic Quality Framework

Section 2:

Overview of Teaching & Learning at the UCO

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 2: An Overview of Teaching & Learning at the UCO

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to all faculty, academic management and students.

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V6.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to reflect new committee structure, external agency names and to reflect the current course portfolio.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQP Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to reflect committee structure amendments; to update staff roles, course portfolio and partnerships; to reflect updated external reference points.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQP Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V8.0	June 2022 PRAG Chair TQSC	Administrative Amendments to reflect factual changes relating to course and partner portfolios, year dates, and role titles and responsibilities.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality & Partnerships	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQP Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
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If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

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Section 2: Teaching & Learning at the University College of Osteopathy

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2.1 The History & Charitable Status of the UCO

- 2.1.1 The University College of Osteopathy (UCO) is the largest and oldest osteopathic educational institution in the United Kingdom. The UCO was founded as the British School of Osteopathy (BSO) in 1917 by John Martin Littlejohn who was a student of Andrew Taylor Still, the founder of osteopathy. The UCO was based in Westminster for a large proportion of its life and since 1997 has been based in Southwark.
- 2.1.2 From 1917 to 1989 the BSO delivered its own self validated award of a Diploma in Osteopathy (DO). In 1989 the BSO gained validation from the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) and started delivering a BSc degree. When CNAA was disbanded in 1992 the validation passed to the Open University Validation Services (OUVS).
- 2.1.3 The BSO was one of the first osteopathic educational institutions to be granted Recognised Qualification (RQ) status in 2000. At that time the degree was privately funded by students and validated by the OUVS. The BSO wanted to widen access for students to osteopathic education and sought funding for its course through the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). HEFCE through the QAA inspected the BSO and judged the work of the BSO was of sufficiently high quality to gain funding, but the policy in existence at that time prevented small institutions from being able to receive direct HEFCE funding. Therefore, HEFCE suggested a collaborative arrangement with the University of Bedfordshire, then the University of Luton, which would provide funded places for BSO students. Subsequently in 2004 the BSO entered a collaborative arrangement with the University of Bedfordshire to provide approval for the BSO's courses and funding for the BSO's undergraduate students.
- 2.1.4 In April 2008 the BSO purchased and designed a new state-of-the-art clinic at 98 – 118 Southwark Bridge Road, SE1 just 10 minutes away from the School's Borough High Street teaching site. The new clinic provided better facilities for consultations and an excellent learning environment for students, including 34 treatment rooms (all with sinks and air conditioning), tutorial rooms, a teaching space and student facilities.
- 2.1.5 In August 2013 the BSO submitted its application for Taught Degree Awarding Powers to the QAA which were successfully granted in July 2015.
- 2.1.6 In October 2014 the School applied to be recognised as an institution designated to be eligible to receive support from funds administered by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Our application was successful, and this was confirmed in November 2016.
- 2.1.7 In October 2016 the BSO applied to HEFCE for University College title which was confirmed in March 2017 and also consulted with its students, staff and other stakeholders to change the name of the BSO to the University College of Osteopathy (UCO), which was granted in July 2017, coinciding with our centenary year.
- 2.1.8 In 2017 the UCO was awarded a Bronze rating in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) which is managed by the Office for Students (OfS) (the regulator of English higher education providers) and in 2018 the UCO was awarded a Silver rating.
- 2.1.9 In January 2020 the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC), the regulator for Osteopathy in the UK, recommended to the Privy Council to recognise the UCO's pre-registration osteopathic qualifications (the Master of Osteopathy, Bachelor of Osteopathy and Master of Science in Osteopathy (Pre-Registration)) with no expiry date and with no conditions, further demonstrating the confidence the GOsC has in the UCO as a provider of high-quality osteopathic education.

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- 2.1.10 For much of its life as well as being a higher education institution, the UCO was also a registered charity (Number 312873) reporting annually to the Charity Commission. In November 2015, the UCO became an exempt charity enabling us to continue our charitable work that encompasses the education of students and osteopaths, as well as access to healthcare within the community.
- 2.1.11 Our charitable osteopathic healthcare has been recognised nationally and locally with many nominations and awards including:
- a) The “Outstanding contribution to the local community award” by the Times Higher Education awards in 2012.
 - b) The “Complementary and Alternative Medicine Magazine Outstanding Contribution to the Community award”, to Steven Vogel, UCO Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) in 2011.
 - c) Shortlisted for the “Charity of the Year (income 1m+) award” by the Charity Times in 2010.
 - d) The “Liberty of the old Borough of Southwark award” in recognition of our contribution to healthcare in Southwark in 2008.
- 2.1.12 The UCO’s charitable objectives are detailed in the Objects of the Company of the UCO’s Articles of Association.

2.2 The UCO’s Mission and Strategic Priorities

- 2.2.1 The UCO’s Mission Statement is to:
- “Continually provide the highest quality education and research for all and the very best care, for each patient, on every occasion.”*
- 2.2.2 The strategic priorities of the UCO to provide Quality Higher Education include:
- a) To be the institution of choice.
 - b) To sustain our financial strength and use it purposefully.
 - c) To provide our students with a distinctive, high-quality experience.

2.3 Institutional Governance

a) The Board of Directors

- 2.3.1 The UCO is a company limited by non-equity share capital (Company registration number 146343) and an Exempt Charity. Its Chancellor is HRH, The Princess Royal.
- 2.3.2 The UCO’s Articles of Association define its governance arrangements.
- 2.3.3 The UCO is governed by a Board of Trustees, known within the UCO as the Board of Directors (or the Board). At least half the Board members are Independent Directors who are not employed by the UCO and includes at least two student members.
- 2.3.4 The Board is responsible for:
- a) Approving and reviewing the delivery of the UCO’s mission, vision, and Strategic Plan.
 - b) Approving the UCO’s annual budgets, long term business plans and its duty to deliver public benefit according to the Charities Act 2011¹.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/25/contents/enacted>

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- c) Managing risks related to the management of the UCO and its Strategic Plan.
- d) Reviewing its own effectiveness as a Board of Directors including the effectiveness of its sub-committees.
- e) Monitoring institutional performance against the Strategic Plan and approved Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- f) Oversight of all academic issues.

b) The Vice-Chancellor's Group and Senior Management Team

2.3.5 The Vice-Chancellor's Group (VCG) is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and consists of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Finance Director and has ownership of overseeing the delivery of the UCO's Strategic Plan and monitoring its performance. It also has a remit to horizon scan and to share this information and its implications for the UCO's function and direction. This group normally meets informally on a regular basis. This group is also responsible for the UCO-wide staff remuneration process that occurs each year.

2.3.6 The Senior Management Team (SMT) is also chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and is responsible for the operational management of the UCO's business. Its membership includes a wide range of staff from across the UCO including the:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
- Finance Director
- IT Director
- Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Head of Clinical Practice
- Head of Estates
- Head of Quality & Partnerships
- Head of Marketing and Communications
- Head of Student Services
- Trusts & Foundations Manager
- Registrar
- Finance Manager

2.4 Academic Governance**a) The Board of Directors**

2.4.1 The Board of Directors has oversight of the UCO's academic governance which is represented by an academic and institutional committee structure.

2.4.2 The UCO's academic and institutional committee structure provides the UCO's framework for the assurance of quality and the securing and enhancing of standards at the UCO. It consists of a range of committees each with its own Terms of Reference and responsibility for ensuring the efficient and transparent operation of the UCO's academic provision. The ultimate academic decision-making committee of the UCO is the Academic Council.

b) Academic Council & its Sub-Committees

- 2.4.3 The Academic Council is the ultimate academic authority of the UCO (subject to the Board of Directors). The Academic Council is responsible for promoting, regulating, and directing the academic work of the UCO, including teaching and research. It oversees the UCO's academic management and all aspects of quality and standards associated with the academic development and standards of the UCO.
- 2.4.4 To carry out its work in a timely and effective manner, the Academic Council delegates specific areas of activity to the following key functional committees:
- a) **The Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC):** The TQSC reports to the Academic Council and communicates with the Senior Management Team. On behalf of the Academic Council, the TQSC is responsible for overseeing the implementation and development of the UCO's systems for setting, maintaining, and monitoring academic standards and its quality assurance systems and procedures, for all taught provision. On behalf of the Academic Council the TQSC has oversight and is the parent committee of:
 - i. The development, implementation, and review of the UCO's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy through the **Education, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee (ETLASC)**.
 - ii. The development, implementation, review and delivery of academic arrangements between the UCO and its collaborative partners through the **Collaborative Provision Sub-Committee (CPSC)**.
 - iii. The development, review and effectiveness of the UCO's academic policies, procedures, regulations and other core documentation through the **Policy & Regulations Group (PRG)**.
 - iv. The day-to-day administration and management of courses, ensuring that the validated curriculum is delivered and assessed in accordance with the relevant course information and unit information forms through **Course Teams**.
 - b) **The Widening Participation Sub-Committee (WPSC):** The WPSC reports to the Academic Council and, on its behalf, oversees the development, implementation, and review of the UCO's strategy, policies, and procedures to support the access, success and progression of students from groups under-represented in higher education. It also monitors and reports on the UCO's Access and Participation Plan ensuring that targets of this plan are met.
 - c) **The Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee (RSSC):** The RSSC reports to the Academic Council and focuses on research and scholarship activity and development across the UCO. The RSSC is responsible for the implementation of the Research and Scholarship Strategy. Embedded within this, the RSSC develops and considers the implementation of new areas of research, as well as enhancing scholarship amongst staff and students and monitoring the research elements of the Professional Doctorate in Osteopathy course. The RSSC also has oversight of and is the parent committee of the **Research Ethics Committee (REC)**, which reviews and considers all proposed research work from participants both within and external to the UCO including students and staff from the UCO and applications from students from other institutions who would like to carry out work with our faculty, students or patients
 - d) **Boards of Examiners:** Boards of Examiners report to the Academic Council and are responsible for considering the results of assessments at all stages of a course, determining student progression, and recommending awards.

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- 2.4.5 Additional committees with responsibility for academic quality can be found in AQF Section 3: The Assurance and Enhancement of Academic Quality and Standards in Teaching and Learning at the UCO.
- 2.4.6 Each of the committees mentioned above have their own Terms of Reference that clearly state their remit and membership.

2.5 Senior Management Structures

a) Senior Management Responsibilities

- 2.5.1 Responsibility for ensuring that the institution is directed, managed, and administered effectively on a day-to-day basis rest with the Vice-Chancellor. It is the Vice-Chancellor's responsibility to inform the Board of Directors about all aspects of the academic and operational management of the UCO. The Vice-Chancellor is supported by two Deputy Vice-Chancellors: the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). The Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellors together with the Finance Director comprise the Vice-Chancellor's Group (VCG).
- 2.5.2 Each member of the VCG has specific responsibilities as follows:
 - a) **Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research):** strategic overview and responsibility for delivery of all research and scholarship activities; quality assurance and quality processes for the research area; research ethics the UCO Clinic and healthcare provision.
 - b) **Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education):** strategic overview and responsibility for delivery of all current academic courses; the development of new courses and partnerships; quality assurance and quality processes for all taught and collaborative provision; student recruitment and admissions; the academic registry; human and learning resources; and student support services.
 - c) **Finance Director:** financial strategy and management; responsibility for budgetary planning and reporting, as well as ensuring that the UCO has a robust system of internal control and financial regulation.

2.6 Academic Management Structures

a) Roles of Staff in Academic Management

- 2.6.1 The Deputy -Vice-Chancellor (Education) is supported by several key staff:
 - a) **The Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment;** The Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment oversees academic development and quality enhancement across the UCO's academic portfolio. They are also responsible for overseeing the development and monitoring of the UCO's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and ensuring that core academic operational activities run smoothly and effectively and initiating improvements where needed contributing to the development and implementation of new initiatives to allow the UCO to meet its strategic aims to provide an excellent learning environment for students and to diversify the UCO's academic courses.
 - b) **The Head of Quality & Partnerships:** The Head of Quality & Partnerships oversees the UCO's quality assurance and enhancement processes working collaboratively with UCO academic and partner staff including responsibility for supporting the approval arrangements with new and existing collaborative partners of the UCO and their ongoing quality assurance oversight.

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- c) **The Registrar:** The Registrar has an overarching role covering both student and academic course administration and is responsible for student registration, student advice, attendance monitoring, maintaining student records, assessments and examinations, academic regulations, course timetabling, and providing data for annual reporting. This role also has overall responsibility for the Registry Department.
- d) **Course Leaders** maintain an oversight of each course and co-ordinate the activities of the Course Team. They take responsibility for ensuring the operational effectiveness of their course on a day-to-day basis. They also ensure that the course is being delivered effectively and efficiently by all academic staff and are supported by Unit Leaders.
- e) **Unit Leaders** are responsible for the day-to-day management of units. They ensure that each unit is delivered and assessed in line with the validated course documentation.

2.6.2 The roles and responsibilities of academic provision management are detailed in [Table 2.1](#) below.

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Table 2.1: Roles & Responsibilities of Academic Management Staff

Area of Responsibility	Course Leaders	Unit Leaders	Core Course Team
Academic Offences & Concerns, Student Conduct & Fitness to Practise	Ensure consistency in line with published procedures and sit on academic offence, disciplinary and fitness to practise panels.	Ensure consistency in line with published procedures and sit on academic offence, disciplinary and fitness to practise panels.	N/A
Monitoring & Reporting	Ensures compliance with monitoring and reporting activity and is responsible for producing the Course Annual Report.	Ensures compliance with monitoring and reporting activity and is responsible for producing the Unit Annual Reports which inform the Course Annual Report.	Contributes to Course and Unit Annual Reporting and considers final course annual report at course team meetings.
Assessment Administration	Co-ordinate assessment dates with the Registry and Course Teams.	Ensure compliance with the Scrutiny Process and Marking Regulations.	Ensure compliance with the Scrutiny Process and Marking Regulations
Assessment Practices	Identify issues for consideration by Course Teams.	Provide appropriate developmental feedback on assessments in line with policy.	Monitors assessment strategy to ensure that it is coherent and developmental and enables students to demonstrate defined learning outcomes.
Course Information	Define course content and ensures accuracy in line with UCO expectations.	Populates the VLE with course information in line with UCO expectations.	Monitors course level information and guidance to students.
Course Teams	Chair course team meetings establishing agendas and chairing discussions in line with approved Terms of Reference.	Attend course team meetings and contribute to discussions.	Monitors day-to-day management and delivery of the course.
Curriculum	Ensure Course Information Forms are up to date proposing modifications where appropriate in liaison with Unit Leaders and the Course Team.	Ensure Unit Information Forms are up to date proposing modifications where appropriate in liaison with Course Leaders and the Course Team.	Monitors curriculum and the extent to which it meets needs of target student group, subject benchmarks and supports the employability of students.
Equality & Diversity	Ensure course aligns to UCO equality and diversity expectations and that appropriate adjustments are made at the course level.	Ensure units align to UCO equality and diversity expectations and that appropriate adjustments are made at the unit level.	Monitors Equality & Diversity issues in relation to course delivery.
Student Induction	Leads course induction programme for new and continuing students.	Leads Unit induction programme for new and continuing students.	Designs and develops course and unit induction programmes.
Academic & Pastoral Support	Acts as a key point of contact for student academic and pastoral issues at course level directing students to relevant wider support where appropriate.	Act as key points of contact for student issues at unit level and directs students to wider support where and when appropriate.	Supports the Course Leader in responding to pastoral support matters in liaison with the Student Support Team.

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Pedagogy & Delivery	Monitors the effectiveness of the pedagogical approach and delivery of course briefing Unit Leaders as appropriate.	Briefs and supports other unit tutors regarding pedagogical approach and delivery.	Monitors coherence of syllabus and its delivery.
Public Information	Produces marketing and recruitment material in liaison with the Marketing Team. Monitors that marketing material is accurate and up-to-date.	Produces unit-related marketing and recruitment information in liaison with the Course Leader.	Contributes to production of course-related marketing and recruitment information.
Resource Requirements	Monitor and advise on course resource requirements and allocation and attends Resource Allocation Group meetings.	Monitor and advise on unit resource requirements and allocation in liaison with the Course Leader.	Provide feedback to Unit and Course Leaders regarding resources for delivery.
Staff Management	Take overall responsibility for staffing courses Ensure that the course curriculum is delivered and assessed in a timely fashion. Take responsibility for the line management, recruitment and appraisal of Unit Leaders.	Take responsibility for the line management, recruitment and appraisal of lecturers in their units.	N/A
Student Achievement & Progression	Attend Exam Boards and ensures all students have appropriate progression and achievement decisions in line with UCO regulations overall.	Attend Exam Boards ensuring that appropriate progression and achievement decisions are made in line with UCO regulations for their unit.	N/A
Student Attendance & Engagement	Monitor student attendance and engagement at course level, attending Student Attendance & Retention Group meetings.	Monitor student attendance and engagement at unit level, attending Student Attendance & Retention Group meetings.	Considers and responds to course-related issues identified through the Student Attendance & Retention Group.
Student Recruitment	Liaise with the Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Teams to ensure appropriateness of recruitment processes. Support and attends open days and other recruitment activities. Chair Course Recruitment Group meetings.	Support open days and other recruitment activities. Contribute to recruitment decisions as appropriate.	Supports open days and other recruitment activities.
Student Voice	Responds to issues raised by students at course level in an appropriate and timely manner. Attend Student & Staff Liaison Consultation Group meetings.	Responds to issues raised at unit level in an appropriate and timely manner. Attend Student & Staff Liaison Consultation Group meetings.	Monitors issues raised by students through Course Team minutes and responds to these in an appropriate and timely manner.

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Teaching Quality	Co-ordinate the course team. Ensure the course is delivered effectively in line with approved Course Documentation. Monitor quality of teaching and advises Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) of any issues.	Co-ordinate the unit teaching team to ensure units are effectively delivered as specified in the Unit Information Forms	Identifies & disseminates good practice and identifies and responds to issues.
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2.7 Quality Assurance & Enhancement External Reference Points

2.7.1 The UCO is committed to maintaining a high academic standard and ongoing enhancement of the quality of our programmes. To achieve this the UCO seeks to engage with several external reference points to ensure that quality is maintained, monitored, and enhanced as appropriate. These are outlined below.

A) QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education

2.7.2 The UK Quality Code for Higher Education² published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)³ is the definitive reference point for all UK higher education providers. The UCO has mapped against the Quality Code to assure that it meets the regulatory expectations for standards and quality and core practices that it describes.

B) QAA Qualification & Credit Frameworks

2.7.3 The QAA Qualification and Credit Frameworks describe the requirements of the different levels of higher education qualifications and the use of academic credit in the UK. These are used to inform the design and development of UCO courses to ensure that the correct level of learning and credit values are reflected and include the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ)⁴ and the Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Advice on Academic Credit Arrangements⁵.

C) QAA Subject Benchmark Statements

2.7.4 QAA subject benchmark statements⁶ are external reference points used to inform the design and development of UCO courses. For example, relevant courses have been mapped against the QAA Osteopathy Benchmark Statement to ensure that their curricula and learning outcomes have been developed and are reviewed and evaluated against an agreed standard within the academic arena. These mapping documents are made available and are considered at course approval events and as part of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation processes.

D) Degree Characteristic Statements

2.7.5 QAA degree characteristic statements⁷ describe the distinctive features of qualifications at particular levels within the Qualifications Frameworks and the qualifications in terms of their purpose, general characteristics and generic outcomes, and are also used as external reference points to inform the design and development of UCO courses.

D) SEEC Credit Level Descriptors

2.7.6 SEEC⁸ is a respected authority within the UK regarding the Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CATS) at higher education levels and serves as a reference point for credit-based learning. In conjunction with the above key QAA reference points, the UCO also

² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

³ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/home>

⁴ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks>

⁵ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/higher-education-credit-framework-for-england>

⁶ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>

⁷ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/characteristics-statements>

⁸ <http://www.seec.org.uk/>

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uses SEEC Credit Level Descriptors⁹ to ensure that units are assigned to the appropriate academic level and to clearly establish the standards expected of students. The UCO's courses are normally mapped to the SEEC Credit Level Descriptors to verify that each unit has been designed and developed and is monitored in accordance with this guidance.

E) Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Bodies (PSRB's)

- 2.7.7 Standards and requirements produced and maintained by PSRB's are also used in the design and development of UCO courses. Courses developed by the UCO which are accredited by a PSRB have been designed, developed, and assessed to meet the PSRB's standards and are central to the course curriculum. For example, the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) is the PSRB that accredits the UCO's pre-registration osteopathic courses. The GOsC has developed the Osteopathic Practice Standards (OPS) that are central to osteopathic training. They outline the safe, competent, and ethical practice of osteopathy and are a fundamental external reference point in the development and delivery of our relevant osteopathic courses. These courses are mapped against the OPS to ensure that all students develop a comprehensive understanding of these standards so that they can explicitly and implicitly demonstrate in practice the national standards of being a competent, safe and ethical health care practitioner.

F) Other External Reference Points

- 2.7.8 In addition to the above, the UCO is also an active member of GuildHE¹⁰, which represents smaller institutions within the higher education sector. It is an inclusive body, an advocate for institutional diversity across higher education and a champion for the high-quality and distinctive educational provision its members offer. GuildHE provides a forum for members and their institutions to share best practice and to disseminate and discuss guidance. The UCO participates in its consultative and information exchange exercises and is an active member of its governance network.
- 2.7.9 The UCO is also a member of the Council of Osteopathic Educational Institutions (COEI), which is a forum for all providers of osteopathic education to meet to discuss matters and share good practice.
- 2.7.10 The UCO is also a partner member of the Osteopathic International Alliance¹¹ (OIA), an international body which represents some 85,000 members. It enables osteopathic institutions to share information and develop practice regarding standards of education, legislation and registration of practitioners worldwide. The UCO's Vice-Chancellor currently sits on the Board of Directors of the OIA.
- 2.7.11 The UCO has Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with several health care education providers around the world. These MoUs encourage staff and student exchange and the sharing of good practice.
- 2.7.12 The UCO draws on external guidance from the wider academic community when benchmarking and developing its quality assurance activities. It has a strong record of

⁹ <https://seec.org.uk/resources/>

¹⁰ <http://www.guildhe.ac.uk/>

¹¹ <https://oialliance.org/>

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seeking, valuing and acting upon critical appraisal from the QAA, PSRB's, and other external experts we work with.

- 2.7.13 The UCO externally references a range of sources when developing its portfolio of courses. In establishing the threshold standards for academic awards, course units and individual study tasks and the way assessments are conducted, academic staff must make use of the appropriate external reference points mentioned above.
- 2.7.14 Extensive use is also made of input from external examiners who have a wide knowledge of standards in the sector as a whole.
- 2.7.15 The UCO is a member of a range of professional bodies and associations, enabling it to keep abreast of current thinking and research in the osteopathic field.
- 2.7.16 UCO staff and faculty also hold several external roles, including committee membership of PSRBs, and external examining at other institutions. The UCO draws on these links to keep its portfolio of courses up to date and to maintain academic standards.
- 2.7.17 UCO faculty are also involved in evaluating applicant osteopaths from overseas and the EU seeking registration with the GOsC and those returning to osteopathic practice.

2.8 Internal Quality Assurance & Enhancement

- 2.8.1 Internally the UCO has specific aims and objectives for academic quality assurance and enhancement. These are articulated in the UCO's Strategic Plan¹². The evolution of our quality and enhancement process has been informed by external reference points, including the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
- 2.8.2 To ensure that the UCO meets its aims with respect to academic quality and standards, we have developed comprehensive academic policies and regulations as presented in this framework.
- 2.8.3 Further information about staff responsibilities for Quality Assurance and Enhancement can be found in AQF Section 3: The Assurance and Enhancement of Academic Quality and Standards in Teaching and Learning at the UCO.

2.9 Course Portfolio & Teaching & Learning Practices

- 2.9.1 The UCO is an educational provider of a range of taught courses that ranges from foundation to Master's level described below:
 - a) Introduction to Healthcare Sciences Course
- 2.9.2 The UCO recognises that it receives many applications from students who wish to study on one of our healthcare courses who have proven academic achievement but who lack a solid grounding in the sciences required to study their chosen course of study. To enable these students to study with us, the UCO has developed and delivers an online pre-entry non-credit bearing "Introduction to Healthcare Sciences (IHS)" course to enable students to gain this grounding in the basic sciences.

¹² <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/mission-values-and-strategy>

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b) Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) Course (Validated by Laser Learning Awards)

- 2.9.3 The Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) course (the Access Course), validated by Laser Learning Awards¹³, consists of 14 units, each of which is worth a specified number of credits.
- 2.9.4 Access Course units are delivered at both FHEQ Level 2 and Level 3 over one academic year.
- 2.9.5 The Access Course is designed specifically, but not exclusively, for students with little or no scientific background, and is ideal for those who wish to pursue a career in osteopathy or a related healthcare discipline but aren't yet ready or don't have the qualifications to undertake a degree programme. A range of units are studies including biological and physical science in addition to English, Mathematics and communication and study skills ensure that students have a sound basis for further study.
- 2.9.6 As this course is accredited by Laser Learning Awards, successful students will gain a nationally recognised award which is an acceptable entry qualification in colleges and universities throughout the UK.

c) Master of Osteopathy Course (M.Ost)

- 2.9.7 The Master of Osteopathy (course is an Integrated Master's qualification. Students study this course either full-time over four years or part-time over five years.
- 2.9.8 Students are required to study concurrently and successfully complete a specified number of units each worth a specified number of credits each year before progressing to the next. Units are delivered at FHEQ Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 and Level 7 appropriate to the year and the level of learning.
- 2.9.9 The M.Ost course is delivered in traditional and virtual learning environments. The emphasis is on providing students with an integrated approach to theory and clinical practice with a strong focus on self-managed learning and learner ownership of learning.
- 2.9.10 A wide range of teaching methods are utilised, including traditional lectures, one-to-one and small group tutorials, practical sessions and practice, workshops, seminars and clinical observation and experience. Case-based learning is used throughout the course to support the application of the required academic knowledge to a clinical scenario.
- 2.9.11 Students are expected to manage their own learning and become independent learners as preparation for the expectations of modern professional life as an osteopath, with its emphasis on continuing professional development and life-long learning.
- 2.9.12 Successful graduates of this course are eligible to apply to the General Osteopathic Council's Register of Osteopath's enabling them to practise as an osteopath in the UK.

¹³ <http://laser-awards.org.uk/>

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d) MSc in Osteopathy (Pre-Registration) Course

- 2.9.13 The MSc in Osteopathy (Pre-Registration) (MScPR) course, designed for physiotherapists and other qualified medical practitioners, is normally delivered full-time over two years, each year consisting of 45 weeks.
- 2.9.14 Students study five units, all at FHEQ Level 7.
- 2.9.15 A wide range of learning and teaching practices are used to deliver this course including Case Based Learning tutorials, lectures, practical osteopathic skills tutorials, seminars, e-learning tasks and group discussions, clinical experience and self-directed study, thereby exposing students to a meaningful, collaborative and challenging educational experience that draws upon knowledge and skills acquired at undergraduate level as well as the experiential learning acquired as a professional health care practitioner. This promotes deep and meaningful learning underpinned by scholarship and research to students, whilst providing them with opportunities to develop and practise core knowledge and skills in a supportive environment.

e) BSc (Hons) in Nutrition with Professional Practice Course

- 2.9.16 The BSc (Hons) Nutrition with Professional Practice course is normally delivered over three academic years (of full-time study) or 5 years (of part-time study). Each academic year is divided into three terms, the first two terms normally consisting of twelve weeks and the third consisting of eight weeks.
- 2.9.17 Students are required to study each academic year concurrently and successfully complete a specified number of units each worth a specified number of credits within each year before progressing to the next. Units are delivered at FHEQ Level 4, Level 5 and Level 6 appropriate to the year and the level of learning.
- 2.9.18 The BSc (Hons) Nutrition with Professional Practice course is delivered in traditional and virtual learning environments. The emphasis is on providing students with an integrated approach to theory and practice.
- 2.9.19 A wide range of teaching methods are utilised, including traditional lectures, one-to-one and small group tutorials, practical sessions, workshops and seminars.
- 2.9.20 This course is accredited by the Association for Nutrition (AfN)¹⁴ meaning that successful graduates will be eligible to apply directly to the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN) and become a Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr).

f) Postgraduate Certificate in Academic & Clinical Education Course

- 2.9.21 The Postgraduate Certificate in Academic & Clinical Education (PGCertACE) course is normally delivered over one year part-time and consists of two 30 credit units studied at FHEQ Level 7.
- 2.9.22 A wide range of established learning and teaching practices are used to deliver this course including seminars/tutorials, workshops, e-learning tasks and group discussions, self-directed study and group work (e.g. a team appraisal of relevant educational papers). Students will be exposed to a meaningful, collaborative, and challenging educational experience that draws upon knowledge and skills acquired at

¹⁴ <https://www.associationfornutrition.org/>

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undergraduate level as well as the experiential learning acquired as a professional health care practitioner.

- 2.9.23 The teaching and learning framework for this course emphasises to students the importance of an active approach to their learning.

g) Postgraduate Certificate in Specialist Paediatric Osteopathic Practice Course

- 2.9.24 The Postgraduate Certificate in Specialist Paediatric Osteopathic Practice (PGCertSPOP) course, designed to develop and enhance practising osteopaths' knowledge, practical and clinical skills in the specialist area of paediatric osteopathic practice, is normally delivered part-time over one year and consists of two units, a 15-credit theoretical unit and a 45 credit clinical unit both studied at FHEQ Level 7.

- 2.9.25 Students attend weekend study and clinical days where students are provided with valuable hands-on experience of working within the clinic under the supervision of experienced osteopaths.

h) Courses Delivered by Collaborative Partners of the UCO

- 2.9.26 As part of its collaborative activity, the UCO works with other educational institutions without Taught Degree Awarding Powers to validate (approve) courses and qualifications that the partner has responsibility for delivering but lead to a UCO award. Prior to approving a course delivered by such an institution, the UCO approves the institution as an Associate Partner to ensure that it meets the UCO's partner approval criteria (see AQF16 Collaborative Activity).

- 2.9.27 The UCO's current Collaborative Partners, the type of provision and the courses they deliver include:

Associate Partner	Type of Provision	Course Title(s)	Accrediting Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body (PSRB)
Accademia Italiana di Medicina Osteopatica (AIMO) Saronno, Italy	Validated	BSc (Hons) in Osteopathic Sciences (Practising Pathway)	N/A
	Validated	BSc (Hons) in Osteopathic Sciences (Professional Pathway)	N/A
	Validated	MSc in Osteopathic Medicine	N/A
	Validated	PGCert in Health Care Education	N/A
College of Esports Stratford, London, UK	Franchised	Certificate of Higher Education in International Esports Business	Sports Leaders (Level 3 Esports Leaders Award)
	Franchised	BA (Hons) in International Esports Business (with and without a Foundation Year)	Sports Leaders (Level 3 Esports Leaders Award)
	Franchised	BA (Hons) in International Esports Business and Events Management (with and without a Foundation Year)	Sports Leaders (Level 3 Esports Leaders Award)
	Franchised	BA (Hons) in International Esports Business and Digital	Sports Leaders (Level 3 Esports Leaders Award)

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		Marketing (with and without a Foundation Year)	
	Franchised	BA (Hons) in International Esports Business and Digital Media (with and without a Foundation Year)	Sports Leaders (Level 3 Esports Leaders Award)
	Franchised	BA (Hons) in Esports Coaching & Management (with and without a Foundation Year)	Sports Leaders (Level 3 Esports Leaders Award)
College of Integrated Chinese Medicine (CICM) Reading, UK	Validated	BSc (Hons) in Acupuncture	British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB) on behalf of the British Acupuncture Council (BAcC)
Northern College of Acupuncture (NCA) York, UK	Validated	BSc (Hons) in Acupuncture	British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB) on behalf of the British Acupuncture Council (BAcC)
	Validated	Online MSc in Advanced Complementary Medicine (Research & Practice)	N/A
	Validated	Online MSc in Advanced Oriental Medicine (Research & Practice)	N/A
	Validated	Online MSc in Advanced Nutrition (Research & Practice)	N/A
	Validated	PGDip & MSc in Chinese Herbal Medicine	European Herbal and Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association (EHTPA) (of which the Register of Chinese Herbal Medicine is a member)
	Validated	PGDip & MSc in Nutrition Science & Practice	Nutritional Therapy Education Commission (NTEC), which accredits on behalf of the British Association of Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine (BANT).
Osteopathic Centre for Animals (OCA) Wantage, UK	Validated	PGCert in Animal Osteopathy	N/A
Sports Medicine Ultrasound Group (SMUG) London, UK	Validated	PGCert in Musculoskeletal Ultrasound	N/A

2.10 Academic Resourcing

2.10.1 The system of resource allocation at the UCO aims to:

- Achieve effective, evidence-based decisions about the UCO's strategic and operational priorities.
- Make staff aware of the costs of the services that we provide and receive, and the potential for savings.

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- c) Measure and manage performance.
- d) Ensure financial sustainability.
- 2.10.2 The Resource Allocation Model (RAM) in place at the UCO is integrated into its budgeting processes enabling academic staff, in particular Course Leaders, to assess how undergraduate and postgraduate courses and other academic and income generating activities contribute to the UCO's overall surplus.
- 2.10.3 The model also establishes a means of allocating resources between undergraduate and postgraduate courses as well as the UCO's income generating functions - business development (including the provision of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses and room hire) and fundraising. In addition, it provides a framework to help determine future viability and cost effectiveness of current programmes and a mechanism for the evaluation of new programmes.
- 2.10.4 The Resource Allocation Group (RAG) is tasked to make recommendations to the Senior Management Team (SMT) on issues concerning the RAM to ensure that it supports and incentivises the achievement of the UCO's strategic objectives and targets. This group consists of the SMT and Course Leaders, which allows financial decision-making to be made from both a business and academic perspective.

2.11 Assessment and Monitoring: Principles of Assessment

- 2.11.1 High quality assessment practices contribute to the maintenance of academic standards. To help achieve the assessment strategy, each course is constructed to ensure that it meets the following 'Principles of Assessment':
 - a) **Validity** - Assessments should measure the learning outcomes of the unit or course and there should be a clear and obvious link in this regard.
 - b) **Fairness** - Assessments should be reasonable in the expectations placed on students and be demonstrably conducted in an equitable and consistent manner. The assessment result should be dependent only on measures of the learning outcomes of the unit or course and should be free from bias caused by the individual or group background, either of the assessors or the students. Assessment questions should therefore be intelligible to all those being assessed. Assessment strategies should allow for an accommodation of functional differences arising from disability, learning styles and physical issues. Assessment and examination practices should provide disabled students with the same opportunity as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes.
 - c) **Reliability** - Assessments should deliver repeatable and accurate judgements. Consistent results should be obtainable for different assessors on each assessment decision.
 - d) **Rigour** - Assessments should measure performance at the level of the unit or course, and defined procedures, processes and standards should be strictly adhered to.
 - e) **Discrimination** - Assessments should enable assessors to distinguish between students who meet and those who fail to meet the intended learning outcomes. Where performance is to be graded, they should ensure that students who perform better are appropriately rewarded in the marks given.
 - f) **Constructive Alignment**: Assessments should be aligned to learning environments and activities and learning outcomes in accordance with the academic level of study,

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using appropriate descriptors and consistent language, reflecting course and unit aims as well as other factors where appropriate, such as professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements.

2.12 Student Support

- 2.12.1 The UCO acknowledges the value of supporting students' learning to ensure as much as possible that students are successful in their studies. To achieve this, the UCO's Student Support Department provides a wide range of support services for students. This is detailed in AQF Section 9: Student Guidance & Learner Support.

2.13 Student Voice

- 2.13.1 All students are encouraged to have input into and engage with improving quality and standards at the UCO through giving their views and feedback, known as using their student voice. Student voice mechanisms include student representation, focus groups and student evaluation questionnaires.
- 2.13.2 All staff and the Students' Union are committed to encouraging the student body to engage with the UCO's student voice mechanisms and to ensure that student input contributes to decision-making at the UCO. Student voice mechanisms are described in detail in AQF Section 10: Student Voice.

2.14 Management Information and the Student Record

a) Registry and Admissions

- 2.14.1 Management information is supported by the provision of a student management database system. This system underpins the UCO's recruitment, registration, attendance management and assessment processes, and is therefore able to produce management reports on key performance indicators. It also provides the tools necessary to respond to the data requirements of external agencies such as the Office for Students (OfS) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

b) Clinical Information

- 2.14.2 The UCO uses a clinic system database for managing patient data and appointments, enabling the production of management reports on the functioning of the Clinic. This system is also tailored to meet the needs of the UCO in managing students during their clinical experience. This system provides individual students and tutors with reporting on patients who have been treated at the clinic. This information can be applied to enhance clinical learning by facilitating more informed reflection upon clinical approaches and outcomes, as well as laying the foundations for further osteopathic research based upon patients within the UCO clinic.

c) Freedom of Information

- 2.14.3 The Freedom of Information Act 2000¹⁵ gives the public the right, subject to certain exemptions enumerated in the Act, to access information held by public authorities (such as universities). It also requires such public authorities to make information available proactively through a publication scheme.

¹⁵ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents>

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2.14.4 Any person who makes a request to the UCO for information not made available through the publication scheme is entitled (subject to the exemptions enumerated in the Act) to be informed in writing whether the UCO holds the information requested and if so, to have the information communicated to them. The request must be in writing (including electronic formats such as email and social media), must state the applicant's name and an address for correspondence, and must contain a description of the information required.

2.14.5 Freedom of Information requests are normally managed by the UCO's Data Protection & Freedom of Information Officer (DPFIO). Further information about how the UCO manages Freedom of Information requests and our Publication Scheme can be found here:

<https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/freedom-information>

d) Data Protection & Right of Access

2.14.6 The UCO takes its obligations to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) seriously and gives students, staff, patients, and others whose personal data we process the right to request data relating to them in accordance with this legislation.

2.14.7 Requests for access to personal data from individuals (known as Subject Access Requests) are normally managed by the UCO's Data Protection & Freedom of Information Officer (DPFIO). Further information about how the UCO manages Subject Access Requests can be found here:

<https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/subject-access-request-policy>

2.15 Communication at the UCO

2.15.1 The UCO always works hard to ensure that good communication is a priority for all stakeholders. The UCO is aware that communication is key to success and, especially, to enhancing the student experience. The UCO uses a variety of methods for communicating with staff, students, and the public as appropriate, including email, UCO Portal (SharePoint) notifications and posters.

a) The UCO's Website

2.15.2 The UCO's website focuses on the needs of two main groups of readers: students¹⁶ and patients¹⁷. These sites are organised around their needs and interests. There is also information about the UCO and its structure, as well as news and events.

2.15.3 The website includes [Discover Uni](#) data, which is information about the UCO's full-time and part-time undergraduate courses and is designed to meet the information needs of prospective students. The Discover Uni website publishes information about UK higher education courses and enable prospective students to compare the UCO's courses with those of other providers to help them make study choices.

b) The UCO's Email System

2.15.4 Microsoft Outlook is used as the UCO's email system.

¹⁶ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/>

¹⁷ <https://www.clinic.uco.ac.uk/>

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2.15.5 It is used as the UCO's main means of communication with students and staff concerning day-to-day organisation and for information that is of immediate, or short-term, relevance and can be accessed via smartphone or any web-connected computer.

2.15.6 Students and staff are provided with a UCO email address which they are expected to use for exclusively for UCO business.

c) The UCO's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – "BONE"

2.15.7 The UCO uses the Open Course Management System, Moodle, for its Virtual Learning Environment, which within the UCO is named "BONE". It can be accessed by students and staff via the internet from anywhere in the world at any time, the value of which is recognised by the UCO's students.

2.15.8 The UCO's VLE provides students with digital learning, including text, audio, and video-based learning resources, forum discussions, quizzes, assessment, electronic submission and grading of assignments, and other interactive activities. The UCO continues to develop and utilise a wider range of resources Moodle provides to enhance blended and e-learning at the UCO.

d) The UCO Portal

2.15.9 The UCO Portal acts as the UCO's intranet and provides students with essential internal information, notifications and news about the UCO and their course. It also provides students with the main gateways into the Virtual Learning Environment, Journal and Library searches and Registry and Student Support services.

2.15.10 The UCO Portal also offers access to some key core documents and news, including governance and committee structures, committee terms of reference, guidelines, handbooks, and other relevant information for staff and students.

e) Vice-Chancellor's Briefings

2.15.11 To improve communication of institutional-level issues, the Vice-Chancellor delivers briefings to staff and students approximately three times a year. These briefings are informal and cover strategic issues facing the UCO and reporting back on the current activities and future plans. The briefings are also an opportunity for staff and students to discuss these issues, raise any general concerns and ask relevant questions. Each briefing is held multiple times across an approximately two-week window to facilitate the widest possible staff and student participation.

2.15.12 Staff briefings are normally held at the UCO on each day of the week including weekends to enable both full- and part-time staff and students to attend.

2.15.13 These sessions may also be held online and are often recorded making them available electronically for those unable to attend in person.

f) Newsletters

2.15.14 Regular newsletters are circulated electronically to all staff and students. The newsletter covers news about the UCO, new and current activities, future plans, as well as updates from and about different areas of the UCO including: the Students' Union; fundraising; Course Teams; Continuing Professional Development; Quality Assurance; Partnerships Research; Estates; Student Admissions; Public Relations and Marketing; and the Clinic.

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g) Staff Conference

2.15.15 The UCO's annual Staff Conference is an important annual event in the UCO calendar. Normally running over a Saturday and/or Sunday in the spring term, the conference addresses a range of current and future issues relevant to the UCO. As well as keynote presentations from external speakers, managers and specialists run workshops that staff can select to attend to improve their skills, all of which contributes to communicating and implementing best practice.

AQF02: Appendices

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
N/A	N/A



Academic Quality Framework

Section 3:

Assurance & Enhancement of Academic Quality & Standards in Teaching & Learning at the UCO

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 3: The Assurance and Enhancement of Academic Quality and Standards in Teaching and Learning at the University College of Osteopathy

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to academic staff, and of particular interest to Course Leaders and Heads of Area, and members of relevant UCO Committees.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V1.0	Jun 2015 N/A	No Amendments	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Annual Review: Administrative Amendments to update role titles, HE regulatory body and web links.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update staff role titles, weblinks & footnotes and to reflect current practice.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Jun 2020 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to reflect new committee structure, to update role titles and to clarify definitions.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to reflect current staff, committee and partnership arrangements.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V8.0	June 2022 PRAG Chair TQSC	Administrative Amendments of a factual nature updating academic years, committee and role titles and responsibilities, including the addition of the UCO’s TLA Strategy as an Appendix.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

Academic Quality Framework

Section 3:

The Assurance and Enhancement of Academic Quality and Standards in Teaching and Learning at the University College of Osteopathy

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3.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ASSURANCE & ENHANCEMENT OF ACADEMIC QUALITY & STANDARDS

3.1.1 The University College of Osteopathy (UCO) takes responsibility for assuring and enhancing quality and academic standards, adhering to national frameworks, as well as aligning to requirements and standards of Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PSRBs) as appropriate. Within the UCO, overall responsibility for academic quality and standards rests with the Academic Council. The UCO's academic governance structures are designed to ensure that responsibilities for quality are clearly defined and owned throughout the UCO.

3.2 ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

3.2.1 The primary UCO committees with responsibility for academic quality are outlined below. Each has Terms of Reference, which determines the committee's remit, membership, frequency of meetings, quoracy and reporting lines which are diagrammatically represented within the UCO's Committee Structure diagram.

- a) **Academic Council:** The Academic Council (AC) is the main decision-making committee for all academic matters at the UCO (subject to approval by the Board of Directors). It is responsible for promoting, regulating, and directing the academic work of the UCO, including teaching and research. It also oversees the UCO's academic management and all aspects of academic quality and standards associated with the UCO. The Academic Council is also the forum where the strategic academic development of the UCO is debated, critically reviewed, and proposed to the Board for consideration and / or approval. The Academic Council is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and includes members from a cross section of the institution, including academic management, Faculty Representatives (from full-time and part-time courses), the Students' Union, Student Representatives (from full-time and part-time courses) and External Representatives (normally one from a Higher Education Institution and one from another Health Care profession).
- b) **The Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC):** The Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC) is a sub-committee of the Academic Council and communicates with the Senior Management Team (SMT) on institutional matters. It is responsible to the Academic Council for overseeing the implementation and development of the UCO's systems for setting, maintaining, and monitoring academic standards and its quality assurance systems and procedures for taught provision at the UCO, and is responsible to the SMT for monitoring the effectiveness and the extent to which the UCO meets its institutional quality assurance obligations.
- c) **Boards of Examiners (EBs)** which consider the results of assessments at all stages of a course and determine progression and recommend awards to the UCO Academic Council, ensuring that students have completed assessment programmes in accordance with approved progression criteria thereby maintaining academic standards.
- d) **The Widening Participation Sub-Committee (WPSC)** which oversees the development, implementation, and review of the UCO's strategy, policies, and procedures to support the access, success and progression of students from groups under-represented in higher education.
- e) **The Enhancement of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee (ETLASC)** which oversees the development and implementation of the UCO's Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy.
- f) **The Collaborative Provision Sub-Committee (CPSC)** which oversees the UCO's collaborative partnerships ensuring that the standard of the UCO award and the quality of the learning opportunities of students, ensuring that all collaborative provision is developed and delivered in line with the agreed validation documents and this Academic Quality Framework.

- g) The **Policy & Regulations Group (PRG)** which oversees and monitors the effectiveness of academic policy and regulations, the Academic Quality Framework, and the UCO's academic committee structure and is responsible for managing the UCO's core documents.
- h) The **Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee (RSSC)**: The Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee (RSSC) reports to the Academic Council and focuses on research and scholarship activity and development across the UCO. The RSSC is responsible for the implementation of the Research and Scholarship Strategy. Embedded within this, the RSSC develops and considers the implementation of new areas of research, as well as enhancing scholarship amongst staff and students. The RSSC also oversees the UCO's Research Ethics process and Research Excellence Framework activities through its sub-committees.
- i) **Course Teams**: Course Teams report to the TQSC regarding the day-to-day administration and management of each Course. Course Teams ensure that the validated curriculum is delivered and assessed in accordance with the relevant course information and unit information forms. Course Teams are chaired by Course Leaders and consist of Unit Leaders and a Student Representative.
- j) **Student-Staff Liaison Consultation Groups (SSLCGs)**: Student-Staff Liaison Consultation Groups (SSLCGs) report to the Course Teams. They serve as the forum for students to discuss with faculty and staff significant group issues connected to learning, teaching, student support, and UCO services and environment. They also provide an opportunity for staff to consult with students about institutional developments under consideration. They are co-chaired by the Head of Student Services and Student Union President and consist of student representatives, Course Team members and senior academic staff. There is an SSLCG for both full- and part-time students including both undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- k) **Scrutiny Boards**: Scrutiny Boards are sub-committees of Course Teams. Scrutiny Boards are responsible for the receipt, consideration and modification of all examination material for the specified course, ensuring that: all assessment items are at the appropriate level; all appropriate learning outcomes are assessed for the year being considered; a high level of written English is maintained throughout all printed assessments; overlapping subject areas do not duplicate the content of questions unnecessarily; and that a diverse range of assessments is used and that assessment methods used are appropriate for the subject they are examining. Scrutiny Boards are chaired by the Registrar and consist of the Course Leader relevant to the assessment under scrutiny, Unit Leaders relevant to the assessment under scrutiny, appropriate Internal Examiners, and relevant External Examiners.
- l) The **Engagement Monitoring Group (EMG)**: The Engagement Monitoring Group (EMG) is a sub-committee of the WPSC. Its purpose is to monitor student attendance and to notify the relevant support staff, Course Leaders, Unit Leaders and the Student Support Officer in cases of concern regarding a student's attendance or engagement. The EMG is chaired by the Student Support Officer and consists of Course Leaders, the Registrar and Head of Clinical Practice. Other members of staff are invited to attend EMG meetings on an 'as required' basis.

3.3 STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES TO ACADEMIC QUALITY

a) THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (EDUCATION)

- 3.3.1 The UCO's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) provides management of the entire academic portfolio and has overall responsibility for academic quality assurance and enhancement. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) is supported by several staff in respect of ensuring that the UCO's quality assurance procedures are undertaken effectively and in promoting the enhancement of quality. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) chairs the TQSC.

B) THE DIRECTOR OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- 3.3.2 The Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment oversees academic development and quality enhancement across the UCO's academic portfolio, including that for overseeing the development and monitoring of the UCO's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, and reports to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) on these matters.

C) COURSE LEADERS AND UNIT LEADERS

- 3.3.3 Course Leaders take responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of the day-to-day quality of the course and for ensuring that operational delivery is being carried out effectively and efficiently by all academic staff. Course Leaders normally chair Course Team committees.
- 3.3.4 Unit Leaders take responsibility for the day-to-day management of a unit of a course and ensures that it is delivered and assessed in line with the validated course documentation.
- 3.3.5 The roles and responsibilities of Course Leaders and Unit Leaders are detailed in AQF Section 2: An Overview of Teaching & Learning at the University College of Osteopathy.

c) THE REGISTRAR AND ACADEMIC REGISTRY

- 3.3.6 The Registrar has an overarching role covering both student and course administration and manages the Academic Registry.
- 3.3.7 The Academic Registry's main role is to act as the definitive record keeper about students and courses, including those validated by the UCO and delivered by collaborative partners, on behalf of the UCO. Its work underpins a student's academic experience from application through to graduation, including enrolment, assessment, timetabling, complaints, discipline, and transcript production on behalf of the UCO. The Academic Registry guides and supports the work of academic and administrative staff in several areas including regulations and student assessment.

d) THE QUALITY TEAM

- 3.3.8 The UCO's Quality Team is managed by the Head of Quality & Partnerships and is responsible on an operational basis for the day-to-day management of, and compliance with, quality assurance and enhancement matters.
- 3.3.9 The Quality Team manages the UCO's Quality Assurance processes including partner and course approval; modifications to courses and units; course and institutional reviews and monitoring and reporting.

3.4 UCO POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC STANDARDS

A) OVERALL POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 3.4.1 The UCO's overall policy in regard to academic standards for undergraduate and postgraduate taught degrees that lead to a UCO award is to ensure that the standards achieved by students completing a particular course of study are comparable both within and between cohorts and with qualifications granted and conferred throughout the university sector in England, in compliance with the Office for Students¹, the QAA UK Quality Code², the UCO's Academic Regulations (AQF Section 7) (or agreed schedules of variance to these Regulations) and relevant Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Body (PSRB) requirements.

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/>

² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

- 3.4.2 Through taught course approval, course documents clarify full details of the learning and assessment structures of courses approved by the UCO. Students are referred to the appropriate course handbook or other course materials for fuller guidance and details on the learning and assessment structures of their course of study.

B) THE DEFINITION OF AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 3.4.3 Academic Standards are the standards set and maintained by the UCO to ensure that the academic credit and qualifications awarded to students by the UCO meet national qualifications frameworks and other relevant benchmarks (including PSRB requirements). Academic standards ensure that qualifications of the same level are comparable, that assessment criteria used to award academic credit and qualifications are sufficiently robust to ensure parity of academic judgement between different assessors, and that assessment regulations, policies and procedures are in place and operated consistently,
- 3.4.4 The UCO is responsible for setting and maintaining academic standards and for ensuring that these meet the requirements of relevant national qualifications frameworks and PSRBs.
- 3.4.5 The UCO is also responsible for the academic standards of all academic credit and qualifications granted in the UCO's name, including that delivered by partner institutions irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or by whom.
- 3.4.6 Several individuals or groups of individuals share the responsibility for defining and maintaining academic standards at the UCO relating to the design, delivery, assessment and review of subject areas and courses of study. These include:
- a) **Individual Tutors & Practice Educators** who contribute to the design, delivery and assessment of courses and regularly review their subject area in accordance with the UCO's academic regulations and relevant policies and procedures.
 - b) **Unit Leaders** who, as members of Course Teams, collectively design, deliver, assess, resource and review units that comprise courses of study in accordance with the UCO's academic regulations and relevant policies and procedures.
 - c) **Course Leaders**, who oversee unit and course design, stipulate the course curriculum and organise its delivery, identify resources required for successful delivery, and co-ordinate the review of courses of study in accordance with the UCO's academic regulations and relevant policies and procedures.
 - d) **Members of Academic Committees**, who are responsible for developing and enhancing existing courses of study, endorsing proposals for new and modifications to existing courses and the discontinuation of existing courses.
 - e) **Members of Academic Council**, who are responsible for maintaining academic standards and recommending the regular review of all courses in conjunction with, where applicable, the various examining and accrediting bodies, for planning, co-ordinating, developing and overseeing the academic work of the UCO and associated activities, and monitoring and implementing student feedback and for advising on matters of resourcing necessary to support the work of the UCO.
 - f) **Members of Boards of Examiners**, who are responsible for considering the results of assessments at all stages of a course, determine progression and recommend awards, including the classification of awards where appropriate, in accordance with approved progression criteria and degree algorithms.
 - g) **Internal and External Panel Members & Experts** who consider approval (validation) of new courses and the re-approval (re-validation) of existing courses in line with established course and review approval criteria, national quality frameworks and PSRB benchmarks.
 - h) **Internal and External Examiners, Moderators and Assessors**, who are responsible for setting and marking course assessments to a sufficient standard, determine and moderate the final marks/grades

awarded to students, agree modifications to courses and units and contribute to periodic review and monitoring and reporting activities.

- 3.4.7 The quality and capability of staff who are responsible and support these activities these activities is fundamental in maintaining academic standards. The UCO ensures that the staff it employs are of a sufficient standard and character that enables them to carry out their designated responsibilities adequately. Staff recruitment and development procedures are discussed more fully in AQF Section 13: Staff Recruitment & Development.
- 3.4.8 There is also corporate responsibility for academic standards and their continuing review. It is important for an institution to establish rigorous mechanisms to ensure that the levels of academic and personal support and the teaching and learning environment are appropriate to enable students to fulfil their potential and achieve the highest level of award as possible.

C) SETTING ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 3.4.9 The UCO sets academic standards which consider the following:
- a) Alignment of academic credit and qualifications with that of national qualifications frameworks, subject benchmark statements, level descriptors and PSRB requirements.
 - b) Rigorous methods of assessment and robust assessment criteria.
 - c) Establishing appropriate assessment and unit threshold (pass) levels.
 - d) Clear regulations for the awarding and moderating of marks/grades which are based on robust assessment criteria, marking schemes and a Common Assessment Grading Scale to assure that effective means of verifying the standards of awards in terms of these elements are in place.
 - e) Ensuring academic integrity in terms of the assessment process and acceptable academic practice.
 - f) Clear and fair algorithms for awarding qualification classifications.
 - g) Ensuring a consistent approach to all the above.
- 3.4.10 The UCO's academic standards are articulated within the AQF specifically:
- a) AQF Section 7: Academic Regulations
 - b) AQF Section 11: External Examining
 - c) AQF Section 12: Boards of Examiners

D) THE MAINTENANCE, VERIFICATION AND MONITORING OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 3.4.11 The primary mechanisms by which academic standards within the UCO are maintained include:
- a) Approval and periodic review of courses, which includes verification that relevant external standards and reference points including national qualifications frameworks published by the QAA³ (which include the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (FHEQ), Credit Framework for England, subject benchmark statements, and degree characteristic statements), SEEC Credit Level Descriptors and relevant PSRB standards), have been used appropriately in the design and constructive alignment of the course.
 - b) Accreditation of courses and awards by PSRBs where appropriate.
 - c) Implementation of a comprehensive Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure and an Appraisal and Professional Development Review Policy⁴ applicable to all UCO staff.

³ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/home>

⁴ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- d) Ongoing monitoring of student attendance and assessment.
 - e) The use of a Common Assessment Grading Scheme throughout the UCO for its taught courses, and appropriate grading of the Access Course provided by Laser Learning Awards⁵.
 - f) The implementation of a comprehensive double and second marking policy across assignments for foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, and anonymous marking (i.e. by candidate number and not by name) as appropriate⁶.
 - g) The requirement for all final examination marks to be agreed by a Board of Examiners consisting of internal markers and External Examiners⁷.
 - h) The role of External Examiners⁸ and Moderators⁹ to ensure academic standards regarding the assessment of students, including the moderation of the standard of work carried out by students, and examining and providing judgements on the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment process and the standards of student performance.
 - i) The experience of internal examiners who serve or have served as External Examiners in other educational institutions to ensure comparability of standards.
- 3.4.12 External Examiners play a fundamental role in monitoring and verifying the UCO's academic standards, within the UCO and across the higher education sector. Further details of the UCO's practices and policies regarding external examining in foundation and taught courses and programmes are given in AQF Section 11: External Examining.

E) THE REVIEW OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 3.4.13 The UCO reviews its academic standards regularly and amends its Academic Quality Framework, policies and procedures in response to any sector changes as appropriate.
- 3.4.14 Performance indicators including entry criteria, retention rates, progression rates, assessment outcomes and first-destination statistics are analysed and reviewed on an annual basis as part of the UCO's Annual Reporting activities as described in AQF Section 5. Where appropriate, academic standards associated with a particular course may be reviewed, and this review may lead to modifications in relevant areas such as learning outcomes, assessment criteria and methods and delivery.
- 3.4.15 Any modification made to a UCO approved course or unit is discussed with relevant students and External Examiners as appropriate, is considered and approved by the UCO's relevant academic committees according to the UCO's quality process as described in AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval and Modification.
- 3.4.16 Any change made to the Access Course validated by LASER follows the LASER quality processes for amendments to units and courses.

3.5 QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

- 3.5.1 The UCO has a strategic commitment to enhancing quality and standards and this is encapsulated within the UCO's Strategic Plan¹⁰.
- 3.5.2 Quality and standards are enhanced using several mechanisms including:

⁵ <https://www.laser-awards.org.uk/>

⁶ See [AQF Section 7: Academic Regulations](#)

⁷ See [AQF Section 12: Boards of Examiners](#)

⁸ See [AQF Section 11: External Examining](#)

⁹ See [AQF Section 7: Academic Regulations](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/mission-values-and-strategy>

- a) **The UCO's Academic Committees**, which individually operate according to prescribed Terms of Reference that enable each committee to fulfil its remit transparently and efficiently, and together form part of a cohesive academic committee structure. Committee Terms of Reference and the committee structure is monitored by the Policy & Regulations Group and is normally reviewed on a 3-yearly basis to ensure that committee effectiveness is maintained or enhanced appropriately.
- b) **Course Team Minutes**, which are completed by Course Teams enabling them to disseminate good practice and identify issues and actions for development and enhancement with each other.
- c) **The Annual Staff Conference**, where both academic and non-academic staff participate in a weekend of staff development. Activities include the presentation of Annual Course Reports and discussion of key issues, with the aim of disseminating good practice and enhancing institution-wide standards and quality.
- d) **Unit Annual Reporting**, whereby Unit Leaders complete a Unit Annual Monitoring Report (UAR). These annual reports review measurable actions based on student and external examiners' feedback to ensure the quality review and enhancement of each unit.
- e) **Course Annual Reporting**, whereby Course Leaders complete a Course Annual Monitoring Report (CAR). These reports review measurable actions based on the Unit Report Forms, as well as student and staff feedback, to assure that each course undergoes sufficient quality review.
- f) **Institutional Annual Reporting:**
 - a. By external agencies reporting on the UCO as an institution to inform students and the wider public whether the UCO continues to meet academic standards and provision expectations of the higher education sector.
 - b. By Collaborative Partners, whereby senior members of collaborative partner institutions appraise their partnership with the UCO.
- g) **Periodic Course Reviews / Course Re-approval (Revalidation)**, whereby Course Teams substantively review course provision, identify areas for enhancement, and disseminate good practice. These events provide an in-depth process that enables greater reflection than annual monitoring and covers progress over a longer time frame (typically five years).
- h) **Peer Review of Teaching**, which takes place as part of the UCO's annual Performance Development Reviews in line with the UCO's Appraisal & Professional Development Review Policy¹¹.
- i) **Student Feedback Mechanisms** including termly Student-Staff Liaison Consultation Group meetings, the Student Voice e-forum, annual course and institutional surveys and the UCO's open-door policy, which are described in more detail within AQF Section 10: Student Voice.

3.6 TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT

- 3.6.1 A key priority at the UCO is ensuring effective teaching, learning and assessment of its students.
- 3.6.2 The UCO's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (AQF03-01) includes actions and targets to ensure that progressive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment are incorporated into an engaging curriculum that fully meets our students' needs.
- 3.6.3 This strategy is developed and reviewed by the Enhancement of Teaching, Learning & Assessment Sub-Committee, (ETLASC) and the TQSC to ensure that it remains current, reflects the UCO's short and long-term goals regarding teaching, learning and assessment, and is amended appropriately in response to changes in the HE and other relevant professional sectors.

¹¹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- 3.6.4 The UCO's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy also considers its diverse student population, and aims to accommodate the different teaching, learning and assessment needs of students by providing a variety of options regarding attendance patterns, learning styles, and assessment methods.
- 3.6.5 Student support mechanisms are also considered as part of this strategy, to enable students to become active, independent, and responsible learners, achieving their maximum potential and enabling them to demonstrate their achievement fully and successfully. In support of this goal, the UCO recognises the need for well-educated, resourceful, and proactive staff fully committed to best practices in teaching and associated scholarship.
- 3.6.6 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy is designed to align closely with other elements of the UCO's Strategic Plan to achieve and continually develop high quality learning and teaching, which embraces the diversity of its student population and the osteopathic and other relevant professions.

AQF03: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
AQF03-01	UCO Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy



Academic Quality Framework

**Section 4: Course & Unit Approval &
Modification**

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 4: Course & Unit Approval & Modification

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to Course Leaders, Unit Leaders and members of relevant UCO Committees including Student Representatives.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	June 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	June 2018 Academic Council	Amendments to Course Approval Process to enable flexibility in the Course Approval Timeline and to reflect current practice of External Panel Member nominations.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Annual Review: Administrative Amendments to update role titles, agency titles and web links & Diagrams for clarity.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update staff role titles, weblinks & footnotes and to reflect current practice.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect new committee structure and current practice.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

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V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments and clarifications throughout to reflect updated staff roles and current practice including related forms and templates. Correction of typographical errors. Amendments to reflect broader provision that may be PSRB accredited.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V8.0	Jul 2022 Academic Council	Major Amendments to reduce the 2-stage course approval process to a 1-stage process that is informed by risk-assessment, and introduction of a risk-based approach to course modification.	Head of Quality & Partnerships	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					X
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

Academic Quality Framework

Section 4: Course and Unit Approval & Modification

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 This section of the Academic Quality Framework details the processes that the University College of Osteopathy (UCO) uses to design, develop, and approve new taught courses and units, and details how modifications may be made to such courses and units following approval.
- 4.1.2 The course approval and modification processes detailed apply to courses delivered by both the UCO and its collaborative partners.
- 4.1.3 All UCO-approved courses and units are required to be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the UCO's Annual Monitoring and Reporting processes as described in AQF Section 5. This provides UCO and partner staff with the opportunity to evaluate the quality and standards of the UCO's taught provision and stimulates curriculum development. The development of new courses and modifications to existing courses that may arise from annual reviews of courses involve external expert peer review and consultation, thereby ensuring that practices and experiences of external experts are utilised and considered.
- 4.1.4 All UCO-approved courses and units are required to be reviewed in depth periodically (normally every 5 years) as part of the UCO's Periodic Review processes as described in [AQF Section 6](#). This provides UCO and partner staff with the opportunity to undertake a full review of the provision to ensure it remains current and fit for purpose.
- 4.1.5 The overall aims of course and unit approval, review and modification are:
 - a) To assure all stakeholders of the UCO and the public of the quality and standards of the UCO's taught course provision and provision delivered by partner institutions that has been approved / validated by the UCO.
 - b) To ensure that the UCO secures a high quality academic and educational experience for its students studying on courses approved / validated by the UCO.

4.2 DESIGNING NEW COURSES AND UNITS

- 4.2.1 The design of new courses and units takes a significant amount of research and development, and it is supported by consultation within the UCO (involving both staff and students) and through engagement with external experts.
- 4.2.2 The design phase culminates in Course or Unit Approval Events which are based on the peer review of documentation and meetings with staff, students and external experts. These events enable the UCO and external approval bodies to evaluate the academic strength, standards, quality, appeal, and viability of the provision in detail.

4.3 MODIFYING EXISTING COURSES AND UNITS

- 4.3.1 Modifications to existing courses and units may be made between course approval and periodic review points to enhance provision, being instigated by student feedback or changes to sector or Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements.
- 4.3.2 The modification processes involve consultation and peer review to a depth which is proportionate to the risk level of the proposed modification(s).

4.4 COURSE AND UNIT APPROVAL AND MODIFICATION PROCESSES

- 4.4.1 The UCO's processes for approving and modifying courses and units are agreed by the Academic Council and are designed to adhere to requirements of external approval bodies and to the relevant

Expectations and Practices regarding Course Design and Development as detailed within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education¹.

4.4.2 The overall aims of course approval and modification processes are:

- a) To ensure that the UCO maintains strategic oversight of the process for the development and approval of courses.
- b) To ensure that courses are strategically and academically appropriate, and are developed in line with the UCO's Mission, Strategic Plan and Academic Regulations ([AQF Section 7](#)).
- c) To assure that the UCO approves courses that meet the appropriate quality and academic standards as defined by the UCO, the Quality Code, and expectations of relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).
- d) To ensure that learning and other resources are adequate and available to support course delivery and students.
- e) To ensure that the course learning environment is fit for purpose.
- f) To ensure that new course proposals are designed and developed appropriately according to prescribed criteria and decision-making processes.
- g) To ensure that the course is coherent and provides students with a developmental educational experience.
- h) To ensure that the quality and standards of teaching and assessment of the course are in line with national practice and will be continuously enhanced.
- i) To ensure that the responsibility for academic ownership and quality management of courses by Course Teams, teaching teams and other UCO departments are clearly communicated and acknowledged.
- j) To ensure that post-graduation, courses have prepared students sufficiently to enable them to meet employer expectations as appropriate.
- k) To ensure that external reference points and expertise are drawn upon to maintain and enhance quality standards regarding current developments and practices outside the UCO's environment.
- l) To ensure that students, staff, and external experts are appropriately involved in the design, development, and approval of courses.
- m) To ensure that appropriate External Examiner appointments for new courses are considered by the TQSC and recommended for approval by the Academic Council before the course starts.

4.5 RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING COURSE AND UNIT APPROVAL AND MODIFICATION

- 4.5.1 The primary responsibility for course and unit development, approval, and modification rests with the Course and Unit Leaders, overseen by the Head of Quality & Partnerships and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 4.5.2 The Head of Quality & Partnerships provides process support and monitors the completion of the required approval and modification stages.
- 4.5.3 Academic and institutional management committees also have roles in the review and approval of proposals. Further details about specific responsibilities are contained in the sub-sections below.
- 4.5.4 Course approval and modification processes are monitored by the Policy and Regulations a Group (PRG) to ensure that they are followed appropriately and remain effective.

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

4.5.5 Approval of new courses (including those proposed by partner institutions) is the responsibility of the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC) and the Academic Council.

4.5.6 Approval of modifications to existing courses is the responsibility of the Collaborative Provision Sub-Committee (CPSC) (for courses delivered by partners), the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC) and the Academic Council as set out in Part 3.

4.6 THE LENGTH OF TIME FOR WHICH COURSES AND UNITS ARE APPROVED

4.6.1 Courses and units are normally approved for five years unless otherwise specified at the Course Approval Event, or until the next Periodic Review point, whichever occurs sooner.

4.6.2 Courses are normally subject to a Periodic Review every five years, the processes of which are described in [AQF Section 6](#).

4.6.3 Where a single course is recommended for periodic review on the basis of a substantial proposed change or concern, this will be considered and recorded as an 'approval' event and the course approval process will apply.

4.7 ALIGNMENT WITH THE QUALITY CODE

4.7.1 Course and unit approval processes are developed and operated at the UCO in-line with external body requirements and aligns to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) regarding Course Design and Development².

PART 2: COURSE APPROVAL

4.8 DRIVERS FOR NEW COURSE DEVELOPMENT

4.8.1 The UCO's portfolio of taught courses including those delivered by collaborative partners is regularly reviewed to maintain and enhance academic quality and standards. Course portfolios evolve over time in response to several drivers including:

- a) The gradual development of existing courses.
- b) Securing entry into new subject areas.
- c) Securing entry into new subject areas through a collaborative partnership.
- d) Evidence of demand in student markets.
- e) Developments in academic strategy.
- f) The identification of new areas through staff research and enterprise.
- g) Demand from employers or professional bodies.
- h) Feedback from external examiners.
- i) Opportunities or threats from competitor institutions.
- j) Changes in patterns of student progression.
- k) Changes in government policy.

4.8.2 In addition to responding to the above to ensure that course portfolios leading to a UCO award remain current and attractive to prospective students, new courses proposed for development should also meet at least one of the following criteria within the resource capacity of the UCO or partner:

² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/course-design-and-development>

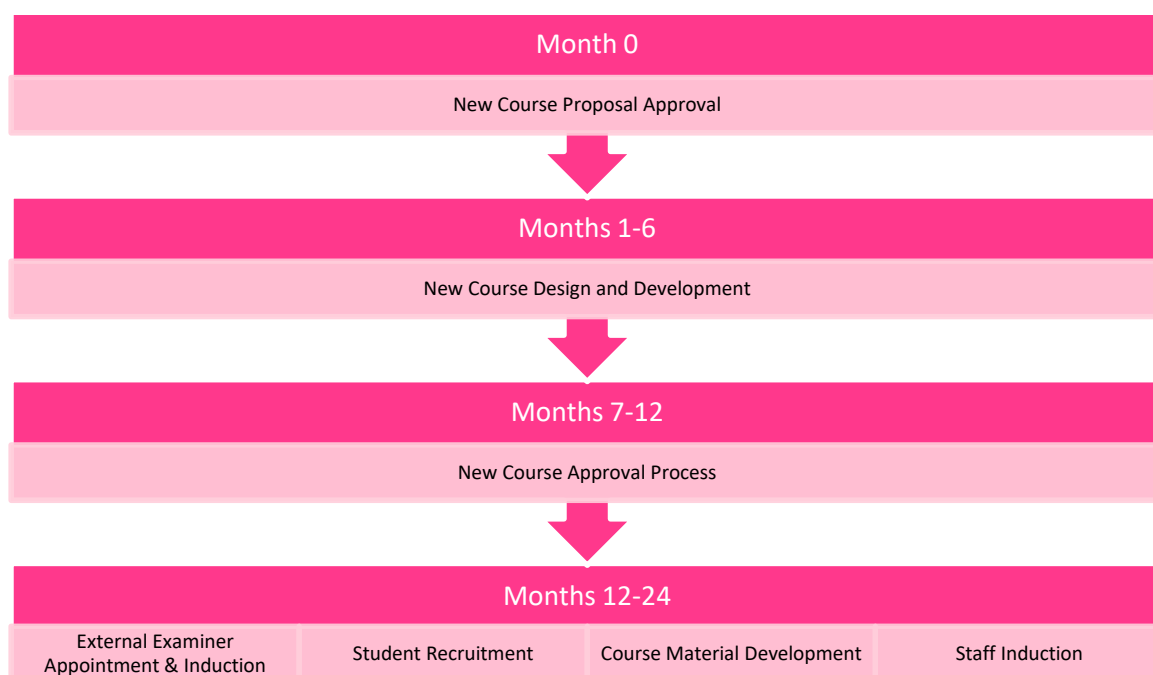
- a) Attract viable new cohorts of students to the course.
- b) Increase the conversion of applicants and prospective applicants to registered students in existing courses.
- c) Increase the progression opportunities for students including progression to Continuing Professional Development and postgraduate courses.
- d) Includes a more effective and sustainable use of staff expertise than on existing courses.

4.9 FRAMEWORK FOR NEW COURSE APPROVALS

- 4.9.1 Course design and approval processes are developed and operate in line with external body requirements and the UK Quality Code.
- 4.9.2 Each new course proposal requires significant research and development, and detailed criteria to guide the approval process. The approval process is rigorous to assure the quality of the proposed provision.
- 4.9.3 Development of the course portfolio must be coherent and consistent with the UCO's strategy and must make business sense in terms of student and market demand, income generated, and the physical and human resources required to run the proposal.
- 4.9.4 All proposals must consider relevant external inputs, including subject benchmark statements and the requirements of professional and statutory bodies where applicable.
- 4.9.5 New course proposals are assessed against criteria in areas including strategic fit and viability, quality and standards, assessment, staffing, and learning resources.

4.10 TIMESCALES OF THE COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS

- 4.10.1 Each new course proposal will require significant research and development from the Course Development Team, and this is normally accommodated by the schedules of the various approval events and oversight bodies.
- 4.10.2 The expected minimum timeframe for the Course Approval Process is 24 months from initial course proposal to delivery as follows:



- 4.10.3 Where a course is proposed to be accredited by a PSRB, the UCO will normally work to the PSRB's accreditation timelines which should be considered by the Course Development Team and planned for accordingly.
- 4.10.4 All new courses must be formally approved by the Academic Council prior to delivery which means that course approval must normally take place at the latest before the 30th of April (for delivery in the September of the next calendar year).
- 4.10.5 It is recognised, however, that these expected timelines may vary depending on the type and nature of the proposed course, how advanced the proposal is, whether course accreditation by a PSRB is to be considered concurrently, and other similar risk factors. This will normally result in expediting the course approval process and where this is agreed the process described in [Section 4.16](#) (Accelerated New Course Approval Process) will be followed.
- 4.10.6 In all cases the required Course Approval Documentation should be submitted to the Quality Team at least 10 days prior to the Course Approval Event.

4.11 NEW COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS OVERVIEW

- 4.11.1 The approval process for new courses is divided into two main stages:
- i) **New Course Proposal Approval** during which it is determined whether the proposed course fits with the UCO's strategic objectives and academic and research strategy, whether the appropriate human and physical resource are available, and whether it will meet market demand. If it is deemed to meet each of these criteria, the proposal will normally progress to the Approval of the New Course stage.
 - ii) **New Course Approval** which normally consists of the following phases:
 - a) **Course Design and Development:** during which the Course Development Team develop and produce the required course approval documentation with reference to relevant external reference points and benchmarks, and in consultation with staff, committees, students, external experts and PSRBs as appropriate.
 - b) **Approval in Detail:** during which a Course Approval Event is held and the Course Approval Panel, satisfied with the Course Development Team's responses to course approval conditions, recommends approval of the new course to the Academic Council by way of the TQSC.
 - c) **Formal Approval:** during which the Academic Council approves the new course for delivery and the Course Development Team receive formal notification of approval.
 - d) **Post Approval:** during which the course documentation for the new course is provided to the Academic Registry, Admissions and Recruitment, and Marketing Teams, and an appropriate External Examiner is appointed, student recruitment activities are undertaken, course learning material is developed, and induction activities are provided to academic staff.
- 4.11.2 The Head of Quality & Partnerships will normally liaise with the Course Development Team regarding details of timelines and documentation requirements, to provide procedural support, and to monitor the completion of the required approval stages as outlined below.
- 4.11.3 Progress of the new Course Approval process will be reported to the CPSC (for partner courses) and TQSC (for all courses) by the Head of Quality & Partnerships.

4.12 STAGE 1: NEW COURSE PROPOSAL APPROVAL

- 4.12.1 Initial scoping documentation is considered at the New Course Proposal Approval stage of the New Course Approval Process.

- 4.12.2 The Course Development Team Leader should complete the following forms to provide the academic and business case for the proposal and to ensure that development of a course is appropriate and viable financially.
- AQF04-01 New Course Proposal Form
 - AQF04-02 New Course Costings Form (applicable to courses delivered by the UCO only)
- 4.12.3 These forms should be completed in liaison with a range of staff to discuss, consider and confirm the operational, resource and financial viability of the proposal, including Recruitment and Marketing, Admissions and Registry, Learning Resources and IT, Human Resources, Finance and Estates, and Student Support staff.
- 4.12.4 This initial scoping documentation should provide an outline of the course and identify internal and external reference points which will inform the design of the course and to which the course will be benchmarked. In addition, the market demand for the proposed course should also be undertaken at the new course proposal approval stage to identify and confirm that a sustainable market for the course exists and to identify any potential competitors that may impact on the success of the course. The initial scoping documentation should also identify any risks associated with the new course, how these will be mitigated should the proposal be approved.
- 4.12.5 The scoping documentation will also identify the proposed course approval process and timelines for approval using a risk-based approach, considering the nature and type of course under consideration, the proposed start date, PSRB accreditation requirements, etc.
- 4.12.6 The Course Development Team Leader is responsible for producing these forms in liaison with the Course Development Team, Director of Teaching, Learning & Assessment, Quality Partnerships Manager, Head of Quality & Partnerships, Finance Director, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) as appropriate; they must be approved by the Academic Council and Senior Management Team (SMT) and be updated as required during the Course Development and Approval in Detail phases.
- 4.12.7 As the New Course Costings Form (AQF04-02) may include financially sensitive information it is not normally shared with Course Approval Panel members and should therefore be produced with an internal audience in mind. The New Course Proposal Form (AQF04-01) will normally be shared with Course Approval Panel members.

A) APPROVAL OF THE NEW COURSE PROPOSAL BY THE TQSC & ACADEMIC COUNCIL

- 4.12.8 The New Course Proposal Form (AQF04-01) is considered by the TQSC to consider the academic case for the proposal and, if successful, recommends approval of the new course proposal to the Academic Council for approval. New course proposals must be approved by the Academic Council. The following outcomes of TQSC and Academic Council consideration of the proposal are as follows:
- a) Approval to progress the proposal to the New Course Approval Stage.
 - b) Approval to progress to the New Course Approval Stage subject to recommended changes / further actions.
 - c) Approval of the proposal is not granted (or may be recommended for re-submission at a later date).

B) APPROVAL OF THE NEW COURSE PROPOSAL BY THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

- 4.12.9 The New Course Proposal Form (AQF04-01) is also considered by the Senior Management to consider the business case for the proposal and identifies any resource and cost implications. For courses developed by the UCO, the New Course Costings Form (AQF04-02) is also considered alongside and includes information such as teaching staff costs, course fees and projected student numbers. The following outcomes of SMT consideration of the proposal are as follows:
- a) Approval to progress to the New Course Approval Stage.

- b) Approval to progress to the New Course Approval Course Stage subject to recommended changes / further actions.
- c) Approval of the proposal is not granted (or may be recommended for re-submission at a later date).

C) NEW COURSE PROPOSAL APPROVAL PROCESS FLOWCHART

4.12.10 A flowchart of the New Course Proposal Approval process is shown in [Diagram 4.1](#).

4.13 STAGE 2: NEW COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS

4.13.1 A flowchart for the approval of a new course (following approval of new course proposal) is shown in [Diagram 4.2](#) and is described in detail below.

4.13.2 The following process phases of the approval of a new course are documented below:

- i. Course Design & Development
- ii. Development of Course Approval Documentation
- iii. Appointment of the Course Approval Panel
- iv. Approval in Detail
- v. Post Approval

i. COURSE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

4.13.3 The Course Design & Development phase of the New Course Approval Process will normally involve a range of activities to ensure that all academic areas and issues are addressed. These will include the consideration of internal and external benchmarks, consultation with Finance, Human Resources, Student Support, Equalities and Learning Resources Departments and other relevant staff, consultation with students and external experts within the subject discipline and PSRBs.

4.13.4 This phase of the new course approval process is where the Course Development Team will design and develop the course curriculum, the teaching, learning and assessment strategies for the course, and identify the recommended resources for the course, in addition to identifying human and physical resources required for the course in line with appropriate internal and external reference points including the UCO's Strategic Plan, the Partner's Strategic Plan, the UCO's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (or approved Partner equivalent), recognised national and international frameworks applicable for the course under consideration, and relevant PSRB standards and expectations as appropriate.

4.13.5 The Quality Team are available for procedural advice regarding course design and development requirements.

ii. DEVELOPMENT OF COURSE APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

4.13.6 Specific course approval documentation is developed during this phase of the New Course Approval process as detailed below.

4.13.7 Responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the required course approval documentation rests with the Course Development Team and is overseen by the Course Development Team Leader unless otherwise specified; procedural guidance is available from the Quality Team.

4.13.8 Version control processes should be used when completing course approval documentation as documented in the UCO's Version Control Policy³. This includes the use of footers to show the date and version of each document.

4.13.9 The course approval documentation should be produced using the referenced forms and templates.

³ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- 4.13.10 The course approval documentation that is normally required is listed in [Table 4.1](#).
- 4.13.11 The Course Approval Panel will normally receive all documentation listed in [Table 4.1](#) and guidance relating to the event (AQF04-12), providing context for the panel regarding the documentation submitted.
- 4.13.12 The required Course Approval Documentation should be submitted electronically to the Quality Team no later than two weeks (or within the agreed timeline before the Course Approval Event. It is the responsibility of the Course Development Team Leader to ensure that the correct documentation is submitted by the agreed deadline.
- 4.13.13 It is the responsibility of the Quality Team to ensure that the correct Course Approval Documentation is circulated to the Course Approval Panel in good time prior to the Course Approval Event.
- 4.13.14 Normally documentation is provided in electronic format only, however Course Approval Panel members may request hard copies from the Quality Team.

TABLE 4.1: REQUIRED COURSE APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

Document Number	Required Course Approval Document	Document Description
AQF04-03	An Academic Rationale	<p>One Academic Rationale should be produced for each course using the Academic Rationale Template (AQF04-03).</p> <p>The Academic Rationale should provide evidence about the following regarding the proposed course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic strength and significance. • Course structure and curriculum. • Strategic fit and viability. • Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy • Quality of the learning experience including student progression through the course. • Quality and standards of the course. • Regulatory and technical compliance. • Staffing and resources. • Student support and guidance. • Course management. • Quality of flexible delivery arrangements. <p>The Academic Rationale should be written with the Course Approval Panel as the intended audience.</p> <p>Guidance for writing the Academic Rationale is provided within the Academic Rationale Template.</p> <p>An Academic Rationale using this template must be completed for each course under consideration irrespective of whether the course is being developed for delivery by the UCO or by a partner institution.</p> <p>Additional evidence and supporting documentation should be appended to the Academic Rationale where relevant, e.g., course-specific policies and procedures, proposed student induction schedules, etc., in addition to links to institutional policies and procedures.</p>

AQF-04-04	New Course Proposal Competitor Analysis & Market Research Form	<p>This form should be completed for each course under consideration using the template provided (AQF04-04).</p> <p>Evidence of market research and competitor analysis may be appended to the form.</p>
AQF04-05a	Course Information Form (CIF)	<p>One CIF should be produced for each course under consideration using the CIF Template (AQF04-05a).</p> <p>The CIF should be written with students as the intended audience.</p> <p>The CIF provides essential information about the course and should be published on the UCO's / Partner's websites to provide prospective students with relevant information about the course.</p> <p>It is important that all sections of the CIF are accurate and completed in full for consideration by the Course Approval Panel. This is the responsibility of the Course Development Team Leader.</p> <p>Guidance for completing the CIF Template is provided in the CIF Manual (AQF-04-05b).</p> <p>Where a partner institution has an established equivalent CIF template which varies from AQF04-05a, it may be used with prior agreement following its assessment that it contains equivalent information by the Quality Team. Where this is the case, use of an alternative template shall be recorded as a variance to the UCO's regulation.</p>
AQF04-06a	Unit Information Forms (UIFs)	<p>One UIF should be produced for each unit using the UIF Template (AQF04-06a).</p> <p>UIFs should be written with students as the intended audience.</p> <p>UIFs provide essential information about specific units.</p> <p>It is important that all sections of the UIF are accurate and completed in full for consideration by the Course Approval Panel. This is the responsibility of the Course Development Team Leader.</p> <p>Guidance for completing the UIF Template is provided in the UIF Manual (AQF-04-06b).</p> <p>Where a partner institution has an established equivalent UIF template which varies from AQF04-06a, it may be used with prior agreement following its assessment that it contains equivalent information by the Quality Team. Where this is the case, use of an alternative template shall be recorded as a variance to the UCO's regulation.</p>
AQF04-07	Course Handbook	<p>One Course Handbook should be produced for each course using the Course Handbook Template (AQF04-07).</p> <p>The Course Handbook should be written with students as the intended audience.</p> <p>The Course Handbook provides students with more detailed information about their course referencing course specific requirements, resources and regulations and signposting to</p>

		<p>relevant policies and procedures, services, and facilities appropriate for the course under consideration.</p> <p>It is important that the Course Handbook is accurate and reflects UCO Academic Regulations (see AQF Section 7: Academic Regulations) and approved policies and procedures.</p> <p>It is important that all sections of the Course Handbook are accurate and completed in full for consideration by the Course Approval Panel. This is the responsibility of the Course Development Team Leader.</p> <p>Where a partner institution has an established equivalent Course Handbook template which varies from AQF04-07, it may be used with prior agreement following its assessment that it contains equivalent information by the Quality Team. Where this is the case, use of an alternative template shall be recorded as a variance to the UCO's regulation.</p>
AQF04-08	External Benchmark Mapping	<p>One External Benchmark Mapping spreadsheet should be produced for each course using the External Benchmark Mapping Template (AQF04-08).</p> <p>The External Benchmark Mapping document should demonstrate how the course maps onto or meets appropriate external benchmarks.</p> <p>It is expected that courses will be mapped to the following external benchmarks as a minimum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Office for Students Regulatory Framework - Annex 3 - Sector Recognised Standards in England (2018)⁴ QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education⁵, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualifications Frameworks Subject Benchmark Statements Degree Characteristics Statements (if applicable) Credit Frameworks SEEC Level Descriptors⁶ Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) standards / codes of practice (as applicable).
AQF04-09	Staff CVs / Recruitment Plan	<p>The names of all staff expected to manage and deliver the proposed course should be provided on the Staff CV Coversheet Form (AQF04-09).</p> <p>The CVs of these staff should also be provided in PDF format and should not contain more personal data than is needed for the purpose of Course Approval. CVs should provide details and evidence of relevant qualifications, expertise, and sector engagement pertinent to the course in question.</p>

⁴ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/securing-student-success-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/>

⁵ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

⁶ <http://seec.org.uk/resources/>

		If staff have not yet been recruited, a Recruitment Plan for prospective staffing of the course should be provided using the same form (AQF04-09) with role descriptions provided to demonstrate the required qualifications, experience and knowledge required for each role.
AQF04-10	Schedule of Variance	Where it is proposed that a variance to the UCO's Academic Regulations or Policies and Procedures relates to the delivery and / or management of the course the Schedule of Variance Template (AQF04-10) should be completed as part of the new course approval documentation and be accompanied by the alternative regulations / policies as appropriate.
N/A	Relevant Supporting Documentation	<p>Course Development Teams are encouraged to submit relevant supporting documentation to support claims made in the academic rationale, to demonstrate alignment with relevant policies, procedures, and regulations, and to support the student learning experience. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner strategic documents where these differ from those of the UCO. • Student Induction Schedules • Work-Based Learning / Placement Handbooks • Evidence of placement places secured. • Copies of existing or new policies developed required for the new course. • SMART Action Plans for the development of learning materials, resources, and VLE, staff recruitment and development, securing of placements, development of facilities and infrastructure,

iii. APPOINTMENT OF THE COURSE APPROVAL PANEL (INCLUDING EXTERNAL PANELLISTS)

- 4.13.15 For each Course Approval Event a Course Approval Panel is appointed which is collectively responsible for assuring that the proposal meets the Course Approval Criteria sufficiently for effective and successful delivery of the course in line with expected academic standards and quality.
- 4.13.16 In all cases the Course Approval Panel will normally consist of the panellists identified in [Table 4.2](#) who shall be appointed in line with the criteria stated.
- 4.13.17 Where the field of study or subject area of a proposed new course is without the UCO's normal areas of expertise or provision, additional external panel members or advisors may be appointed to assure that academic standards and quality are upheld.
- 4.13.18 Where a second course approval event is required as part of the course approval process or is recommended by the Course Approval Panel as an outcome to a Course Approval Event, the same panel shall normally be appointed for both events to assure consistency in approach to the course under consideration.
- 4.13.19 Where several closely related courses are proposed for approval, for example a suite of courses with shared units, the same Course Approval Panel may also be appointed to assure consistency in approach should more than one Course Approval Event be agreed or required.
- 4.13.20 Internal panellists will be recruited from the UCO's existing pool of academic and professional services staff, with training and support provided to those who may be new to the process or to a panel role.

- 4.13.21 External panellists will normally be nominated by the Course Development Team in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) using the External Panel Member Nomination Form (AQF04-11). The CV of nominated External Panel Members should accompany each nomination form.
- 4.13.22 At least one academic and one industry external panellist will normally be required.
- 4.13.23 External panellists should have:
- Relevant knowledge and experience of the subject area of the new course under consideration.
 - Be able to fulfil the requirements of the role including reviewing the new course approval documentation prior to the course approval event, attending the Course Approval Event, and being available for post-course approval event requirements, such as reviewing responses to conditions.
- 4.13.24 External panellists should not have:
- Been an external examiner at the UCO or relevant partner institution within the last three years.
 - Been a staff member at the UCO or relevant partner institution within the last three years.
 - Been involved with the development of the proposed course.
- 4.13.25 External Panel member nomination forms and CVs are approved by the TQSC. Where time does not allow consideration by the TQSC at a committee meeting, these may be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) as Chair of the TQSC.
- 4.13.26 The Quality Team will thereafter be responsible for liaising with the appointed External Panellists regarding the arrangements, requirements, and logistics of the course approval process and event. This will normally include providing guidance regarding the expectations of their role, their expected time commitment, fees, and expenses and providing an opportunity for a pre-panel meeting and / or support to ensure that they are clear about their role.
- 4.13.27 Any proposed changes to the appointed Course Approval Panel will require approval by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) as Chair of the TQSC.

TABLE 4.2: COURSE APPROVAL PANEL MEMBERSHIP, CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT & PANEL ROLES

Panellist	Criteria for Appointment	Panel Role
Chair	The Chair is a senior member of academic staff who has not had direct involvement with the development of the proposal.	<p>The Chair of the panel is expected to ensure that discussions during the event are developmental and enhance the proposal being considered.</p> <p>The Chair should use the initial private meeting of the panel to agree who will lead on which themes, which areas should be highlighted for clarification as well as the order of topics.</p> <p>The Chair will open the event by clarifying the aims and objectives of the event and will close the event by summarising the conclusions and outcomes. Issues which are not fully clarified should be pursued and any areas of concern should be shared with the Course Development Team at an early stage.</p>

		The Chair approves the Course Development Team's response to any conditions arising from the event.
An Internal Academic Representative	The internal academic representative is a member of UCO academic staff normally within the same subject area as that of the proposed course and should not have been involved in developing or submitting the proposal.	The role of the academic representative is to draw upon his/her experiences within his/her own academic area to provide an objective and independent view of the quality of the proposal.
Two External Panel Members; one academic and one industry	<p>External members of the panel should not have been an External Examiner or former member of staff at the UCO within the last three years nor involved in the development of the proposal.</p> <p>Neither should any of the Course Development Team putting forward the proposal be acting as an External Examiner on a course with which the external nominee is associated.</p>	<p>The role of the external panel members is to draw upon their subject specialism and professional experience to provide an objective and independent judgement of the quality, standards and coherence of the proposal.</p> <p>It is expected that external panel members will undertake the role of "critical friend" and constructively challenge viewpoints or assumptions that are held by the Course Team or institutionally.</p>
A Student Representative	The Student Representative should be a student of the UCO and to have been a student for at least one year or a recent graduate (of not more than two years) within the same subject area as that of the proposed course.	The role of the student panel member is to contribute to the assessment of all areas of the proposal, but with a particular focus on the student experience.
A Quality Assurance Representative	The Quality Assurance Representative should be a member of the UCO's Quality Assurance Team.	The role of this representative is to advise on quality assurance and regulatory issues and to confirm that the proposal adheres to UCO regulations and policies and to raise any variations to UCO requirements or expectations in the proposed course, as conditions of approval.
A Secretary	The Secretary is usually assigned by the Head of Quality.	The Secretary's duties include taking notes at the event and preparing the report of the event in liaison with the Chair of the Panel.

iv. APPROVAL IN DETAIL

4.13.28 The Approval in Detail stage of the New Course Approval Process involves a series of activities undertaken in sequential order as follows:

Order	New Course Approval Process Activities
1	Course Development Team submission of the required Course Approval Documentation to the Quality Team within the agreed timeline.

2	Quality Team circulation of the submitted Course Approval Documentation and course approval guidance to the Course Approval Panel.
3	Course Approval Panel independent review of the Course Approval Documentation within a defined time-period prior to the Course Approval Event where panellists confirm whether the proposal meets the specified course approval criteria and generating lines of enquiry to pursue with the Course Development Team at the Course Approval Event, during which clarifications or additional information may be requested via the Quality Team.
4	Course Approval Panel and Course Development Team attendance to a Course Approval Event where the outcomes of the Course Approval Panel's independent reviews of the Course Approval Documentation will be discussed, agreed lines of enquiry pursued and an outcome to the event agreed in line with the defined Possible Course Approval Event Outcomes .
5	Course Development Team consideration of the Course Approval Event outcome, which may include responding to any time-limited approval conditions.
6	Course Approval Panel review of the Course Development Team's response to the Course Approval Event outcome and / or approval conditions to confirm that these have been met to a sufficient standard further to which approval of the new course for delivery can be recommended to the TQSC.
7	TQSC consider the Course Approval Panel's recommendation to approve the course for delivery and recommend their decision to the Academic Council.
8	Academic Council considers the TQSC's recommendation to approve the course for delivery and authorises formal approval.

A) COURSE APPROVAL EVENTS

4.13.29 Course Approval Events will normally take place virtually however, where new premises or specialist facilities are involved in the delivery of the proposed new course, the Course Approval Event will either be held at the delivery site to enable the Course Approval Panel to view the premises and facilities. Where this is not possible, a virtual viewing may be arranged, or a site visit may be set as an approval condition.

4.13.30 To assure appropriate scrutiny of new courses, a maximum of the equivalent of 480 credits of learning will constitute a one-day course approval event where those credits are part of the same course proposal, and a maximum of the equivalent of 120 credits of learning will constitute a one-day event where those credits are derived from more than one new course proposal. Where these limits are exceeded, the course approval event will increase by increments of one day as appropriate for the proposal.

4.13.31 Course Approval Events will be constructed to last for one day only which may operate over one whole day or two half days depending on logistics.

4.13.32 Course Approval Events normally follow a set agenda which is provided in [Table 4.4](#). This agenda may be amended in response to identified lines of enquiry by the Course Approval Panel and may be flexible throughout the Course Approval Event depending on the nature and evolving of discussions between the Course Approval Panel and the Course Development Team.

B) POSSIBLE COURSE APPROVAL EVENT OUTCOMES

4.13.33 The possible outcomes of Course Approval Events are:

- a) Approval without conditions.

- b) Approval with conditions (where the additional work required is related to documentation or to secure academic standards and/or quality as represented by the scrutiny requirements specified above).
- c) Non-approval (either with a recommendation to resubmit at a later date or to withdraw the proposal).

4.13.34 Recommendations to enhance the proposed course may also be identified.

4.13.35 Commendations may also be identified.

4.13.36 The Chair of the Course Approval Panel will normally report outline feedback orally to the Course Development Team at the Course Approval Event's final feedback session. Formal confirmation of the Course Approval Event outcomes is given in writing through the Course Approval Event Conditions and Response Form (AQF04-13) as soon as possible after the event and the more detailed course approval outcome report following the event.

C) COURSE APPROVAL REPORTING & RESPONDING TO OUTCOMES

4.13.37 The Secretary to the panel drafts a course approval outcome report normally within two weeks of the event.

4.13.38 The report should include the outcome of the event including the reasons for the panel's conclusions. Any course approval conditions should be specified, together with their requisite deadlines and responsibilities, and any recommendations for enhancement should be listed.

4.13.39 The report should specify any proposed / approved variations to UCO regulations and policy, and any transition arrangements in respect of continuing students, as well as the start date confirmed at the course approval event (subject to conditions).

4.13.40 The panel may report on areas of strength in its feedback to the Course Development Team and note these in the report.

4.13.41 The report should also provide a clear indication of the discussions to explain the panel's conclusions.

4.13.42 Where more than one award/title is considered at a single event, outcomes must be reported separately for each award/title.

4.13.43 The Secretary to the panel circulates the report to the members of the Course Approval Panel for confirmation and final approval and authorisation by the Chair of the panel. The Secretary then circulates the confirmed report to the Course Development Team Leader, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Head of Quality & Partnerships.

4.13.44 It is the responsibility of the Course Development Team Leader, in consultation with the Course Development Team and relevant staff as appropriate, to respond to any approval conditions and recommendations detailed in the course approval outcome report by completing the relevant column of the Course Approval Event Conditions and Response Form (AQF04-13) by the requisite deadline/s. All course approval conditions should be responded to by the Course Development Team in the response.

4.13.45 Recommendations are not required to be met however it is expected that consideration will be given to recommendations by the Course Development Team, and that action or comment will be given as appropriate in the response. It is advised that this includes consideration of disseminating strengths identified during the approval process.

4.13.46 The Course Development Team's response should be submitted to the Quality Team, who will circulate it and any revised or additional documentation to the Course Approval Panel for review and confirmation that the responses meet the conditions sufficiently to recommend approval of the course for delivery.

4.13.47 The Chair of the Course Approval Panel will consider the panel's feedback and must also be satisfied with the Course Development Team's responses to the approval conditions and recommendations prior to the commencement of the course. They will confirm that the response is satisfactory by signing the Course Approval Event Conditions and Response Form (AQF04-13) and returning it to the Quality Team.

- 4.13.48 The Quality Team will forward the signed Course Approval Event Conditions and Response Form (AQF04-13) and the course approval outcome report recommending approval of the course for delivery to the TQSC for consideration. The TQSC shall then recommend approval of the course for delivery to the Academic Council.
- 4.13.49 When a course is not recommended for approval by the Course Approval Panel, or there is disagreement regarding the approval / delivery conditions that cannot be reconciled between the Panel Chair and Course Development Team, the Chair of the TQSC shall be advised immediately and, in consultation with the Head of Quality & Partnerships and the Course Approval Panel Chair, shall determine whether it is appropriate for the course to be considered by a Course Approval Review Panel or should be presented to another Course Approval Panel at a later date. The composition of a Course Approval Review Panel shall be determined by the TQSC Chair. The Course Approval Review Panel shall produce a report on the outcome of their discussions and present their findings directly to the TQSC.
- 4.13.50 In the case of courses that are accredited, approval for delivery may also be subject to approval from the relevant Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body (PSRB).

D) FORMAL APPROVAL

- 4.13.51 The Academic Council considers the course approval outcome report and Course Approval Event Conditions and Response Form (AQF04-13) and the recommendation from the TQSC that the course is approved for delivery.
- 4.13.52 Further to formal approval by the Academic Council a Course Approval Confirmation Form (AQF04-14) is produced and provided to the Course Development Team. The confirmation form details the start date of the new course, the length of time for which the course is approved and the date of the periodic review of the course.
- 4.13.53 The confirmation form serves as confirmation that the Course Approval Process has concluded.
- 4.13.54 Monitoring of ongoing approval conditions is overseen by the ~~CPSC in respect of partner courses~~, the TQSC in respect of educational matters and the Senior Management Team in respect of institutional matters as appropriate.

E) POST APPROVAL

- 4.13.55 Following formal approval of the new course for delivery:
- a) The Quality Team will keep a record of the approved definitive course documentation on file and provide a copy of this to the Course Development Team (for their records), Registry (to update the student record system and make assessment arrangements) and, for courses developed by the UCO, the Marketing Team (to publish / update as appropriate on the UCO's website).
 - b) The Quality Team will ask the Course Leader of the new course to nominate an External Examiner for the course in line with the UCO's External Examiner nomination process described in AQF Section 11. The External Examiner should be appointed and attend a training / induction session to their role by the start date of the new course.
 - c) The Course Team for the new course prepare for delivery of the new course, will liaise with relevant staff as appropriate (e.g., HR for staff recruitment, the Recruitment & Marketing Team for course publicity, the Admissions Team for Interview Events, the Registry Team for induction and timetabling of the new course, the ICT Department for online learning resources, etc.).
 - d) The Admissions and Registry Teams are responsible for updating the UCO's Information Management Systems to reflect the addition of the new course.

4.14 CRITERIA FOR THE APPROVAL OF NEW COURSES

- 4.14.1 Course Approval Panels are required to consider the following criteria when reviewing and approving a new course. The course approval outcome report will typically be structured on these criteria, noting practice that is innovative and/or likely to be of interest to other Course Teams.
- 4.14.2 These criteria should also inform the development of the course and its documentation throughout the course design and approval process. Course Development Teams are therefore recommended to consider and structure the Academic Rationale on these criteria listed in [Table 4.3](#).

TABLE 4.3: COURSE APPROVAL CRITERIA

Area	Course Approval Criteria	Relevant Course Approval Document
Academic Strength & Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The proposed course constitutes a significant and sector-benchmarked academic offering in the subject area(s) it represents. ii. The course is accurately understood and evidenced by the Course Development Team as distinctive, developmental, or comparable with others within the Higher Education sector. iii. The expectations of students, employers and other relevant professional bodies have been considered within the course design and development process. 	AQF04-01: New Course Proposal Form AQF04-03: Academic Rationale AQF04-04: New Course Proposal Competitor Analysis & Market Research Form
Strategic Fit & Viability	<p>The proposed course supports the UCO's mission and strategic direction.</p> <p>There is market research and/or quantitative evidence to support the viability of the proposed provision.</p> <p>The proposed course constitutes a worthwhile extension of the UCO's existing provision in terms of its curriculum and proposed market(s).</p>	UCO / Partner Strategic Documents AQF04-04: New Course Proposal Competitor Analysis & Market Research Form
Quality & Standards of the Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The aims and objectives of the proposed course are consistent with the UCO's (or partner's) strategic educational aims and objectives. ii. The proposed course complies with the UCO's Academic Regulations (AQF Section 7) unless a variation to these regulations is proposed and detailed within the approval documentation. iii. The course demonstrates constructive alignment between aims, learning outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment strategies, level of learning, 	UCO / Partner Strategic Documents AQF04-03: Academic Rationale AQF04-05a: CIFs AQF04-06a: UIFs AQF04-07: Course Handbook AQF04-08: External Benchmark Mapping AQF04-10: Schedule of Variance to UCO Academic Regulations

	<p>credit weighting and recommended resources</p> <p>iv. Relevant internal and external benchmarks, including the QAA FHEQ, credit framework, subject benchmarks and qualification characteristics documents, and appropriate industry/professional standards, have been considered and addressed appropriately within the course design and development process.</p> <p>v. The intended learning outcomes for the course, and the standards that will be achieved, are appropriate to the level of the proposed award and title and are appropriately distinct from any other awards and/or titles offered or already proposed for approval.</p> <p>vi. There are opportunities for academic progression to (e.g., Recognition of Prior Learning opportunities) and from the proposed course (e.g., Exit Qualifications), with appropriate entry and exit requirements in line with UCO regulations (see AQF Section 7).</p>	
Quality of the Learning Experience	<p>i. The proposed course provides students with a coherent and developmental educational experience.</p> <p>ii. The graduate / postgraduate outcomes for students, including those who achieve specified exit awards, represent a good return on their investment.</p> <p>iii. Engagement with relevant employers and/or professional bodies throughout the course is sufficient to confirm that the student experience is informed by current and contemporary practice, e.g., guest lecturers, placement or work experience opportunities, field trips or visits, etc.</p> <p>iv. The proposed course is consistent with the UCO's (or approved partner's) equal opportunities and diversity policies and promotes an inclusive environment for learning by anticipating the varied requirements of learners (for example, because of a declared disability, specific cultural background, location, or age), and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities.</p>	<p>AQF04-03: Academic Rationale</p> <p>AQF04-05a: CIFs</p> <p>AQF04-06a: UIFs</p> <p>AQF04-07: Course Handbook</p> <p>Equal Opportunities, Diversity & Inclusivity Policies</p> <p>Evidence of planned guest lecturers, placement or work experience opportunities, field trips or visits, e.g., Placement Handbook.</p>

	v. The experience of students studying in part-time, distance, flexible modes and/or partnership can be confirmed as equivalent to those of students studying full-time on the same/similar provision.	
Course Structure & Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The course structure, curriculum and intended learning outcomes match the rationale for the proposed course. ii. The academic rationale for the proposed course is sound, and the curriculum is coherent, with clear progression in the subject matter. iii. The intended learning outcomes and aims of the course and those of its component units align. iv. The teaching and learning strategies of the course and its component units are appropriate to the curriculum. v. There is evidence that the quality of teaching and standards of assessment in the subject are likely to be consistent with national practice. vi. The course is balanced in terms of subject specialism, skills development, and professional standards. vii. The course structure considers students with diverse characteristics, including ensuring that intended learning outcomes, learning, and teaching activities, learning environments, and planned assessment methods do not create any unnecessary barriers. 	<p>AQF04-03: Academic Rationale</p> <p>AQF04-05a: CIFs</p> <p>AQF04-06a: UIFs</p> <p>AQF04-07: Course Handbook</p> <p>Equal Opportunities, Diversity & Inclusivity Policies</p>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The intended learning outcomes of the course and its component units are tested through the assessment process. ii. The assessment strategy is clear, with students exposed to a range of assessment types. iii. Individual assessments within units are clearly identified and provide an effective measurement of performance, with an acceptable and balanced overall student workload. iv. The assessment strategy and individual assessments is designed to support student performance. 	<p>AQF04-03: Academic Rationale</p> <p>AQF04-05a: CIFs</p> <p>AQF04-06a: UIFs</p> <p>Equal Opportunities, Diversity & Inclusivity Policies</p>

	v. Assessment practices are inclusive and equitable, and the methods, tasks and processes do not advantage or disadvantage any group or individual.	
Regulatory & Technical Compliance	<p>The course does not contain any elements or processes at variance with UCO Academic Regulations (AQF Section 7), other than any exceptions for which approval is explicitly sought as part of the approval process.</p> <p>The UCO's policies, regulations and operational processes are applied consistently or identified and justified as variations.</p> <p>UCO expectations in respect of academic provision and its delivery are met in full.</p> <p>Any relevant PSRB requirements are met and align appropriately with UCO requirements and expectations.</p> <p>External requirements relevant to the provision are met.</p> <p>The course complies with the UCO's (or approved partner equivalent) policies on equality and diversity.</p>	<p>AQF04-01: New Course Proposal Form</p> <p>AQF04-03: Academic Rationale</p> <p>AQF04-05a: CIFs</p> <p>AQF04-06a: UIFs</p> <p>AQF04-07: Course Handbook</p> <p>AQF04-10: Schedule of Variance to UCO Academic Regulations</p>
Resources	<p>The human, physical and learning resources available (or the plans that are in place to provide them), including the environment within which the course will be offered, are satisfactory.</p> <p>i. Regarding human resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The delivery team are suitably qualified in their area(s) of expertise and have a postgraduate teaching qualification. b) There is a staff development policy in place that values and encourages academic and professional development activity by staff. c) The Course Team is externally engaged with relevant subject and professional communities. d) There is confidence that the Course Team can deliver and develop the course. 	<p>AQF04-01: New Course Proposal Form</p> <p>AQF04-03: Academic Rationale</p> <p>AQF04-05a: CIFs</p> <p>AQF04-06a: UIFs</p> <p>AQF04-09: Staff CVs / Staff Resource Plan</p> <p>Staff Development Policy</p> <p>Staff Induction Procedure</p> <p>Actual / Virtual Tour of Facilities</p> <p>Site Plans</p>

e) The quality of provision and its further enhancement are fully supported by research, scholarship, and academic enterprise within the Course Team.

f) The research and scholarly activity of the delivery team is sufficient to maintain the standards of provision and enrich the curriculum with contemporary developments in the subject, particularly to underpin work at Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level 6 and FHEQ Level 7⁷.

ii. Regarding physical resources:

a) The site of delivery is appropriate for the proposed course.

b) Any specialist facilities are in place (or the plans that are in place to provide them) are appropriate for the proposed course.

c) Any specialist equipment is in place (or the plans that are in place to provide them) are appropriate for the proposed course.

iii. Regarding learning resources:

a) Text and web-based recommended resources for the proposed course are appropriate, contemporary, and easily available and accessible to students.

b) The virtual learning environment (or equivalent) (or the plans that are in place to provide one) are appropriate for the proposed course.

c) Any specialist learning resources (or the plans that are in place to provide them) are appropriate for the proposed course and easily

⁷ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>

	available and accessible to students.	
Learner Support & Guidance (Excluding Student Support Services)	i. Course induction arrangements are appropriate to introduce students to any specific course features. ii. Arrangements are in place for any language or other support required by particular groups of students (overseas, direct entry with advanced standing etc.), and provision is made for students from diverse backgrounds and/or prior educational experience, and students with a range of characteristics including protected characteristics. iii. Support is available to students in respect of any critical course-related choices or decisions (e.g. electives, placements). iv. There are sound arrangements and support mechanisms in place for the management of work-based learning, mentoring, projects, etc.	AQF04-03: Academic Rationale AQF04-05a: CIFs AQF04-06a: UIFs AQF04-07: Course Handbook Course Induction Schedule Equal Opportunities, Diversity & Inclusivity Policies Work-Based Learning / Mentor / Project Handbooks
Course Management	i. The Course Team understands its responsibilities in respect of the management of the course, including student learning opportunities regarding teaching, learning and assessment processes and learning resources. ii. There are appropriate mechanisms in place for obtaining and responding to student feedback on the course and the student experience. iii. Arrangements for any cross-course and / or cross-institutional co-ordination are described and adequate.	AQF04-03: Academic Rationale Course Team Terms of Reference Examples of Student Feedback Surveys
Quality of Flexible Delivery Arrangements (These criteria are for use in respect of courses that are identified for flexible / distance delivery at the time of proposal. It is expected that during the process of approving such courses, all areas relating to the criteria above will be addressed. The criteria in this final	i. The nature, outcomes and progress of the learning experience are clearly and accurately conveyed to applicants and students. ii. The expectations of students are clearly identified, scheduled and supported, through the provision of appropriate information and criteria, study plans and contact points. iii. Arrangements for induction appropriate to the learning environment and delivery systems have been made.	AQF04-03: Academic Rationale AQF04-05a: CIFs AQF04-06a: UIFs AQF04-07: Course Handbook Examples of Study Plans Course Induction Schedule Description or tour of proposed delivery systems (e.g. VLE).

<p>section must also be addressed in respect of any units in which the learning experience depends substantially on flexible / distance delivery. Any change from the approved mode in the transition to or from the flexible / distance delivery of a course or unit must be re-approved through the course modification process.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Teaching, learning and assessment strategies are equivalent in quality to those provided in other learning contexts and are appropriate for the learning experience they will support. v. Assessment and feedback, including opportunities for formative assessment appropriate to contexts of independent study, can be managed securely in terms of quality, standards, and operational effectiveness, with verification and contingency arrangements in place. vi. The proposed distance / flexible delivery systems are accessible by the intended student population, are appropriately reliable and secure, and are consistent with UCO policies on equality and diversity. vii. The proposed delivery systems have been tested for reliability, and appropriate contingency plans are in place. viii. The longevity of delivery systems and materials has been considered, and appropriate plans are in place for development, updating and replacement. ix. The Course Team has appropriate experience and knowledge to support students and maintain quality and standards within distance learning / flexible delivery. 	
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4.15 AGENDA FOR COURSE APPROVAL EVENTS

4.15.1 The indicative agenda in [Table 4.4](#) below would typically apply for Course Approval Events. This agenda may be adapted as necessary.

TABLE 4.4: INDICATIVE AGENDA FOR A COURSE APPROVAL EVENT

Time	Agenda Item Please note – Session times may vary dependent on Lines of Enquiry & Discussions	Attendance
9:30am – 11:00am	Private meeting of the Panel to consider the outcomes of their individual reviews of the Course Approval Criteria and documentation and to identify Lines of Enquiry to pursue with the Course Development Team.	Panel
11:00am – 1:00pm	Discussions with the Course Development Team to pursue identified Lines of Enquiry and discuss any	Panel

	related matters. Actual / Virtual Tour of the Location where the Course will be Delivered as appropriate.	Course Development Team
1:00pm – 1:30pm	Lunch Break	All
1:30pm – 2:30pm	Private meeting of the Panel to consider the responses of the Course Development Team from the morning sessions and identify further Lines of Enquiry to pursue with the Course Development Team.	Panel
2:30pm – 3:45pm	Discussions with the Course Development Team to pursue identified Lines of Enquiry.	Panel Course Development Team
3:45pm – 4:15pm	Private meeting of the Panel to consider the recommended outcome for approval of the course as validated provision.	Panel
4:15pm – 4:30pm	Feedback is given to the Course Development Team including the meeting outcome, recommendations, and conditions.	Panel Course Development Team

4.16 ACCELERATED NEW COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS

- 4.16.1 In some cases, for example due to market or employer needs, an ‘accelerated’ process of course approval may be appropriate. Possible reasons include:
- The proposal is a subset of a recently successfully approved / revalidated course (for example, it is a short course for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) purposes).
 - The proposal shares a large number of units with a recently successfully approved / revalidated course.
 - The proposal is one of a portfolio of closely linked courses of which one has been recently successfully approved / revalidated.
- 4.16.2 In cases where it is thought this would be appropriate, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) should be contacted for advice in the first instance. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Head of Quality & Partnerships will then decide on whether this is appropriate, and if so, will agree a timescale for the accelerated new course approval process.
- 4.16.3 The same process as outlined in [Section 4.13](#) will normally be undertaken but using an accelerated timescale.
- 4.16.4 Where an accelerated timescale is approved, it shall be recorded on the Variation to Course Approval Process Form (AQF04-15).

4.17 PUBLICITY FOR AND MARKETING OF NEW COURSES

- 4.17.1 In line with the guidance and advice published by the Competitions & Marketing Authority⁸, the UCO works to ensure the accuracy of public information.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-advises-universities-and-students-on-consumer-law>

- 4.17.2 Information presented through the UCO's public website⁹ is verified as accurate by the Course Leader in conjunction with the Head of Quality & Partnerships and the UCO's Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing Teams following approval of the course, and thereafter on an annual basis.
- 4.17.3 Where new provision is being considered the course may only be advertised formally once a Course Approval Event has been scheduled. At this point the course must clearly be marketed as "subject to approval". Following receipt of the Course Approval Confirmation Form confirming formal approval of the course, this caveat may be removed. Any publicity for the new provision first requires approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 4.17.4 Published materials should always include the UCO logo in the approved format, refer to the UCO by its correct title, state that the course leads to an award of the UCO, and state the entry requirements for the course, including any English-language requirements. For courses delivered by partners, the nature of the partnership should also be clearly stated.

4.18 APPROVAL OF NEW AWARDS

- 4.18.1 A new award is one not currently offered by the UCO.
- 4.18.2 Proposals for new awards must be submitted using the New Course Proposal Form (AQF04-01) and will be approved concurrently with the associated new course through the New Course Approval Process detailed above.
- 4.18.3 Proposals for new awards will be considered by the TQSC (along with any variances to the UCO's Academic Regulations (AQF Section 7) that the proposed new award may require) and the Senior Management Team. If approved by these committees the new award will be recommended for approval by the Academic Council.
- 4.18.4 All new awards must be formally approved by the Academic Council.

⁹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/>

PART 3: COURSE & UNIT MODIFICATIONS

4.19 MODIFICATIONS TO COURSES & UNITS

- 4.19.1 Courses and units are typically approved for a period of five years, but it is acknowledged that modifications may be made following approval to enhance provision.
- 4.19.2 Staff may identify opportunities for enhancing approved courses and units as part of routine monitoring and other reflective activity.
- 4.19.3 As with new course design and development, modifications to courses and units must be coherent and consistent with the UCO's Strategic Plan (and / or partner's equivalent), must make business sense, and must be approved through the relevant modification process set out below. In all cases, a rationale for the proposed modification must be provided by the Course or Unit Leader as appropriate. They must also identify the modifications to the approved definitive course documentation and undertake appropriate consultation with stakeholders.
- 4.19.4 Modifications to courses and units are reflected through new versions of the following definitive course documentation which include:
 - a) Course Information Forms
 - b) Unit Information Forms
 - c) Course Handbooks

4.20 CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF COURSE AND UNIT MODIFICATION PROPOSALS

- 4.20.1 Course and unit modification proposals are considered by committees with educational oversight of the provision in question as appropriate; for courses delivered by the UCO, major changes which have a resource implication are also considered by the Senior Management Team. Proposed modifications are then approved through the relevant process according to the level of modification.
- 4.20.2 Proposals for course and unit modifications are subject to peer-review and external and internal consultation to provide assurance of the maintenance of academic quality and standards prior to their final approval.
- 4.20.3 Course and unit modifications may only be considered for approval further to the completion and submission of the appropriate approval documentation as detailed in the sections below.
- 4.20.4 Consultation may be undertaken at relevant committee meetings and through electronic communication. Where electronic consultation is undertaken in place of discussion at a committee meeting, this should be noted at the next available meeting and documented in meeting minutes.
- 4.20.5 In the case of consultation with students, a 10-day consultation period is recommended as a minimum to enable all affected students to consider and feedback on the proposed modifications.
- 4.20.6 For all modification proposals the Head of Quality & Partnerships shall liaise with the Course Leader and Unit Leader as appropriate regarding details of timelines and documentation needs, to provide procedural support and to monitor the completion of the required approval stages as outlined below. The Head of Quality & Partnerships will monitor that the minor and major modification approval stages are followed and will report this to the TQSC.

4.21 ALIGNMENT WITH THE QUALITY CODE

- 4.21.1 Course and unit modification processes are developed and operated at the UCO in line with external body requirements, including the UK Quality Code of Higher Education regarding Course Design & Development¹⁰.

4.22 ALIGNMENT WITH THE COMPETITION & MARKETS AUTHORITY (CMA)

- 4.22.1 A key consideration when proposing and approving a course modification is to ensure that prospective and existing students are provided with adequate notice of forthcoming changes to material information about their course and that they are consulted about this appropriately. This is in line with guidance published by the [Competition & Markets Authority \(CMA\)](https://www.cma.gov.uk/) for Higher Education Providers which helps providers fulfil their obligations under consumer protection law, in particular the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) and the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 (CCRs).

- 4.22.2 CMA guidance defines 'material information' as:

- a) Course title.
- b) Entry requirements / criteria (both academic and non-academic), and an indication of the standard / typical offer level criteria, including particular criteria for English language proficiency and visa and immigration requirements for international students.
- c) Core units of the course, and an indication of likely optional units, including whether there are any optional modules that are generally provided each year.
- d) Information about the composition of the course and how it will be delivered.
- e) The balance between the various elements, such as the number and type of contact hours that students can expect (for example, lectures, seminars, work placements, feedback on assignments).
- f) The expected workload of students (for example the expected self-study time).
- g) Details about the general level of experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the different elements of the course (for example, general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example professor, senior lecturer, or postgraduate student).
- h) The overall method(s) of assessment for the course, for example by exams, coursework, or practical assessments, etc (or a combination of these).
- i) The award to be received on successful completion of the course and, if relevant, the awarding body or institution.
- j) Location of study or possible locations, which should also include the likely or possible location of any work placements to be undertaken (where known), and accessibility to and opening times of facilities and learning resources.
- k) Length of the course.
- l) Whether the course and provider are regulated and by whom, for example, where an institution is regulated by the Office for Students or has a specific course designation.

¹⁰ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/course-design-and-development>

- m) Whether the course is accredited, for example by a professional, statutory, or regulatory body, and by whom.
- n) Any particular terms, such as rules and regulations, that apply to the course that students may find particularly surprising (such as, for example, a term explaining that the body awarding the degree is different to the HE provider running the course) or are otherwise important (such as, for example, any rules or regulations whose contravention might prevent a student from completing their course).
- o) Course fees and any additional course costs.

4.22.3 Modifications that may affect any of the above material information should be submitted for approval six months prior to the expected course start date to ensure that students, applicants, and other relevant stakeholders are provided with sufficient notice regarding planned modifications.

4.23 DRIVERS FOR MODIFICATIONS TO COURSES AND UNITS

4.23.1 Courses and units are typically approved for a period of five years from the point of approval to the point of periodic course review. During this period, it may be identified that modifications to a course or its units would enhance the provision. Course and Unit Leaders may propose in response to several sources of information, including:

- a) External Examiners' reports.
- b) Reports from accrediting or other external bodies.
- c) Staff, student, and graduate feedback.
- d) Student progress and other relevant data.
- e) Institutional goals and mission.
- f) Strategic academic and resource planning.
- g) Subject sectoral developments.
- h) Changing external environment.
- i) Typographical errors or clarifications.
- j) Good practice in other courses or units at the UCO, or other sources of good practice.

4.24 FRAMEWORK FOR MODIFICATIONS TO COURSES AND UNITS

4.24.1 The approval of course and unit modifications is subject to clear identification of the modifications, the production of a sound rationale, and evidence of undertaking appropriate consultation with stakeholders.

4.24.2 As with new course and unit design and development, modifications to courses and units must be coherent and consistent with the UCO's Strategic Plan (and / or partner's equivalent), make business sense, and be academically sound and appropriate.

4.24.3 The following areas of the approved CIF and UIF may not be changed:

- a) HECoS Code
- b) UCAS Course Code
- c) Unit Code

4.25 TIMESCALES OF COURSE & UNIT MODIFICATIONS

A) PLANNED MODIFICATIONS

- 4.25.1 A planned modification is one that is approved before the final Academic Council meeting of the academic year preceding implementation.
- 4.25.2 Modifications that may impact on material information define in [CMA guidance](#) will normally be required to be approved by the penultimate Academic Council of the academic year (or 6 months preceding the course start date) to ensure that students, applicants, and other relevant stakeholders are provided with sufficient notice regarding planned modifications to meet CMA obligations.

B) IMMEDIATE MODIFICATIONS

- 4.25.3 An immediate modification is one approved outside of the planned modification timeframes.
- 4.25.4 Immediate modifications required, for example, in response to External Examiner recommendations or operational issues arising or identified at a time that does not permit the proposal of a Planned Modification, must in all cases be presented to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Chair of Academic Council for approval.
- 4.25.5 Actions to approve modifications by the Academic Council Chair will be recognised by the Academic Council at its next meeting.

4.26 RISK-BASED APPROACH TO COURSE & UNIT MODIFICATIONS

- 4.26.1 A risk-based approach is taken to course and unit modifications depending on the nature, timing and extent of modification(s) proposed. The level of scrutiny and the modification approval process is designed to be proportionate to the risk level of the modification(s) being proposed.
- 4.26.2 The risk level of a modification is broadly identified by several factors which include but are not limited to:
- a) The section(s) of the Course or Unit Information or Course Handbook affected by the proposed modification.
 - b) The nature and extent of the proposed modification.
 - c) The cumulative effect of a high volume of small modifications.
 - d) Whether a modification is planned or immediate.
 - e) Whether the course is accredited by a PSRB.
- 4.26.3 The risk level of a modification determines whether the modification is processed through the administrative (low risk), minor (medium risk) or major (high risk) modification process.
- 4.26.4 The risk-level of a proposed modification will normally be initially assessed and determined by the Head of Quality & Partnerships in liaison with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) as appropriate.
- 4.26.5 In all cases the risk-based modification process will ensure that:
- a) The aims of courses and their component units will continue to align.
 - b) The learning outcomes of courses and their component units will continue to align.
 - c) The course and its component units will continue to align with the UCO's strategy and mission (and / or that of a partner's equivalent).
 - d) The criteria for course and unit design, development and approval are always met.

- 4.26.6 Where a cumulative effect of medium risk modifications is considered substantial, the 'major' modification process may be initiated; where a cumulative effect of high-risk modifications is considered substantial, a periodic course review event may be initiated.

4.27 LOW-RISK MODIFICATIONS

- 4.27.1 Low-risk course and unit modifications are typically administrative or factual in nature and will normally include those listed in [Table 4.5](#).
- 4.27.2 Low-risk modifications will typically be processed through the [Administrative Modification Approval Process](#).

TABLE 4.5: MODIFICATIONS THAT NORMALLY QUALIFY AS LOW-RISK

Course Modifications affecting CIFs / Course Handbooks	<p>Corrections to typographical errors.</p> <p>Corrections to staff role or committee titles.</p> <p>Corrections to names or titles of external organisations.</p> <p>Names of Course or Unit Leaders and current staff to reflect those currently in post.</p> <p>Clarifications to wording that does not materially change meaning.</p>
Unit Modifications affecting UIFs / Course Handbooks	<p>Corrections to typographical errors.</p> <p>Corrections to staff role or committee titles.</p> <p>Corrections to names or titles of external organisations.</p> <p>Names of Course or Unit Leaders and current staff to reflect those currently in post.</p> <p>Updates to editions of Recommended Resources.</p> <p>Clarifications to wording that does not materially change meaning.</p>
Other Modifications	<p>Corrections to typographical errors.</p> <p>Corrections to staff role or committee titles.</p> <p>Corrections to names or titles of external organisations.</p> <p>Names of Course or Unit Leaders and current staff to reflect those currently in post.</p> <p>Clarifications to wording that does not materially change meaning.</p>

4.28 ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION PROCESS

- 4.28.1 The Administrative Modification Approval Process set out in [Diagram 4.3](#) should be used to approve course and unit modifications that have been determined as low-risk modifications.
- 4.28.2 The Head of Quality & Partnerships will confirm the risk level of the proposed modification and advise on and confirm the modification approval process and required documentation.
- 4.28.3 Low-risk modifications may normally be made by Unit and Course Leaders at any point in the academic year.
- 4.28.4 Due to the nature of low-risk modifications, peer-review and external and internal consultation is not normally required.

- 4.28.5 The documentation requirements for the Administrative Modification Approval Process are set out in [Table 4.6](#).
- 4.28.6 Responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the required modification approval documentation rests with the Course Team and is overseen by the Course or Unit Leader as appropriate unless otherwise specified.
- 4.28.7 The relevant Course or Unit Leader is responsible for ensuring that the required modification approval documentation is completed in full prior to submitting the proposed low-risk modification for approval.
- 4.28.8 Version control processes should be used when completing course and unit modification approval documentation as documented in the UCO's Version Control Policy¹¹. This includes the use of footers to show the date and version of the document.
- 4.28.9 The relevant Unit or Course Leader should submit the required completed modification approval documentation to the Quality Team electronically (Quality@uco.ac.uk).
- 4.28.10 Low-risk modifications may only be considered for approved further to the completion and submission of the required major modification approval process documentation.
- 4.28.11 All low-risk modifications should be considered and formally approved by the Head of Quality & Partnerships.
- 4.28.12 Following formal approval of a low-risk modification by the Head of Quality & Partnerships:
- The Quality Team will be responsible for providing the approved modified documentation to the Recruitment, Marketing, Admissions and Registry Teams for their records and publication as appropriate, and for publishing the modified course documents on the VLE.
 - The Course / Unit Leader will be responsible for informing relevant students and staff of the modification, ensuring that any associated documents, website and VLE information are updated to reflect the modification, and ensuring that marketing documentation is updated and published as appropriate.
 - The Quality Team will be responsible for storing the approved modified documentation and noting the modification on the relevant Course Modification Register.

TABLE 4.6: ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION APPROVAL PROCESS DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Document Required	Guidance
A Word version of the CIF / UIF / Course Handbook highlighting the proposed modifications using 'Track Changes'.	Word versions of these documents are available from the Quality Team (Quality@uco.ac.uk).

4.29 MEDIUM-RISK MODIFICATIONS

- 4.29.1 Medium-risk course and unit modifications normally include those that are of a more substantial nature than low-risk modifications and are likely to have some impact on existing or prospective students
- 4.29.2 Typical medium-risk modifications are provided in [Table 4.7](#).
- 4.29.3 Medium-risk modifications will typically be processed through the [Minor Modification Approval Process](#).
- 4.29.4 The Head of Quality & Partnerships should be consulted at an early stage to confirm the risk level of the proposed modification.

¹¹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- 4.29.5 Medium-risk modifications should be planned for implementation in the following academic year, and normally require consultation with students and External Examiners.
- 4.29.6 A significant number of proposed medium-risk modifications in combination may be determined as a high-risk and subsequently be considered through the 'major' modification process. In such instances advice should be sought from the Head of Quality & Partnerships at an early stage.

TABLE 4.7: MODIFICATIONS THAT NORMALLY QUALIFY AS MEDIUM-RISK

Course Modifications affecting CIFs / Course Handbooks	Course Summary Key Features Unit Information Moderate modifications to the Teaching & Learning Strategy Moderate modifications to the Assessment Strategy Moderate modifications to Student Learning Hours Further Study & Employability
Unit Modifications affecting UIFs / Course Handbooks	Unit Summary Learning Outcomes & Assessment Criteria Moderate modifications to the Teaching & Learning Strategy Moderate modifications to the Assessment Strategy Moderate modifications to Student Learning Hours Unit Content Recommended Resources
Other Modifications	More substantial re-wording documentation.

4.30 MINOR MODIFICATION APPROVAL PROCESS

- 4.29.1 The Minor Modification Approval Process set out in [Diagram 4.4](#) should be used to approve course and unit modifications that have been determined as medium-risk modifications.
- 4.29.2 The Head of Quality & Partnerships will confirm the risk level of the proposed modification and advise on and confirm the required modification approval process and documentation.
- 4.29.3 Medium-risk modifications may normally be made by Unit and Course Leaders at several points in the academic year to coincide with TQSC and CPSC meetings where such modifications will be considered and approved. Course Teams should therefore plan medium-risk modifications to align to the meeting dates of these committees. Committee meeting dates are made available here: [UCO Committee Meeting Dates](#).
- 4.29.4 Medium-risk modifications should be planned rather than immediate. Immediate high-risk modifications will normally only be considered exceptionally where there is a genuine need, for example in response to operational issues, or where academic standards and quality are at risk.
- 4.29.5 Medium-risk modifications normally require peer-review and external and internal consultation to provide assurance of the maintenance of academic quality and standards prior to their final approval.
- 4.29.6 The documentation requirements for the Minor Modification Approval Process are set out in [Table 4.8](#).

- 4.29.7 Responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the required modification approval documentation rests with the Course Team and is overseen by the Course or Unit Leader as appropriate unless otherwise specified.
- 4.29.8 The relevant Course or Unit Leader is responsible for ensuring that the required modification approval documentation is completed in full prior to submitting the proposed medium-risk modification for approval.
- 4.29.9 Version control processes should be used when completing course and unit modification approval documentation as documented in the UCO's Version Control Policy¹². This includes the use of footers to show the date and version of the document.
- 4.29.10 The relevant Unit or Course Leader should submit the required completed modification approval documentation to the Quality Team electronically (Quality@uco.ac.uk).
- 4.29.11 Medium-risk modifications may only be considered for approved further to the completion and submission of the required major modification approval process documentation.
- 4.29.12 All medium-risk modifications should be considered and recommended for approval by the relevant Course Team following their review of the required modification documentation ([Table 4.8](#)) and prior to submitting the modification proposal to the TQSC / CPSC should:
- a) Consider whether the proposed modification impacts on other aspects or the course or its component units and address these impacts as appropriate.
 - b) Consider the impact of previous modifications and confirm that the proposed modification and associated modifications to date (since initial approval or re-approval) is appropriate and feasible, and do not warrant further action, e.g., Periodic Course Review.
 - c) Consider and, if necessary, consult with the Finance, Student Support, Registry, Human Resources, and other teams as appropriate to consider resource implications of the proposed modification, and seek approval of any resource costs with the Finance Director (or partner equivalent).
 - d) Confirm that appropriate Student and External Examiner consultation has been undertaken and considered.
 - e) Confirm that appropriate PSRB consultation has been undertaken and considered (if applicable).
- 4.29.13 Following Course Team approval, all medium-risk modifications must next be considered and formally approved by the TQSC (for courses delivered by the UCO) or the CPSC (for courses leading to a UCO award delivered by Partners). These committees should also consider the impact and appropriateness of the proposed modification and assure that appropriate consultation has been undertaken prior to approving the proposed medium-risk modification.
- 4.29.14 Where a medium-risk modification is required to be implemented immediately, approval of the modification may be made by Chair's Action of the above committees if and as appropriate. The outcome of high-risk modifications approved by Chairs' Actions shall normally be noted at the next available committee meeting.
- 4.29.15 Following formal approval of a medium-risk modification by the TQSC / CPSC:
- a) The Quality Team will be responsible for providing the approved modified documentation to the Recruitment, Marketing, Admissions and Registry Teams for their records and publication as appropriate, and for publishing the modified course documents on the VLE.
 - b) The Course / Unit Leader will be responsible for informing relevant students and staff of the modification, ensuring that any associated documents, website and VLE information are updated

¹² <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

to reflect the modification, and ensuring that marketing documentation is updated and published as appropriate.

- c) The Quality Team will be responsible for storing the approved modified documentation and noting the modification on the relevant Course Modification Register.

TABLE 4.8: MINOR MODIFICATION APPROVAL PROCESS DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Documents Required	Guidance
A Word version of the CIF / UIF / Course Handbook highlighting the proposed modifications using 'Track Changes'.	Word versions of these documents are available from the Quality Team (Quality@uco.ac.uk).
Course Modification Form (AQF04-16) summarizing and providing a rationale for the proposed modification.	Available here: AQF Documents
Course Team Minutes / Email Correspondence agreeing the proposed modification.	Extracts of meeting minutes / notes or PDF files of email correspondence may be submitted.
SSLCG Minutes / Email Correspondence providing evidence of student consultation.	Extracts of meeting minutes / notes or PDF files of email correspondence may be submitted.
Email Correspondence providing evidence of External Examiner consultation.	Extracts of meeting minutes / notes or PDF files of email correspondence may be submitted.
Email Correspondence providing evidence of staff consultation regarding resources, as appropriate.	Extracts of meeting minutes / notes or PDF files of email correspondence may be submitted.

4.31 HIGH-RISK MODIFICATIONS

- 4.31.1 High-risk course and unit modifications normally include those that are of a more substantial nature than medium-risk modifications and are likely to have a significant impact on existing or prospective students or provision.
- 4.31.2 Typical high-risk modifications are identified in [Table 4.9](#).
- 4.31.3 High-risk modifications will typically be processed through the [Major Modification Approval Process](#).
- 4.31.4 The Head of Quality & Partnerships should be consulted at an early stage to confirm the risk level of the proposed modification.
- 4.31.5 High-risk modifications should be planned for implementation in the following academic year, and require consultation with internal staff, students, and External Examiners.
- 4.31.6 High-risk modifications must be agreed by the relevant Course Team and subsequently be considered and formally recommended for approval by the TQSC (for courses delivered by the UCO) or the CPSC (for courses delivered by Partners) to the Academic Council before they are implemented.
- 4.31.7 High-risk modifications may normally be made at three points in the year (normally December, March, and June) to coincide with when the Academic Council meets.
- 4.31.8 A significant number of proposed high-risk modifications in combination may need to be considered through the periodic course review process contained in AQF Section 6. In such instances advice should be sought from the Head of Quality & Partnerships at an early stage.

TABLE 4.9: MODIFICATIONS THAT NORMALLY QUALIFY AS HIGH-RISK

Course Modifications	<p>Qualification (Award).</p> <p>Course Title.</p> <p>Course Outcomes.</p> <p>Course Aims.</p> <p>Course Structure.</p> <p>External Benchmark mapping.</p> <p>Substantial modifications to the Teaching & Learning Strategy.</p> <p>Substantial modifications to the Assessment Strategy.</p> <p>Substantial modifications to Student Learning Hours.</p> <p>Length of course.</p> <p>Adding or changing accreditation by a PSRB.</p> <p>Course Entry Criteria.</p> <p>Course Progression Criteria or Regulations.</p> <p>Degree Classification.</p> <p>Adding or changing the mode of delivery of a course.</p> <p>Adding or changing the location of delivery of a course.</p> <p>Adding or changing an exit qualification of the course.</p>
Unit Modifications	<p>Unit Title.</p> <p>Unit Aims.</p> <p>Unit Credits.</p> <p>Unit Level.</p> <p>Unit Pre-requisites or regulations.</p> <p>Substantial modifications to the Teaching & Learning Strategy</p> <p>Substantial modifications to the Assessment Strategy</p> <p>Substantial modifications to Student Learning Hours</p> <p>Changing whether a unit is mandatory or optional.</p>
Other	<p>An immediate modification.</p> <p>An accumulation of medium-risk modifications.</p> <p>Adding, removing, or replacing a unit.</p> <p>Modifying a course to reflect a specialization.</p> <p>Suspending a course.</p> <p>Closing a course.</p> <p>Adding, removing, or changing a placement.</p> <p>Modifications that impact on PSRB standards or requirements.</p> <p>Modifications that impact on alignment to CMA guidance.</p>

4.32 MAJOR MODIFICATION PROCESS

- 4.32.1 The Major Modification Approval Process set out in [Diagram 4.5](#) should be used to approve course and unit modifications that have been determined as high-risk modifications.
- 4.32.2 The Head of Quality & Partnerships will confirm the risk level of the proposed modification and advise on and confirm the required modification approval process and documentation.
- 4.32.3 High-risk modifications may normally be made by Unit and Course Leaders at several points in the academic year to coincide with TQSC and CPSC meetings where such modifications will be considered and recommended for approval by the Academic Council. The Academic Council typically meets three times per year (normally December, March, and June) at which all high-risk modifications must be formally approved before they are implemented. Course Teams should therefore plan high-risk modifications to align to the meeting dates of these committees. Committee meeting dates are made available here: [UCO Committee Meeting Dates](#).
- 4.32.4 High-risk modifications should be planned rather than immediate. Immediate high-risk modifications will normally only be considered exceptionally where there is a genuine need, for example in response to operational issues, or where academic standards and quality are at risk.
- 4.32.5 All high-risk modifications require peer-review and external and internal consultation to provide assurance of the maintenance of academic quality and standards prior to their final approval.
- 4.32.6 The documentation requirements for the Major Modification Approval Process are set out in [Table 4.10](#).
- 4.32.7 Responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the required modification approval documentation rests with the Course Team and is overseen by the Course or Unit Leader as appropriate unless otherwise specified.
- 4.32.8 The relevant Course or Unit Leader is responsible for ensuring that the required modification approval documentation is completed in full prior to submitting the proposed high-risk modification for approval.
- 4.32.9 Version control processes should be used when completing course and unit modification approval documentation as documented in the UCO's Version Control Policy¹³. This includes the use of footers to show the date and version of the document.
- 4.32.10 The relevant Unit or Course Leader should submit the required completed modification approval documentation to the Quality Team electronically (Quality@uco.ac.uk).
- 4.32.11 High-risk modifications may only be considered for approved further to the completion and submission of the required major modification approval process documentation.
- 4.32.12 All high-risk modifications should be considered and recommended for approval by the relevant Course Team following their review of the required modification documentation ([Table 4.10](#)) and prior to submitting the modification proposal to the TQSC / CPSC should:
- Consider whether the proposed modification impacts on other aspects or the course or its component units and address these impacts as appropriate.
 - Consider the impact of previous modifications and confirm that the proposed modification and associated modifications to date (since initial approval or re-approval) is appropriate and feasible, and do not warrant further action, e.g., Periodic Course Review.
 - Consider and, if necessary, consult with the Finance, Student Support, Registry, Human Resources, and other teams as appropriate to consider resource implications of the proposed modification, and seek approval of any resource costs with the Finance Director (or partner equivalent).
 - Confirm that Student and External Examiner consultation has been undertaken and considered.

¹³ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- e) Confirm that PSRB consultation has been undertaken and considered (if applicable).
- 4.32.13 Following Course Team approval, all high-risk modifications must next be considered by the TQSC (for courses delivered by the UCO) and the CPSC (for courses leading to a UCO award delivered by Partners). These committees should also consider the impact and appropriateness of the proposed modification and assure that appropriate consultation has been undertaken prior to recommending approval of the proposed high-risk modification to the Academic Council for formal approval.
- 4.32.14 Following consideration by the TQSC / CPSC approval, the proposed high-risk modification must next be considered by the Academic Council for formal approval.
- 4.32.15 Where a high-risk modification is required to be implemented immediately, approval of the modification may be made by Chair's Action of the above committees if and as appropriate. The outcome of high-risk modifications approved by Chairs' Actions shall normally be noted at the next available committee meeting.
- 4.32.16 Following formal approval of a high-risk modification by the Academic Council:
- d) The Quality Team will be responsible for providing the approved modified documentation to the Recruitment, Marketing, Admissions and Registry Teams for their records and publication as appropriate, and for publishing the modified course documents on the VLE.
 - e) The Course / Unit Leader will be responsible for informing relevant students and staff of the modification, ensuring that any associated documents, website and VLE information are updated to reflect the modification, and ensuring that marketing documentation is updated and published as appropriate.
 - f) The Quality Team will be responsible for storing the approved modified documentation and noting the modification on the relevant Course Modification Register.

TABLE 4.10: MAJOR MODIFICATION APPROVAL PROCESS DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Documents Required	Guidance
A Word version of the CIF / UIF / Course Handbook highlighting the proposed modifications using 'Track Changes'.	Word versions of these documents are available from the Quality Team (Quality@uco.ac.uk).
Course Modification Form (AQF04-16) summarizing and providing a rationale for the proposed modification.	Available here: AQF Documents
Course Team Minutes / Email Correspondence agreeing the proposed modification.	Extracts of meeting minutes / notes or PDF files of email correspondence may be submitted.
SSLCG Minutes / Email Correspondence providing evidence of student consultation.	Extracts of meeting minutes / notes or PDF files of email correspondence may be submitted.
Email Correspondence providing evidence of External Examiner consultation.	Extracts of meeting minutes / notes or PDF files of email correspondence may be submitted.
Email Correspondence providing evidence of PSRB consultation, as appropriate.	Extracts of meeting minutes / notes or PDF files of email correspondence may be submitted.
Email Correspondence providing evidence of staff consultation regarding resources, as appropriate.	Extracts of meeting minutes / notes or PDF files of email correspondence may be submitted.

4.33 COURSE MODIFICATION CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

A) STUDENTS

- 4.33.1 Where a medium- or low-risk course modification is proposed, consultation with students affected by the modification will normally be required.
- 4.33.2 Affected students includes those who will ultimately experience the modification as part of their course; all affected cohorts of students should be consulted.
- 4.33.3 It may also be beneficial to consult with students who may not be affected by the modification but who are on the non-modified iteration of the course to gather their feedback on the proposal based on their experience.
- 4.33.4 To ensure that all affected students have the opportunity to provide comment on a proposed course modification, students should be emailed the proposed modification clearly setting out the rationale and be provided with a 10-day consultation period in which to reply.
- 4.33.5 Student consultation may additionally be undertaken through Student Representatives, Student-Staff Liaison Consultation Groups, and student focus groups.
- 4.33.6 Evidence of student consultation should be provided in the form of meeting minutes / notes and email correspondence.

B) EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 4.33.7 Where a medium- or low-risk course modification is proposed, consultation with relevant External Examiners will normally be required.
- 4.33.8 This may be in the form of a meeting with the External Examiner or through email correspondence.
- 4.33.9 Evidence of External Examiner consultation should be provided in the form of meeting minutes / notes and email correspondence.

C) PSRB's

- 4.33.10 Where a course is accredited by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) the PSRB should be consulted or notified if the proposed modification will impact on PSRB accreditation requirements.
- 4.33.11 It is the responsibility of the Course Leader to determine whether a modification requires PSRB consultation or notification and should be undertaken in line within the terms of PSRB accreditation.
- 4.33.12 Evidence of PSRB consultation should be provided in the form of meeting minutes / notes and email correspondence.

D) RELEVANT STAFF

- 4.33.13 Course and Unit Leaders should consult with relevant institutional staff if the proposed modification will have an impact on institutional, human, or learning resources or require new resources.
- 4.33.14 Where a financial impact is identified, the Finance Director (or partner equivalent) must be consulted.
- 4.33.15 Evidence of staff consultation should be provided in the form of meeting minutes / notes and email correspondence.

PART 4: CLOSING A COURSE OR PARTNERSHIP

4.34 CLOSING A COURSE

- 4.34.1 The UCO may decide to withdraw a course from its portfolio of provision for several reasons, including:
- a) An outcome of course monitoring or review.
 - b) Changes in patterns of demand from prospective students.
 - c) Changes in staffing.
 - d) Strategic realignment of the UCO's portfolio of provision.
 - e) A major organisational change.
 - f) Circumstances beyond the UCO's control.
- 4.34.2 The process for closing a course follows that for a high-risk modification.
- 4.34.3 When considering the closure of a course, due consideration will be given to students currently enrolled on the course, and the protection of their student experience in line with the [UCO's Student Protection Plan](#) (or partner equivalent). Wherever possible, students will normally be given the opportunity to complete their course within the standard time frame, with access to all learning opportunities and resources available.
- 4.34.4 Students will normally be informed at the earliest opportunity if their course is to be withdrawn from the UCO's portfolio of provision, and discussions will be held with students to consider the implications.
- 4.34.5 The effect on partners, delivery organisations, and support providers with whom they work to offer the course, and on the students studying with them, must be considered, and these stakeholders should be informed and consulted about the closure.
- 4.34.6 As with other major changes, students who would be affected by the modification(s) must be consulted.
- 4.34.7 Approval for the closure of a course ultimately rests with the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Academic Council and Senior Management Team.
- 4.34.8 The Head of Quality & Partnerships in liaison with admissions and marketing teams is responsible for ensuring that course information is updated appropriately on records systems, promotional material, and websites by appropriate staff.

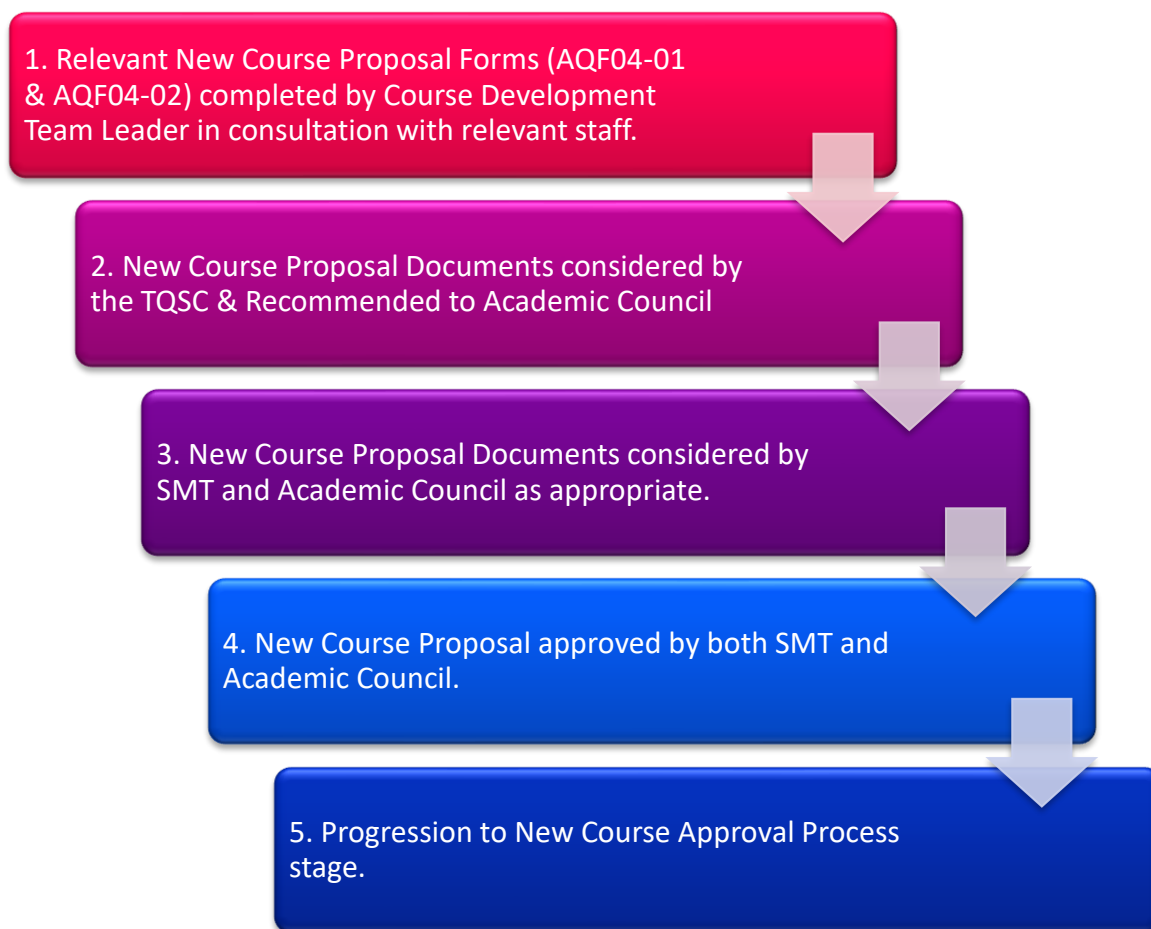
4.35 CLOSING A PARTNERSHIP

- 4.35.1 Should a decision be made to terminate a partnership between the UCO and a partner institution, the Principal of that institution must be notified at the earliest opportunity by the UCO's Vice-Chancellor.
- 4.35.2 An exit strategy will be developed (normally led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)) following the contract clause regarding termination and the reasons for the termination. This will aim to ensure a smooth departure from the relationship, whilst preserving the integrity and continuation of students' education.
- 4.35.3 This should also be agreed by the UCO's Academic Council, Senior Management Team, UCO's Board of Directors and by the main decision-making committee of the partner institution.
- 4.35.4 See AQF Section 16: Collaborative Activity for further details.

AQF04: APPENDICES

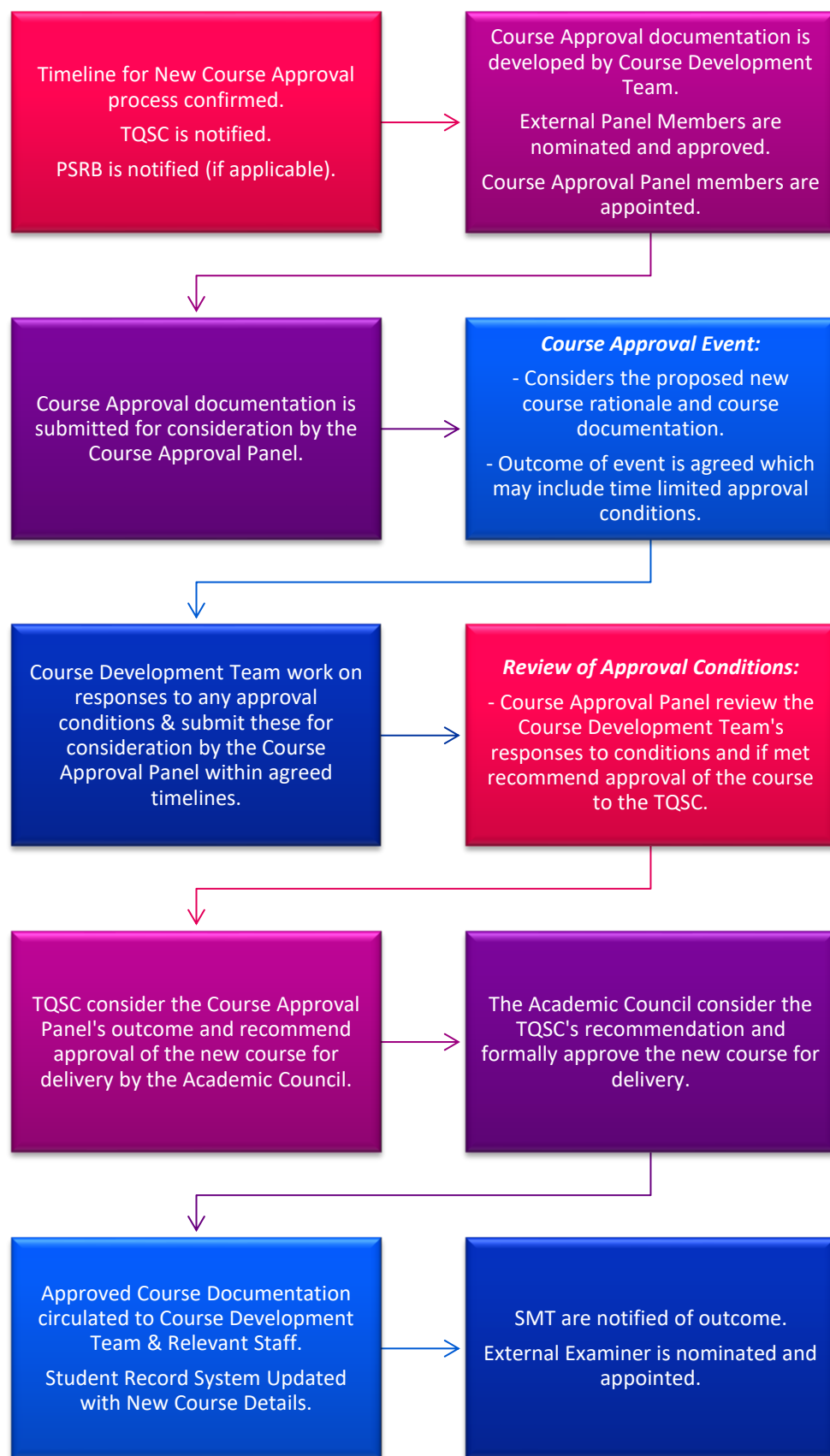
Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
AQF04-01	New Course Proposal Form
AQF04-02	New Course Costings Form
AQF04-03	Academic Rationale Template
AQF04-04	New Course Competitor Analysis & Market Research Form
AQF04-05a	Course Information Form Template
AQF04-05b	Course Information Form Template Manual
AQF04-06a	Unit Information Form Template
AQF04-06b	Unit Information Form Template Manual
AQF04-07	Course Handbook Template
AQF04-08	External Benchmark Mapping Template
AQF04-09	Staff CV's Coversheet / Recruitment Plan
AQF04-10	Schedule of Variance to UCO Regulations Form
AQF04-11	External Panel Member Nomination Form
AQF04-12a	Course Approval Panel Guidance Template
AQF04-12b	Course Approval Panel Feedback Form
AQF04-13	Course Approval Event Conditions & Response Form
AQF04-14	Course Approval Confirmation Form
AQF04-15	Variation to Course Approval Process Form
AQF04-16	Course Modification Form

DIAGRAM 4.1: STAGE 1 NEW COURSE PROPOSAL APPROVAL PROCESS



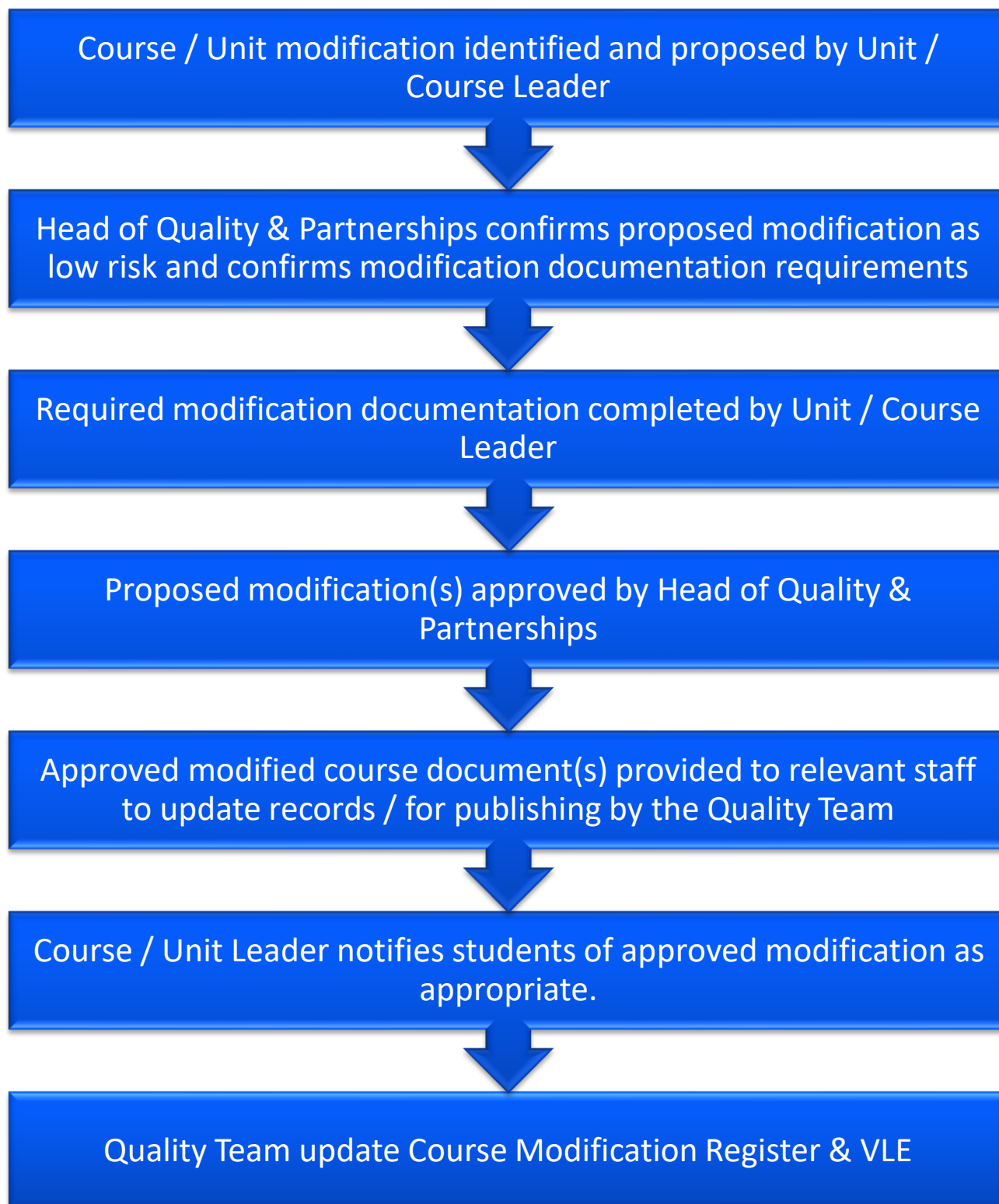
[\(RETURN TO STAGE 1: NEW COURSE PROPOSAL APPROVAL\)](#)

DIAGRAM 4.2: STAGE 2: NEW COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS



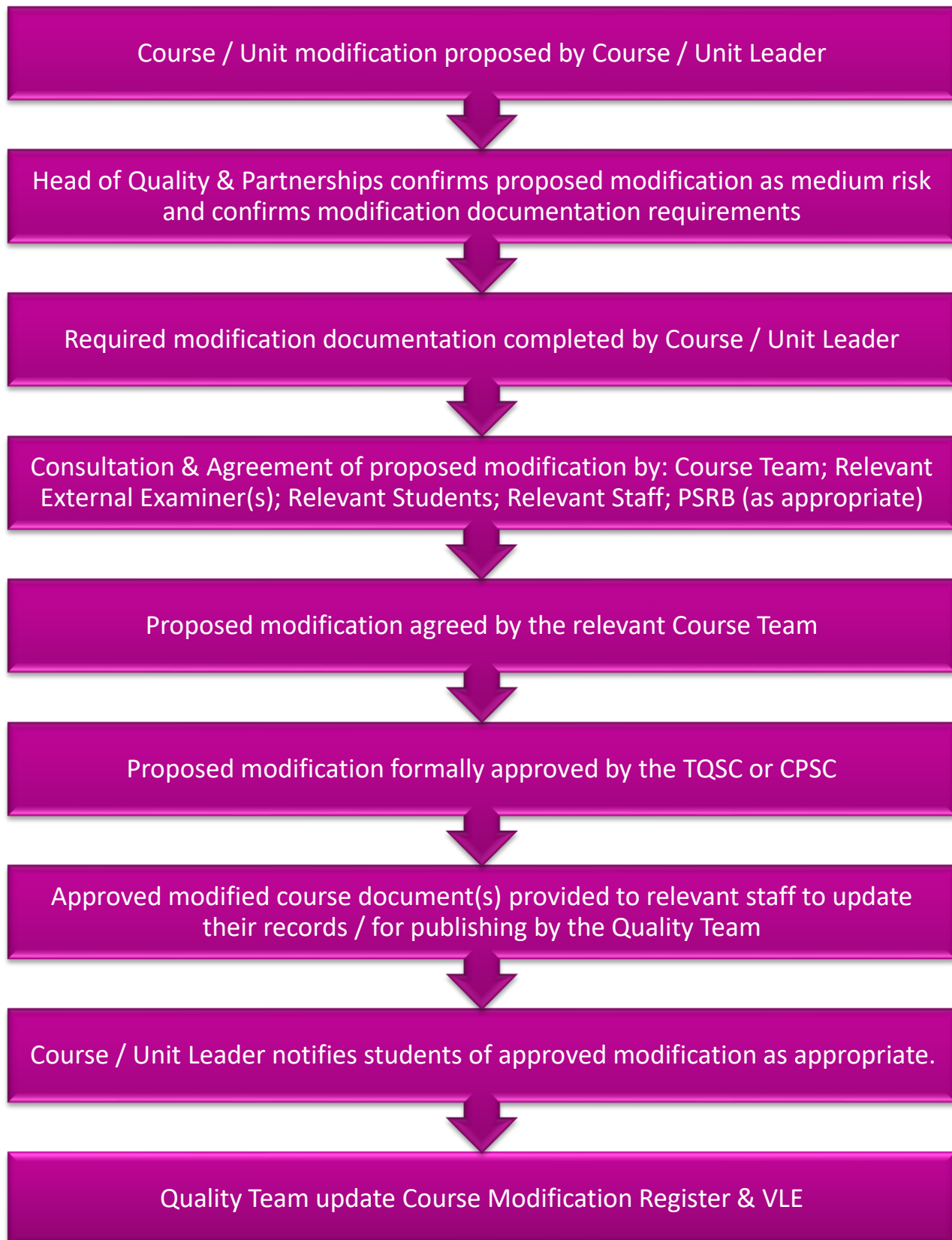
[\(Return to STAGE 2: New Course Approval Process\)](#)

DIAGRAM 4.3: THE ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION APPROVAL PROCESS



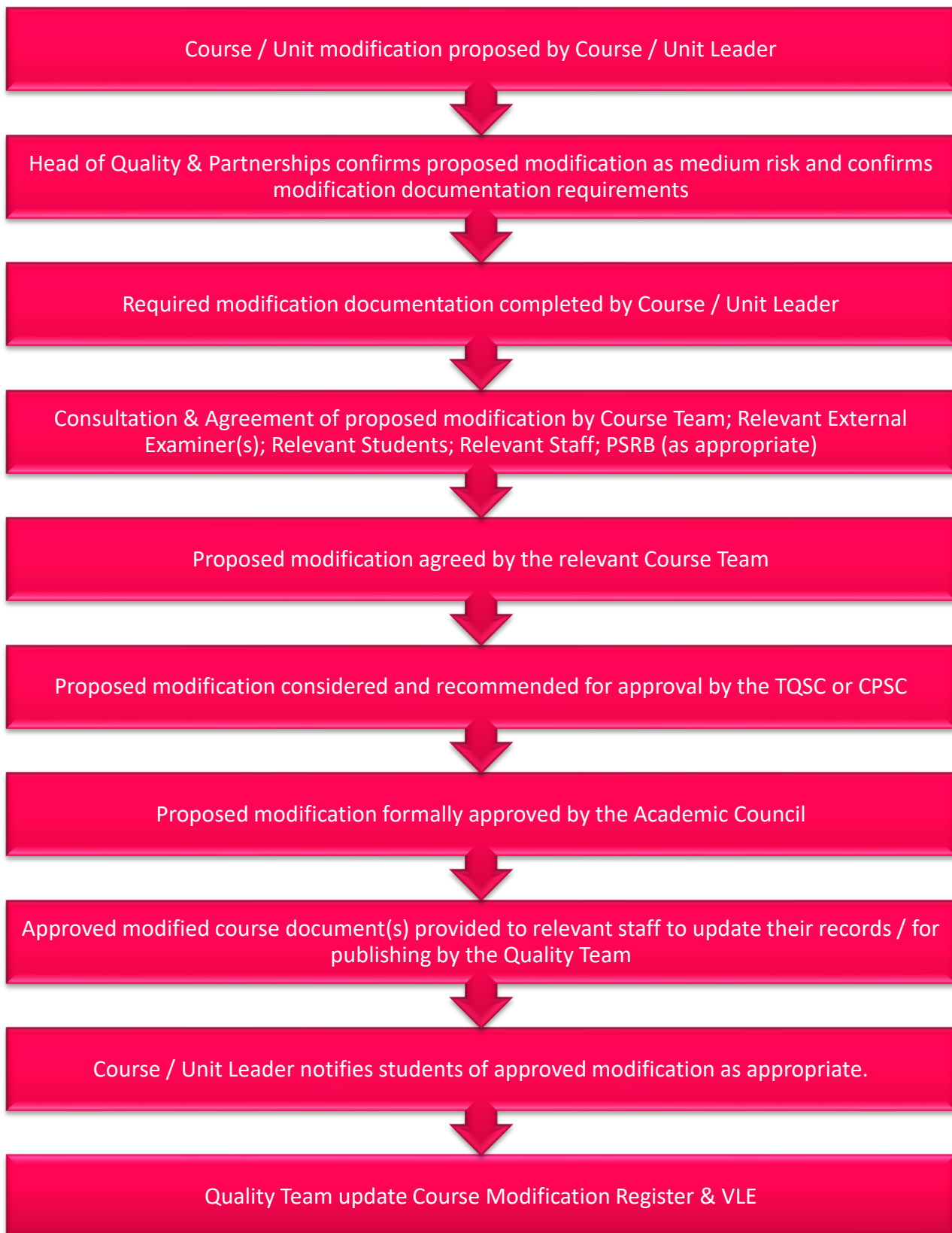
[\(Return to Section 4.28: Administrative Modification Approval Process\)](#)

DIAGRAM 4.4: THE MINOR MODIFICATION APPROVAL PROCESS



[*\(Return to Section 4.30: Minor Modification Process\)*](#)

DIAGRAM 4.5: THE MAJOR MODIFICATION APPROVAL PROCESS



[*\(Return to Section 4.32: Major Modification Process\)*](#)



Academic Quality Framework

Section 5:

Annual Monitoring & Reporting

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 05: Annual Monitoring & Reporting

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to Course Leaders, Unit Leaders and members of relevant UCO Committees including Student Representatives.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\0 Head of Quality – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sep 2018 PRAG Chair	Annual Review: Administrative Amendments to update role titles, agency titles and web links & Diagrams for clarity.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update staff role titles, weblinks & footnotes and to reflect current practice.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect new committee structure and titles of external agencies.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

Academic Quality Framework 2022-2023 / Section 05: Annual Monitoring & Reporting

V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to correct typographical errors, updated annual report forms and reflect current practice, including production of Annual Summaries.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V8.0	June 2022 PRAG Chair TQSC	Administrative Amendments to update academic year dates and staff role titles and wording amendments to clarify current process.	Head of Quality & Partnerships	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
<p>If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk</p>					

Academic Quality Framework

Section 5: Annual Reporting & Monitoring

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5. ANNUAL MONITORING & REPORTING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 In addition to Course and Unit Approval and Modifications (AQF Section 4) and Periodic Review (AQF Section 6), Annual Monitoring and Reporting forms part of the UCO's cycle of assuring and enhancing the academic standards and quality of its courses and units.
- 5.1.2 The UCO's Annual Monitoring and Reporting processes are agreed by the Academic Council and have been designed to align to the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education regarding Monitoring and Evaluation¹.
- 5.1.3 At the UCO, monitoring activity is overseen by the Collaborative Provision Sub-Committee (CPSC) for partner courses and the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC) for UCO courses on behalf of the Academic Council, co-ordinated by the Head of Quality & Partnerships, and undertaken by members of Course Teams, Heads of UCO Departments, External Examiners, and Partner Institutions and involves input from a range of staff and students.
- 5.1.4 A range of monitoring activity is undertaken both on an ongoing basis and at specific time points to ensure that courses and units remain current and effective.
- 5.1.5 Ongoing monitoring includes:
- a) Course Teams' reflection on good practice and areas for development throughout the year, which are captured in Course Team (or partner equivalent) minutes and shared between related portfolios of courses, helping to ensure that there is coherence in planning and delivery across related courses.
 - b) Termly Course Team (or partner equivalent) meetings to monitor the operation of individual courses and provision throughout the year, enabling these committees to respond to any course-related issues efficiently.
 - c) Termly Student and Staff Liaison Consultation Group meetings to monitor the Student Experience throughout the year and to respond to student-led issues efficiently.
 - d) Monitoring activity undertaken at specific time points includes annual monitoring and reporting. This involves reflection on progress over the past year and identification of opportunities for enhancement to be implemented and tracked through the coming year.
- 5.1.6 Annual monitoring and reporting activities include:
- a) The production of Unit and Course Annual Reports.
 - b) The production of collaborative partner Institutional Annual Reports.
 - c) The production of Operational Annual Reports.
 - d) The annual review of course documentation and information.

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/monitoring-and-evaluation>

- e) The production of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) Annual Reports.
 - f) The production of External Examiner Annual Reports.
 - g) Dissemination of Student Evaluation Questionnaire results and feedback.
- 5.1.7 As noted above, the UCO undertakes monitoring activities and produces annual reports as required by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).
- 5.1.8 The UCO's Annual Monitoring and Reporting Cycle in [Diagram 5.1](#) shows the UCO's current monitoring and reporting activities.

5.2 PRINCIPLES & OBJECTIVES OF ANNUAL MONITORING AND REPORTING

A) PRINCIPLES OF ANNUAL MONITORING & REPORTING

- 5.2.1 The annual monitoring and reporting processes regarding provision validated by the UCO are confirmed at Course Approval and Periodic Review as appropriate.
- 5.2.2 The principles of annual monitoring and reporting are:
- a) To establish an effective and efficient process through which the UCO may review and monitor provision that leads to a UCO award to maintain quality and standards.
 - b) To ensure that stakeholders are involved in and contribute to the production of annual reports, to ensure that provision leading to a UCO award is monitored and reported on as appropriate.
 - c) To produce a sound and evidence-based report upon which teaching faculty, at both a unit and course level, may base enhancements to the quality and operational effectiveness of provision leading to a UCO award and the student learning experience.

B) OBJECTIVES OF ANNUAL MONITORING & REPORTING

- 5.2.3 The objectives of the annual monitoring and reporting are:
- a) To provide an evidence base for teaching faculty to improve and enhance the learning experience of students, through action at unit course and institutional level.
 - b) To confirm (in conjunction with External Examiner Annual Reports) that the quality and academic standards of provision have been maintained in accordance with all external and internal benchmarks and requirements.
 - c) To collect longitudinal data and information on which basis trends and changes relevant to the longer-term quality and sustainability of provision can be assessed (including through periodic review) and actioned appropriately.

5.3 TYPES OF ANNUAL REPORT PRODUCED

A) UNIT & COURSE ANNUAL REPORTS

- 5.3.1 An Annual Report is produced for each unit (or stream of units) and each course leading to an award of the UCO, using an agreed template to ensure that appropriate and common areas across all units and courses are considered, reviewed, and monitored.

The use of these templates also enables comparisons across units and courses to be made in addition to longitudinal comparisons with previous years' reports.

5.3.2 Unit Annual Reports (UARs) and Course Annual Reports (CARs) draw on a range of sources of evidence, including:

- Student progression and completion data.
- Minutes of Course Team and Student and Staff Liaison Consultation Group meetings (or partner equivalents).
- External Examiner Annual Reports and feedback.
- Outcomes of student feedback questionnaires.

5.3.3 Within each UAR and CAR, strengths and weaknesses are identified, action plans from the preceding year are updated, and an action plan for the forthcoming academic year is developed.

5.3.4 UARs are produced using the UCO's UAR template (AQF05-01) to assure consistency in reporting.

5.3.5 CARs are produced using the UCO's CAR templates (AQF05-02a and AQF05-02b) to assure consistency in reporting

B) INSTITUTIONAL ANNUAL REPORTS

5.3.6 Institutional Annual Reports (IARs) are produced by collaborative partner institutions who deliver courses that lead to an award of the UCO.

5.3.7 Collaborative partner institutions normally produce an IAR in addition to UARs and CARs to enable them to report on their institutional activities of the preceding year and plans for the forthcoming year, to assure the UCO that partner institution quality and standards are being maintained.

5.3.8 IARs draw on information and evidence provided in UARs and CARs (including External Examiner Annual Reports, student progression data, student feedback and other relevant and appropriate reference points), which are appended to the IAR to provide the UCO with oversight of the partner institution's annual monitoring and reporting processes as agreed at Course and / or Partner Approval in line with AQF Section 16: Collaborative Activity.

5.3.9 IARs are produced using the UCO's IAR template (AQF05-03) to assure consistency in reporting.

5.3.10 IARs are considered and monitored by the UCO's Collaborative Partnerships Sub-Committee (CPSC) on behalf of the TQSC.

C) OPERATIONAL ANNUAL REPORTS

5.3.11 In addition to the annual monitoring and reporting of units, courses, and partner institutions, the UCO also requires each department (as determined by the Senior Management Team) of the UCO that provides services and facilities for students to produce an annual report to ensure that the quality and standards provided by these areas are maintained and to enhance the student experience as appropriate.

- 5.3.12 Operational Annual Reports (OARs) draw on evidence, including student questionnaire feedback, relevant external reference points and operational performance to reflect on their effectiveness during the preceding year, and to produce an action plan for enhancement for the forthcoming year.
- 5.3.13 OARs are produced using the UCO's OAR template (AQF05-04) to assure consistency in reporting.
- 5.3.14 OARs are considered by the Senior Management Team and Academic Council as appropriate.

D) NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (NSS) ANNUAL REPORT

- 5.3.15 All eligible final year undergraduate students are invited to complete the National Student Survey (NSS) administered by Ipsos MORI, an independent market research company.
- 5.3.16 The NSS is intended to give final year students an opportunity to report back on their student experience.
- 5.3.17 NSS results are published on the Discover Uni website², the official website for comparing UK higher education course data, which helps prospective students choose an appropriate course and university.
- 5.3.18 For courses delivered by the UCO, NSS results are carefully analysed and reviewed in conjunction with UCO Student Evaluation Questionnaire results, and an NSS Annual Report (NSSAR) is produced by the relevant Course Leader of each course surveyed. This includes an action plan in response to NSS feedback.
- 5.3.19 NSSARs are produced using the UCO's NSSAR template (AQF05-05) to assure consistency in reporting.
- 5.3.20 The NSS Annual Report is agreed by the Academic Council and considered by the Senior Management Team and Board of Directors as appropriate. It is also considered and monitored by the TQSC, and Student-Staff Liaison and Consultation Groups.
- 5.3.21 The action plan undergoes a mid-point review midway through the year to review progress and end end-point review to monitor completion of action plan tasks.

E) EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORTS

- 5.3.22 External Examiners Annual Reports (EEARs) are produced by External Examiners in line with AQF Section 11 (External Examining).
- 5.3.23 EEARs are critical for ensuring that the UCO maintains threshold academic standards, and for assuring and enhancing quality.
- 5.3.24 Course Leaders, in consultation with Course Teams, produce a response to each EEAR which, having been approved by the TQSC is provided to the External Examiner concerned, to acknowledge their report and to communicate actions taken in response to recommendations made within the report.

² <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>

5.3.25 EEARs and EEAR responses are considered by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), and the CPSC (for partner courses) and TQSC (for UCO courses) to ensure that appropriate actions are made in response to recommendations, and to identify and disseminate good practice.

5.3.26 EEARs are also reviewed by the Head of Quality & Partnerships and reported on collectively through External Examiner Annual Synthesis Reports, which are considered and approved at institutional level by the CPSC, TQSC and Academic Council.

F) ANNUAL SUMMARIES

5.3.27 Annual Summaries are produced to review and monitor the implementation and effectiveness of key policies, which include:

- a) Academic Appeals Policy
- b) Academic Discipline Policy
- c) Student Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Procedure
- d) Student Fitness to Practise Policy
- e) Student Complaints Policy & Procedure
- f) Disclosure & Barring Service Policy & Procedure
- g) Scrutiny Process
- h) Staff Disciplinary & Capability Policy
- i) Staff Grievance Procedure
- j) Patient Complaints Policy & Procedure (General and Associate Clinics)
- k) Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy

5.3.28 The Annual Summaries concerned with student and academic matters are considered and monitored by the TQSC, Academic Council and the Senior Management Team as appropriate as stated on the annual summary templates (AQF05-07a – AQF05-07k).

5.3.29 Annual Summaries concerned with staff, patients and public interest disclosures are considered and monitored by the Senior Management Team.

5.3.30 Annual Summaries enable the UCO to identify trends in cases, evaluate the operation of these key policies, identify specific issues and good practice, and identify enhancements to policy and practice.

5.3.31 Partner institutions report on similar key policies within Institutional Annual Reports.

5.4 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DEVELOPING ANNUAL REPORTS

5.4.1 The responsibilities for developing and producing ARs are outlined below.

A) UNIT ANNUAL REPORTS (UARs)

5.4.2 Unit Leaders (or Course Leaders where no Unit Leaders are allocated) are responsible for developing and producing UARs using the UAR template (AQF05-01) in consultation with unit teaching staff and Course Leaders as appropriate.

5.4.3 For undergraduate courses one UAR should be completed for each unit or for a stream of units that deliver similar subject matter over multiple pathways of a course and across levels / years of study.

- 5.4.4 For postgraduate courses UARs are not required to be completed. Individual units that comprise postgraduate courses are instead reported on within the CAR (AQF05-02b).
- 5.4.5 UARs should be produced within the agreed timescale and to enable the CAR to be produced.
- 5.4.6 UARs should draw on External Examiner Annual Reports, student progression data, student feedback, and other relevant and appropriate reference points as noted in the guidance contained within the UAR template.
- 5.4.7 UARs should be appended to CARs.
- 5.4.8 Unit Leaders are responsible for the accuracy and completeness of UARs, which should be developed in line with the UCO's Version Control Policy and Core Documentation Management, Development & Review Policy and Procedure³. This includes using tracked changes to identify amendments and including footers to show the date and version number of the document.
- 5.4.9 UARs are agreed and monitored by Course Teams.

B) COURSE ANNUAL REPORTS (CARs)

- 5.4.10 Course Leaders are responsible for developing and producing CARs using the relevant CAR template depending on whether a course is delivered at undergraduate level (AQF-05-02a) or postgraduate level (AQF-05-02b), in consultation with Unit Leaders as appropriate.
- 5.4.11 One CAR should be produced for each course.
- 5.4.12 CARs should be produced within the agreed timescale as outlined in the Annual Monitoring and Reporting Cycle ([Diagram 5.1](#)).
- 5.4.13 CARs should draw on UAR's, External Examiner Annual Reports, student progression data, student feedback, and other relevant and appropriate reference points.
- 5.4.14 Course Leaders are responsible for the accuracy and completeness of CARs, which should be developed in line with the UCO's Version Control Policy and Core Documentation Management, Development & Review Policy and Procedure⁴. This includes using tracked changes to identify amendments and including footers to show the date and version number of the document.
- 5.4.15 Course Annual Reports are agreed by Course Teams and then recommended for approval by the CPSC (for partner courses) and the TQSC (for UCO courses) where the reports are considered together for peer review and recommendations for enhancement.
- 5.4.16 The CPSC and TQSC approve Course Annual Reports and monitors progress of Course Annual Report Action Plans on behalf of the Academic Council.

³ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

⁴ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

C) INSTITUTIONAL ANNUAL REPORTS (IARs)

- 5.4.17 The Principal (or equivalent) of partner institutions is responsible for producing IARs using the IAR template (AQF05-03) in consultation with Unit and Course Leaders (or their equivalents).
- 5.4.18 One IAR should be produced for each partner institution delivering one or more courses that lead to an award of the UCO.
- 5.4.19 IARs should draw on the information provided in UARs and CARs in addition to other relevant and appropriate reference points, to provide a comprehensive and informative annual report on institutional activities over the past year and plans for the forthcoming year.
- 5.4.20 UARs, CARs and relevant External Examiner Annual Reports should be appended to IARs.
- 5.4.21 The Principal (or equivalent) of the partner institution is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of IARs, which should be developed in line with the UCO's Version Control Policy⁵ and Core Documentation Management, Development & Review Policy and Procedure. This includes using footers to show the date and version number of the document.

D) OPERATIONAL ANNUAL REPORTS (OARs)

- 5.4.22 The head of each UCO department (as determined by the Senior Management Team) is responsible for producing OARs using the OAR template (AQF-05-04) in consultation with their department staff and others as appropriate.
- 5.4.23 One OAR should be produced for each department, as determined by the Senior Management Team.
- 5.4.24 OARs should draw on relevant evidence, including student feedback questionnaire results.
- 5.4.25 Heads of departments are responsible for the accuracy and completeness of OARs, which should be developed in line with the UCO's Version Control Policy and Core Documentation Management, Development & Review Policy and Procedure. This includes using tracked changes to identify amendments and including footers to show the date and version number of the document.
- 5.4.26 OARs are considered and approved by the Senior Management Team and may be considered by the Academic Council as appropriate.
- 5.4.27 OARs are not normally completed by partner institutions who are responsible for monitoring and reporting on institutional matters to the UCO through IARs.

E) NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY ANNUAL REPORT (NSSAR)

- 5.4.28 The relevant UCO Course Leader is responsible for producing an annual report regarding NSS results, using the NSSAR template (AQF-05-05), in consultation with academic and non-academic staff as appropriate.

⁵ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- 5.4.29 One NSS Annual Report should be produced for each course surveyed.
- 5.4.30 The NSSAR is considered by relevant Course Teams to inform CARs and is considered by the TQSC to make recommendations for enhancements as appropriate.
- 5.4.31 The NSSAR is then considered and approved by the Academic Council (for academic matters) and the Senior Management Team (for institutional matters). It is also normally presented to the Board of Directors for academic oversight.
- 5.4.32 NSSARs are not normally completed by partner institutions who are responsible for monitoring and reporting on NSS matters to the UCO through CARs.

F) EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORTS (EEARs)

- 5.4.33 External Examiners are responsible for producing EEARs, using the EEAR template, to cover the provision they are contracted to examine within the timeline stipulated in the AQF Section 11 (External Examining) and / or their contract.
- 5.4.34 One EEAR is required to be produced per External Examiner for each course that they are contracted to examine in line with AQF Section 11: External Examining for further information.
- 5.4.35 The Head of Quality & Partnerships is responsible for reviewing and producing annual External Examiner Synthesis Reports for UCO and partner EEARs which are agreed by the CPSC and TQSC and approved by the Academic Council.
- 5.4.36 It is the responsibility of the CPSC and TQSC to note receipt of EEARs and approve External Examiner Responses.

G) ANNUAL SUMMARIES

- 5.4.37 It is the responsibility of the relevant Senior Manager to complete the required Annual Summary within the agreed deadline.
- 5.4.38 It is the responsibility of the relevant committees identified within each Annual Summary template to consider each Annual Summary and monitor any actions.

5.5 ANNUAL REPORT DEVELOPMENT & APPROVAL PROCESS

- 5.5.1 The development and approval process for ARs that applies to all taught degree provision at the UCO and partner institutions delivering courses that lead to an award of the UCO is provided in [Diagram 5.2](#).
- 5.5.2 Guidance for developing ARs is provided within report templates to ensure a consistent approach to report production.
- 5.5.3 Authors of reports are recommended to liaise with other staff members when developing ARs, to avoid duplication and ensure that actions are appropriate and achievable.
- 5.5.4 [Table 5.1](#) shows the development and approval stages, normal completion dates, tasks and responsibilities for developing and approving ARs. Tasks should be undertaken in numerical order. Those listed under the same Stage Number take place concurrently.

5.5.5 The CPSC and TQSC monitor the completion of the following stages via update reports from the Head of Quality & Partnerships.

TABLE 5.1: ANNUAL REPORT DEVELOPMENT & APPROVAL STAGES, TASKS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Stage No.	Completion Date	Annual Report (AR) Development Task	Responsibility
1	Jun / Jul	Circulation of AR templates to those responsible for developing ARs with timeline for completion. Dissemination of student feedback questionnaire results to Unit and Course Leaders & Senior Managers as appropriate.	Quality Team
2	End of July	Course Team Annual Review meetings take place where requirements for AR development is noted.	Course Leaders
		Undergraduate EEARs submitted.	External Examiners
3	Jul – Sep	Dissemination of Undergraduate EEARs to Unit and Course Leaders as appropriate.	Quality Team
		Dissemination of student progression data to Unit and Course Leaders to inform UARs and CARs.	Registrar
		UARs produced by Unit Leaders in consultation with unit teaching staff and Course Leaders as appropriate.	Unit Leaders
		OARs produced by Senior Managers in consultation with team staff	Senior Managers
4	End of Sep	Postgraduate EEARs submitted.	External Examiners
5	End of Sep	Dissemination of Postgraduate EEARs to Unit and Course Leaders as appropriate to produce responses.	Quality Team
6	Sep - Oct	CARs produced in consultation with Unit Leaders as appropriate.	Course Leaders
		Approval of Undergraduate EEAR responses.	CPSC / TQSC
7	Early Oct	Approved Undergraduate EEAR responses sent to External Examiners.	Quality Team
		Course level peer review and approval of UARs and CARs.	Course Teams
		Course level review of EEARs and responses.	
8	Oct - Nov	IARs produced and internally approved through approved committee system as agreed at Partner Approval.	Partner Institutions
9	Early Nov	Submission of IARs to Quality Team.	Partner Institutions

10	Mid Nov	Consideration of CARs and consideration of NSSAR and IARs recommending that these be approved by the Academic Council. Consideration and agreement of all EEARs and responses. Consideration and agreement of External Examiner Report Synthesis to recommend this for approval by the Academic Council.	CPSC/TQSC
		Consideration and approval of OARs.	Senior Management Team
11	Dec	Approval of CARs, IARs, EEAR Synthesis Report.	Academic Council
		EEARs published to students via the VLE.	Quality Team / Partner Institutions
12	Mid Dec	Approved EEAR responses sent to External Examiners.	Quality Team

5.6 ANNUAL REPORT MONITORING PROCESS

5.6.1 To review and update the progress of AR action plans, the UCO undertakes formal monitoring activities. These include mid-point (normally in February - April) and end-point (normally in September of the next academic year) reviews of action plans of all Annual Reports at appropriate committees, including the Academic Council and Senior Management Team as appropriate.

5.6.2 The purpose of the AR monitoring process is:

- To enable AR owners to consider and include data that may not have been available at the time of report production.
- To inform relevant staff and students of the progress of action plans.
- To assure the Academic Council that actions are being completed and enhancements implemented.

5.7 ANNUAL REPORT ENHANCEMENT PLANS

5.7.1 Where concerns have been raised, for example regarding student performance or satisfaction of a particular unit, course, partner institution, or department, the AR owner will normally be required to complete an Annual Reporting Enhancement Plan (AQF05-06) to respond specifically to the concerns in detail, enabling the UCO to assure that such concerns are monitored and addressed appropriately.

5.7.2 The TQSC on behalf of the Academic Council monitors the completion of AR monitoring activities and enhancement plans related to academic matters.

5.7.3 The Senior Management Team monitors the completion of AR monitoring activities and enhancement plans related to institutional matters.

5.7.4 [Table 5.2](#) shows the stages, tasks and responsibilities of Annual Report monitoring activities.

TABLE 5.2: ANNUAL REPORT MONITORING STAGES, TASKS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Stage No.	Completion Date	AR Monitoring Task	Responsibility
1	Feb	Mid-Point Review of EEAR, UAR, CAR, and NSSAR Action Plans including updates made to take account of student progression data and External Examiner Annual Reports not available during report production.	Course Teams
		Mid-Point Review of OAR Action Plans.	Senior Management Team
2	Feb	Mid-Point Review of IAR Action Plans.	CPSC
3	Mar	Mid-Point Review of EEAR, UAR, CAR, IAR and NSSAR Action Plans including updates made to take account of student progression data and External Examiner Annual Reports not available during report production.	CPSC & TQSC
		Mid-Point Review of OAR Operational Plans	Senior Management Team
4	Mar	Noting of: Mid-Point Reviews of EEAR, UAR, CAR, IAR and NSSAR Action Plans. Mid-Point Review of relevant OAR Operational Plans External Examiner Report Synthesis Action Plans	Academic Council
6	Sep	End-Point Review of EEAR, UAR, CAR and NSSAR Action Plans.	Course Teams
7	Sep	End-Point Review of IAR Action Plans.	CPSC
8	Sep	End-Point Review of EEAR, UAR, CAR, IAR and NSSAR Action Plans.	CPSC & TQSC
		End-Point review of OAR Action Plans.	Senior Management Team
9	Jun	Noting of endpoint reviewed AR action plans.	Academic Council (for academic matters) Senior Management Team (for institutional matters)

5.8 DISSEMINATION OF ANNUAL REPORTS

5.8.1 The UCO disseminates approved ARs and the outcomes of monitoring mid-point reviews to staff, students, and External Examiners. This takes place through committees, the annual Staff Conference, and electronic circulation.

5.8.2 The responsibility for disseminating ARs rests with their authors in liaison with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Head of Quality & Partnerships.

5.9 ANNUAL REVIEW OF COURSE DOCUMENTATION & INFORMATION

5.9.1 Included in the UCO's monitoring and reporting activities is the regular review of approved course documentation (i.e., Unit and Course Information Forms and Handbooks) and published course information (i.e. promotional materials, course brochures and website and intranet content), to ensure that these reflect up to date and accurate data.

5.9.2 The review of course documentation and information are normally undertaken annually in May / June, by allocated staff as identified in [Table 5.3](#).

5.9.3 The processes that should be followed for amending approved course documentation and information are also shown in [Table 5.3](#).

TABLE 5.3: ANNUAL REVIEW OF APPROVED COURSE DOCUMENTATION & INFORMATION

Documentation / Information to be Reviewed	Responsibility for the Review	Amendment Process
Course Information Form (CIFs)	Course Leaders	Course and Unit Modification process outlined in AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval and Modifications.
Unit Information Forms (UIFs)	Unit Leaders	Course and Unit Modification process outlined in AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval and Modifications.
Course Handbooks	Course Leaders	Course and Unit Modification process outlined in AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval and Modifications.
UCO Portal and Student Portal content	Head of Marketing & Communication in liaison with relevant Heads of Departments and staff	Annual review to assure currency of published information.
Course information published on the UCO's website	Head of Marketing & Communications in liaison with relevant staff	In line with the Core Documentation Management, Development & Review Policy & Procedure ⁶ and Competition & Marketing Authority advice and guidance ⁷ .

⁶ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-advises-universities-and-students-on-consumer-law>

Promotional Material	Head of Marketing & Communications in liaison with Course Leaders and other relevant staff	In line with the Core Documentation Management, Development & Review Policy & Procedure ⁸ .
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5.10 ANNUAL MONITORING AND REPORTING TO PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES

- 5.10.1 In addition to annual monitoring and reporting activities detailed in this section of the Academic Quality Framework above, the UCO also produces annual reports as required by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).
- 5.10.2 Currently the UCO's pre-registration Recognised Qualification provision adheres to the annual reporting requirements of the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC)⁹.
- 5.10.3 The process stages, completion dates, tasks and responsibilities for producing, approving and monitoring PSRB annual reports are outlined in [Table 5.4](#) below.
- 5.10.4 PSRB annual reports should be produced and reviewed in line with the UCO's Version Control Policy¹⁰. This includes using tracked changes to identify amendments and including footers to show the date and version number of the document.
- 5.10.5 Responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of documentation production rests with the staff identified in [Table 5.4](#) below, unless otherwise specified.
- 5.10.6 The TQSC monitors the completion of the following stages via update reports from the Head of Quality & Partnerships.

TABLE 5.4: PSRB ANNUAL REPORT PRODUCTION, APPROVAL & MONITORING PROCESSES

a) PSRB Annual Report Production & Approval	
PSRB Annual Report Production Task	Responsibility
PSRB Annual Report form provided electronically to the UCO's Vice-Chancellor / relevant staff.	PSRB
PSRB annual report forwarded to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Head of Quality & Partnerships for completion.	Vice-Chancellor / Relevant Staff
Agree responsibilities for completing the PSRB annual Report with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education). Circulate PSRB annual report to relevant staff members for completion with a deadline date.	Head of Quality & Partnerships

⁸ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

⁹ <https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/home/>

¹⁰ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

Completion of relevant sections of the PSRB annual report.	Relevant Staff Members
Collate completed PSRB annual report sections into one single report. Gather required appendices from relevant staff members.	Head of Quality & Partnerships
Peer review and approval of the PSRB annual report. Recommendation that the peer reviewed PSRB annual report is approved by the Academic Council.	TQSC
Consideration and approval of the PSRB annual report and approve for submission to the PSRB.	Academic Council
Submission of the approved PSRB annual report and relevant appendices to the PSRB by the deadline date.	Head of Quality & Partnerships
Analysis of the submitted PSRB annual report and production of an analysis report / feedback.	PSRB
Provide PSRB's analysis report / feedback to UCO.	PSRB
b) PSRB Annual Report Monitoring	
PSRB Annual Report Monitoring Task	Responsibility
Note and review the PSRB annual report analysis report / feedback and agree responses as appropriate.	TQSC Academic Council Senior Management Team
Disseminate areas of good practice to relevant Course Leaders (for consideration by Course Teams) and other staff as appropriate. Respond to any requests for information as stipulated in the PSRB annual report outcome in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor (on behalf of Academic Council) and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) (on behalf of the TQSC).	Head of Quality & Partnerships / Relevant Course Leader
Note the PSRB annual report submission outcomes and actions to be taken in response to these.	Academic Council
Monitor the progress of actions to be taken in response to the PSRB annual report submission outcomes.	TQSC

DIAGRAM 5.1: ANNUAL REPORTING & MONITORING CYCLE

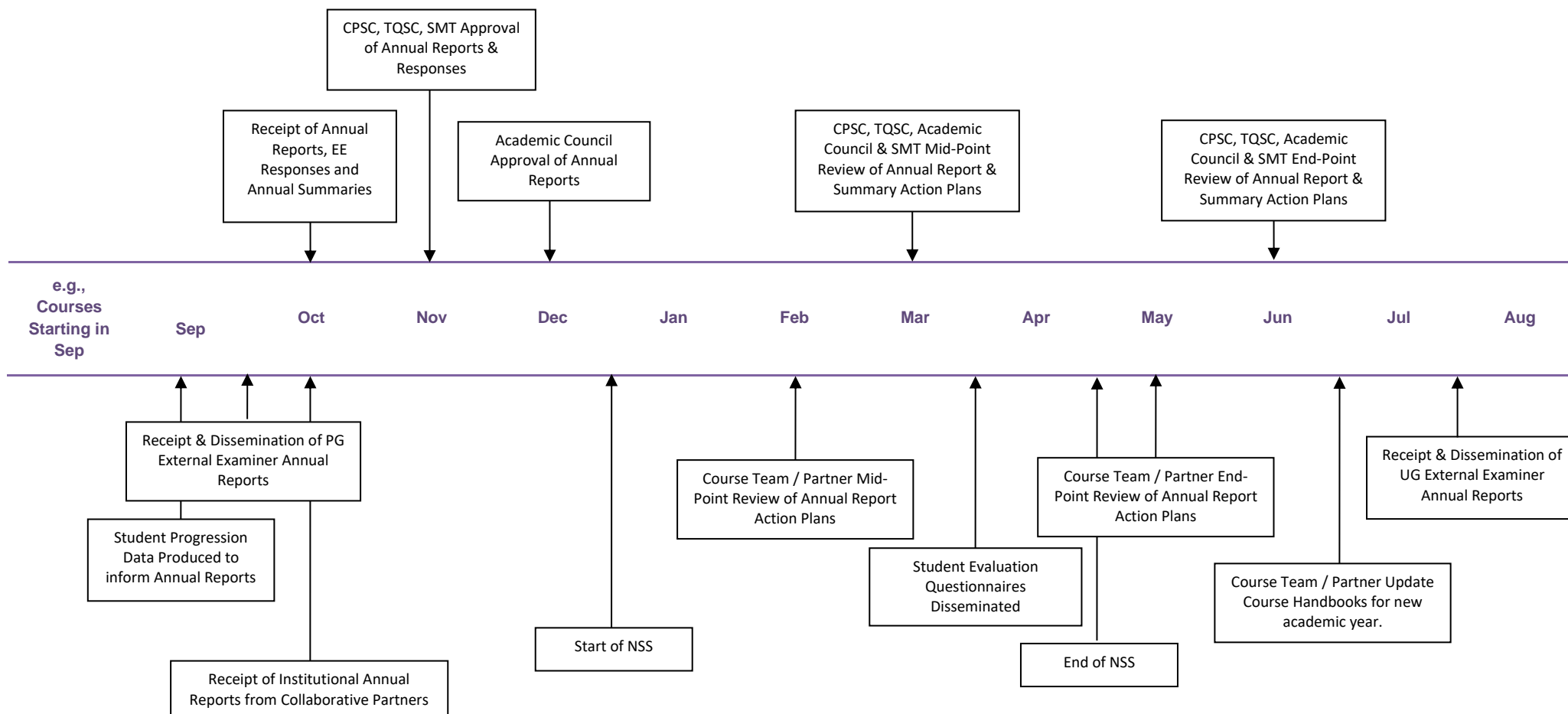
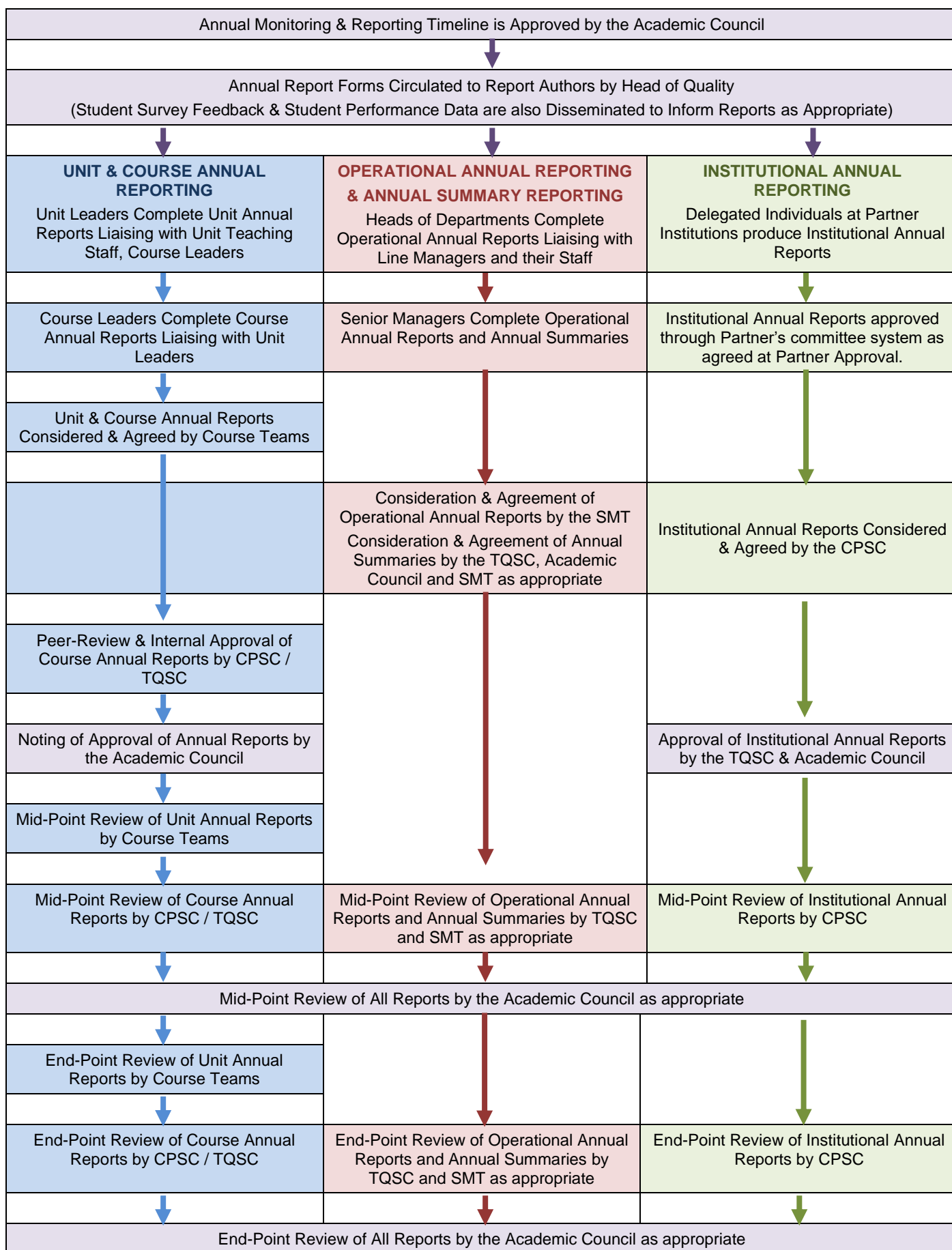


DIAGRAM 5.2: ANNUAL MONITORING & REPORTING PROCESS



AQF05: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
AQF05-01	Unit Annual Report Form
AQF05-02a	Course Annual Report Form – Undergraduate Courses
AQF05-02b	Course Annual Report Form – Postgraduate Courses
AQF05-03	Institutional Annual Report Form
AQF05-04	Operational Annual Report Form
AQF05-05	National Student Survey Annual Report Form
AQF05-06	Annual Reporting Enhancement Plan
AQF05-07a	Annual Summary Academic Appeals Template
AQF05-07b	Annual Summary Academic Discipline Template
AQF05-07c	Annual Summary Student Misconduct Template
AQF05-07d	Annual Summary Student Fitness to Practise Template
AQF05-07e	Annual Summary Student Complaints Template
AQF05-07f	Annual Summary DBS (Criminal Convictions and Cautions Risk Assessment) Template
AQF05-07g	Annual Summary Scrutiny Process Template
AQF05-07h	Annual Summary Staff Disciplinary & Capability Template
AQF05-07i	Annual Summary Staff Grievances Template
AQF05-07j	Annual Summary Patient Complaints Template
AQF05-07k	Annual Summary Whistleblowing (Public Interest Disclosure) Template



Academic Quality Framework

Section 6: Periodic Review

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 6: Periodic Review

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to Course Leaders, Heads of Area, Unit Leaders and members of relevant UCO Committees including student representatives.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\0 Head of Quality – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	June 2018 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to the Periodic Review Process, updating role titles and weblinks.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update staff role titles, weblinks & footnotes and to reflect current practice.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect new committee structure, role titles and responsibilities and to reflect broadening of provision.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	<i>Administrative Amendments to correct typographical errors and update section to reflect revised templates / forms in line with current practice.</i>	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V8.0	July 2022 Academic Council	<i>Major Amendments to remove the Preparatory PCR Event following a successful pilot of this change in process, and amendment of the PCR agenda to allow flexibility and focus of discussions at PCR Events depending on the nature and complexity of the provision under review.</i>	Head of Quality & Partnerships	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

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6.1 PERIODIC REVIEW INTRODUCTION

- 6.1.1 Periodic Review (PR) focuses on how providers (i.e., the UCO and any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) or other relevant external organisation) manage the quality of provision and maintain academic standards. It is an in-depth process which enables greater reflection than single annual monitoring activity and covers progress over a longer time frame (typically the past five years).
- 6.1.2 Periodic reviews of subject areas, courses and institutions ensure that academic provision is subject to effective scrutiny and self-reflection with an emphasis on constructive feedback from peers such that the student learning experience and quality processes may be enhanced and promoted as appropriate.
- 6.1.3 The UCO holds internal PRs of its taught course provision and is itself subject to external PRs as required by PSRBs and other external bodies as appropriate.

6.2 INTERNAL & EXTERNAL PERIODIC REVIEWS

A) INTERNAL PERIODIC REVIEW

- 6.2.1 PR of courses within a subject area (Periodic Course Review (PCR), also known as Course Re-approval or revalidation) is an internal periodic review process which enables the UCO to check the health of its course provision, identify areas for development, and disseminate good practice.
- 6.2.2 PCR allows for a broad and holistic consideration of courses, through a process of self-evaluation undertaken by staff working in the area in question, and involving stakeholder input (including student involvement), peer and external review. It includes the identification of good practice and strategies for enhancement.
- 6.2.3 Each PCR includes related provision within its scope, as appropriate.
- 6.2.4 PCR at the UCO provides assurance to the Academic Council that it can have confidence in the academic standards and quality of its courses and in the structures and processes that will maintain standards and quality in the future.
- 6.2.5 The UCO's processes for PCR align with the Quality Code published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) regarding Monitoring & Evaluation¹.
- 6.2.6 Normally, PCRs of taught courses are undertaken by the UCO every five years from the date of Course Approval.
- 6.2.7 The UCO's internal PCR processes are agreed by the Academic Council and are monitored by the Policy & Regulations Group to ensure that they are followed appropriately and remain effective.
- 6.2.8 Procedural support for PCRs is provided by the Head of Quality & Partnerships.
- 6.2.9 Detailed criteria guide the PCR process. These may include a review of strategic fit and viability, management of quality and standards, assessment, staffing, and learning resources. Relevant staff and PCR panel members are provided with documentation specifying procedural requirements and guidance to support development.
- 6.2.10 It is appropriate for PCRs to include consideration of new and changed provision within a subject area in line with requirements for the approval of new provision and/or modifications to current

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/monitoring-and-evaluation>

provision (see AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval & Modifications). Such approval must be agreed at the Review Scoping Stage.

- 6.2.11 Internal Institutional Periodic Review of Collaborative Partners of the UCO is described in AQF Section 16: Collaborative Activity.

B) EXTERNAL PERIODIC INSTITUTIONAL & COURSE REVIEW

- 6.2.12 As mentioned above, the UCO is subject to external periodic review as required by PSRBs and other external bodies, such as LASER Learning Awards (for the Access to Higher Education Diploma course).
- 6.2.13 The UCO adheres to the periodic review processes as required and stipulated by external organisations.
- 6.2.14 Periodic reviews by PSRBs are not interchangeable with internal PCRs, although some areas may be common for each review, such as a focus on the curriculum and staff expertise.

C) ALIGNMENT OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PERIODIC REVIEWS

- 6.2.15 The UCO's internal PCR processes and the external PR processes may be aligned if appropriate. For example, internal assurance and preparatory events often closely resemble external events. In the case of two review requirements – for instance, a PCR and renewal review for courses accredited by a PSRB – the UCO may schedule these within an appropriately close timeframe. This aims to avoid duplication and burden of workload where possible and appropriate.
- 6.2.16 Similarly, in some circumstances a combined review may be undertaken with a PSRB.

6.3 PERIODIC REVIEW PROCESS STAGES

- 6.3.1 The stages that constitute periodic review processes are outlined in the sections for PCR and PIR processes below.
- 6.3.2 Periodic review documentation development involves consultation with relevant stakeholders and internal peer review through the UCO's committee structure and preparatory periodic review events before submission to the final periodic review event.
- 6.3.3 Periodic review events are held following the submission of documentation, to enable reviewers to meet with staff and students, and to discuss and clarify lines of enquiry to inform the outcome of the periodic review.

6.4 PERIODIC COURSE REVIEW PROCESS

- 6.4.1 Taught courses approved by the UCO are normally expected to undergo a PCR once every five years (normally from the date of course approval) using the process described below.
- 6.4.2 A PCR typically includes all provision within a subject area and may include consideration of new and modified provision within a subject area, in line with requirements for the approval of new and modified provision (see AQF Section 4: Modifications to Courses & Units).
- 6.4.3 Where a single course is recommended for periodic review based on substantial proposed modifications or concern, this will be considered and recorded as an 'approval' event, and the New Course Approval process will apply (see AQF Section 4: New Course Approval Process).
- 6.4.4 PCR documentation should normally be submitted at least four weeks prior to each PCR event, to provide adequate time for panellists to review the documentation and identify lines of enquiry.
- 6.4.5 Processes for course and partnership closure are provided in AQF Section 4: Closing a Course and AQF Section 4: Closing a Partnership.

6.5 OBJECTIVES OF PERIODIC COURSE REVIEW

- 6.5.1 Periodic Course Review provides an opportunity in particular for the evaluation of:
- a) Subject standing and development, in the context of the UCO's strategy and sector norms and development.
 - b) Management of quality and standards in the provision offered within a subject, including the maintenance of core documentation (Course and Unit Information Forms) and the appropriate management of modifications to provision.
 - c) Academic standards and the maintenance of structures and processes designed for their support (including external examination, annual monitoring, unit and course reporting, and academic due process in the assessment and grading of student performance).
 - d) The quality and the student-led enhancement of the learner experience and opportunity in the context of the UCO's mission.
 - e) External engagement and benchmarking, e.g., with the QAA Quality Code, sector benchmarks, PSRBs (where relevant), employers, alumni and other external reference points that support the development and enhancement of provision and the learner experience.
 - f) Engagement and compliance with UCO strategy, policy, and initiatives over the period of review.

6.6 PREPARATION & TIMESCALES FOR PERIODIC COURSE REVIEWS

- 6.6.1 The Head of Quality & Partnerships will normally manage the PCR process at the UCO in liaison with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 6.6.2 Each PCR will commence in the academic year preceding review with a PCR Scoping Meeting between the following staff (as a minimum): the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Course Leaders of the provision within the review, and the Head of Quality & Partnerships.
- 6.6.3 At this scoping meeting:
- a) The Periodic Course Review Form (AQF06-01) will be finalised.
 - b) The scope of the review and of the provision within it will be finalised.
 - c) The date and duration of PCR Event(s) will be confirmed.
 - d) The institutional benchmark set will be confirmed.
 - e) The requirement for externality at the Periodic Course Review Event will be established on the basis of subject and course breadth and level.
 - f) The inclusion of any planned course approval within the review will be confirmed (subject to completion of the UCO's New Course Approval processes); additional approvals may be added later, in which case the relevant form (New Course Proposal Form (AQF04-01) / Course Modification Form (AQF-04-16) will be appended to the Periodic Course Review Form (AQF06-01).
 - g) Any relationship between the PCR and PSRB engagement will be established.
- 6.6.4 The Head of Quality & Partnerships will submit a Periodic Review Schedule to the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC) to consider and recommend for approval by the Academic Council, and keep these committees apprised of any changes to the schedule.
- 6.6.5 Following the PCR Scoping Meeting relevant staff will prepare the required documentation as agreed at this meeting.
- 6.6.6 The typical timescale for PCR's is shown in [Diagram 6.1](#).

6.7 APPOINTMENT OF PERIODIC COURSE REVIEW PANELS

- 6.7.1 The Head of Quality & Partnerships, in consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), will appoint and invite the panel for the PCR Event, including internal panel members, external subject specialists, and student representation.
- 6.7.2 The initial identification of external subject specialists should be made at least three months prior to the PCR Event.
- 6.7.3 The Course Leader/s of the course/s being reviewed in consultation with their Course Team/s and in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) are responsible for nominating appropriate external subject specialists by completing the Periodic Course Review External Panel Member Nomination Form (AQF06-02), which should be accompanied by the CV of the nominated individual.
- 6.7.4 External panel member nominees should have sufficient specialist knowledge but not have been engaged in teaching, research or scholarly activity relating to the course(s) under review, including recently serving as an External Examiner for the course(s) under review. Neither should any of the Course Team putting forward the proposal be acting as an External Examiner on a course with which the external nominee is associated.
- 6.7.5 Nomination forms and CVs should be submitted to the Quality Team for approval by the TQSC (or where timescales do not permit committee approval, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) as Chair of the TQSC) normally no later than three months prior to the PCR Event.
- 6.7.6 The Quality Team will thereafter be responsible for liaising with the nominated External Panel Members regarding the arrangements and logistics of the review event. This will normally include providing guidance to the External Panel Members regarding the expectations of External Panel Members, their expected time commitment, fees and expenses and opportunity for a pre-panel meeting to ensure that they are clear about their role.
- 6.7.7 [Table 6.1](#) shows the typical membership of a PCR Event Panel, the criteria of appointment of each panel member, and their role for this event.

TABLE 6.1: TYPICAL PCR EVENT PANEL MEMBERSHIP, CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT & PANEL ROLES

Panellist	Criteria for Appointment	Role
Chair	Normally an academic member of the UCO's Academic Council or Teaching Quality & Standards Committee not involved in the submission.	The panel chair will lead the panel and ensure that the requirements of the review process are achieved effectively. The chair approves the responses to any conditions from the event.
One or Two (depending on subject breadth) Academic External Panel Members	The Academic External Panel Members should be specialists in the field of the subject provision under review. External academic specialists will be selected on the basis of their	The role of the external panel members is to draw upon their subject specialism and professional experience to provide an objective and independent judgement of the quality, standards and coherence of the provision under review.

	<p>coverage of subjects under review at an appropriate level of seniority.</p> <p>They will be independent of the UCO, i.e., not have been engaged in teaching, research or scholarly activity relating to the course(s) under review such as recently serving as External Examiners for the course(s) under review.</p> <p>Neither should any of the Course Team putting forward the proposal be acting as an External Examiner on a course with which the external nominee is associated.</p> <p>Where a review includes a range of subjects deemed sufficiently broad to require additional external academic input (as indicated, for example, by the range of subject benchmarks to which the provision responds), this will be specified on the Periodic Course Review Form.</p>	<p>It is expected that external panel members will undertake the role of “critical friend” and constructively challenge viewpoints or assumptions that are held by the Course Team or institutionally.</p>
An Industry External Panel Member	<p>The Industry External Panel Member should be a practitioner from a practice field related to the subject provision.</p> <p>External practitioners must have substantial practitioner expertise relevant to graduates of the provision under review.</p> <p>The practitioner may not be involved in the direct delivery or support of the provision under review.</p>	
One or Two Senior Academic Internal Representatives	<p>The senior academic representatives should be from outside of the subject provision under review.</p>	<p>To give an internal but independent view on general teaching and learning issues, the learning experience and environment and general resource issues.</p>
A Student Representative (or an approved representative if a student representative is formally noted at the review panel event and	<p>Student representatives must have current or recent experience as a student of UCO (within the previous two academic years).</p>	<p>The role of the student panel member is to contribute to the assessment of all areas of the review, but with a particular focus on the student experience.</p>

documented in the final report as not available)		
A Quality Assurance Representative	The Quality Assurance Representative should be a member of the UCO's Quality Assurance Team.	To look at issues relating to continued compliance with UCO processes and with QAA requirements / external reference points.
A Secretary	The Secretary is normally appointed by the Head of Quality & Partnerships.	<p>The Secretary's duties include liaising with the Head of Quality about the arrangements for the periodic review process, communicating with panel members, drawing up a draft programme for the panel review event and preparing the review report.</p> <p>The Secretary is responsible for acting as conduit between the panel and the Course Team regarding initial observations prior to the event and in the response to the outcomes of the review.</p>

6.8 PERIODIC COURSE REVIEW REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

- 6.8.1 Responsibility for preparing the PCR submission documentation resides with the Course Teams concerned in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships.
- 6.8.2 It is usually expected that consultation with students and relevant staff (faculty, student support, learning resources and human resources as appropriate) and external experts (External Examiners and PSRBs) will be undertaken regarding proposed modifications which arise from the review preparation process, in line with AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval & Modification.
- 6.8.3 Periodic Course Review documentation should be produced and reviewed in line with the UCO's Version Control Policy². This includes using tracked changes to identify amendments and including footers to show the date and version number of the document.
- 6.8.4 Responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of documentation production rests with the Course Leader/s of the provision under review.
- 6.8.5 Internal peer review before submission to the PCR Event is the responsibility of the relevant Course Leader/s.
- 6.8.6 [Table 6.2](#) shows the documentation required to be produced and submitted for PCRs. In all cases coverage should normally include the period since the previous PCR or Course Approval Event unless otherwise stated.

² <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

TABLE 6.2: REQUIRED PERIODIC COURSE REVIEW (PCR) DOCUMENTATION

Required Document	PCR	Document Description
A Self-Evaluation Document (SED) (AQF06-03) SED Appendices (AQF06-03a-g)		<p>The SED is a critical self-evaluation of the subject and its provision in the context of UCO benchmarks and policies, and external benchmarks and requirements.</p> <p>The SED should be approximately 20 pages long and provide evidence that sufficient and effective attention is being given to the enhancement of quality and the maintenance of standards.</p> <p>The SED should be produced using the PCR SED template (AQF06-03).</p> <p>Guidance for writing the SED is provided in the template.</p> <p>The SED should be accompanied by the following appendices:</p> <p>AQF06-03a Appendix 1: Market Research Summary</p> <p>AQF06-03b Appendix 2: Competitor Analysis Summary</p> <p>AQF06-03c Appendix 3: Course Data</p> <p>AQF06-03d Appendix 4: External Benchmark Mapping (for each course under review)</p> <p>AQF06-03e Appendix 5: UCO Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy Mapping</p> <p>AQF06-03f Appendix 6: Course Approval Criteria</p> <p>AQF06-03g Appendix 7: Course Equality Impact Assessment</p>
Course Information Forms for the course/s under consideration		Reviewed Course Information Forms (CIFs) for each of the courses under review with any modifications track changed, using the current CIF template (AQF04-05a).
Unit Information Forms		Reviewed Unit Information Forms (UIFs) for each of the courses under review with any modifications track changed, using the current UCO UIF template (AQF04-06a).
Course Handbooks		Reviewed Course Handbooks for each of the courses under review with any modifications track changed, using the current Course Handbook template (AQF04-07).
Course Modifications		<p>Course Modification Forms (AQF04-16) should be submitted alongside any proposed changes to courses or units as part of the Periodic Review.</p> <p>These should clearly identify the rationale for the modification and any resource implications.</p> <p>A summary of the proposed course modifications should also be identified in the appropriate section of the SED.</p>

6.8.7 Course Teams will be provided with the following information by the Quality Team to enable them to reflect on the course since it was last approved / reviewed:

- Current course documentation, including Course Information Forms, Unit Information Forms and Course Handbooks for the course/s under review.
- Annual Monitoring Reports since the previous internal / external periodic review or Course Approval (whichever is the most recent).
- External Examiner Annual Reports from the previous three academic years and the responses to these reports.
- Any PSRB Reports from the previous three academic years and the responses to the reports or since the previous internal / external periodic review or Course Approval (whichever is the most recent), together with evidence of any action taken in response to those reports.
- Outcome reports from the last Course Approval or Periodic Review Events of the courses under consideration (whichever is the most recent).

- f) Course Team and other key committee minutes since the previous internal / external periodic review or Course Approval (whichever is the most recent).
 - g) National Student Survey (NSS) and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) / Graduate Outcomes Survey or similar data covering the provision under review.
- 6.8.8 The Quality Team will also provide Course Teams with the following internal and external reference points (as agreed at the Periodic Review scoping stage to enable benchmark mapping and the completion of SED Appendix 4: External Benchmark Mapping (AQF06-03d) and SED Appendix 5: UCO Teaching, Learning and Assessment Mapping (AQF06-03e):
 - a) The QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
 - b) Appropriate QAA Subject Benchmark Statements
 - c) Appropriate QAA Degree Characteristics Statements
 - d) The QAA Credit Framework for England
 - e) The SEEC Credit Level Descriptors
 - f) Relevant PSRB Standards
 - g) The UCO's Strategic Plan
 - h) The UCO's Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy
 - i) Other relevant documentation that Course Teams consider would support the PCR submission
- 6.8.9 Copies of the reference point documentation will be supplied to the PCR Event Panel by the Quality Team.
- 6.8.10 Deadlines for PCR submission documentation are produced by the Head of Quality & Partnerships in liaison with relevant Course Leader/s and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 6.8.11 All PCR documentation should normally be submitted electronically to the Quality Team at least four weeks prior to each PCR event.
- 6.8.12 The PCR documentation will be circulated to the PCR Event Panel together with guidance and relevant benchmarking standards to enable panel members to consider submitted documentation prior to the PCR Event and to provide them with the opportunity to put forward comments or areas for clarification as appropriate.

6.9 PERIODIC COURSE REVIEW EVENTS

- 6.9.1 Normally one PCR Event is arranged however, depending on the nature of the course/s under review and other risk factors, a second PCR Event may take place.
- 6.9.2 The PCR Event normally lasts for one day, however if significant modifications or a new course are proposed as part of the PCR, the event may be scheduled over more than one day.
- 6.9.3 The purpose of the PCR Event is to:
 - a) Provide assurance to the UCO about the quality and standards of the provision concerned.
 - b) Consider the effectiveness with which UCO policies are being implemented, including approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.
 - c) Confirm that research, advanced professional development, and scholarly activities are impacting the provision at FHEQ Levels 6 and 7.
 - d) Identify good practice and particular strengths and strategies for quality enhancement.
 - e) Approve new courses and / or approve modifications to existing courses and units that are confirmed to occur as part of the PCR process, in line with the UCO's course and unit approval

and modification processes as documented in AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval & Modifications.

- 6.9.4 The PCR Event Panel will achieve this by considering and questioning the PCR documentation submission, meeting with Course Team members, students, teaching staff, senior and support staff and, as appropriate, alumni of the provision under review. A tour of the location of delivery of the course/s may also be undertaken to review facilities and resources.
- 6.9.5 An indicative agenda for PCR events is provided in [Table 6.3](#).
- 6.9.6 Any variation to the agenda or to the duration of the PCR Event, other than that produced by the addition of the approval of new courses and modifications to existing courses and units, must be agreed at the PCR Scoping Meeting or by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 6.9.7 Depending on the nature and complexity of the provision under review, the agenda may include additional meetings with non-academic staff, senior staff, professional services staff, and students.

TABLE 6.3: INDICATIVE AGENDA FOR PERIODIC COURSE REVIEW EVENTS

Time	Meeting	Expected Attendance
9.30 – 10.30	Private meeting of the panel to discuss the format for the event meeting, overall impression of the review documentation and to identify any lines of enquiry.	Panel
10.30 – 12.30	Discussion with the Course Team to pursue agreed lines of enquiry.	Panel Course Team
12.30 – 13.30	Panel meeting to discuss responses to lines of enquiry, identify any re-approval conditions (as appropriate) and identify further lines of enquiry.	Panel
13.30 – 14.00	Lunch	Panel Course Team
14.00 – 14.30	Private meeting of the panel to discuss further lines of enquiry.	Panel
14.30 – 15.30	Discussion with the Course Team to pursue further lines of enquiry.	Panel Course Team
15.30 – 16.00	Private meeting of the panel to discuss outcome and conditions.	Panel
16.00 – 16.30	Feedback outcome and any conditions to the Course Team.	Panel Course Team
16.30	End of Meeting	Panel Course Team

6.10 PERIODIC COURSE REVIEW EVENT OUTCOMES

6.10.1 The outcome of the PCR Event will be made based on the considerations and judgements of the PCR Event Panel regarding academic standards and the quality of provision as outlined below.

A) JUDGEMENTS ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS

6.10.2 The panel will reach a single judgement on academic standards that is based on consideration of the specified outcomes of provision (in relation to relevant external benchmarks), including the content and design of the curriculum, and the design and effective implementation of assessments as a means of testing the outcomes. Exceptionally, different areas of provision may be subject to different judgements, although normally one judgement will be made across the provision.

6.10.3 The judgement will normally be one of the following:

- a) **Confidence:** i.e., re-approve provision normally for another 5 years subject to further annual and periodic review, i.e., the panel was satisfied with current management of academic standards and quality and the prospect of these being maintained in the future.
- b) **Confidence subject to specified conditions:** the panel may identify issues with some/all provision and require the Course Team/s to provide progress reports on these, normally at six-monthly intervals, until the issues are completed.
- c) **No Confidence:** i.e., this judgement should only be reached if there are fundamental and very significant weaknesses that had not been identified in the Self Evaluation Document with appropriate plans in place to address within a suitable timeframe with appropriate arrangements for the management of any required suspension of provision.

B) JUDGEMENTS ON THE QUALITY OF PROVISION

6.10.4 The outcome of the PCR Event will also include judgements on the quality of provision in respect of:

- a) **Academic strength and viability** (i.e., the effective understanding and focus on the academic position and strategic development of the subject area and its provision, its effective use of benchmarks, staff development and external engagement, and evidence of the effective integration of its academic activities including research and teaching);
- b) **Learning opportunities and resources** (i.e., the evidence that the provision and Course Teams provide their students with opportunities to achieve and develop);
- c) **Student focus and support** (i.e., evidence that the provision and Course Teams are both proactive and responsive in their management and enhancement of the learner experience).

6.10.5 The judgement will normally be one of the following:

- a) **Commendable:** i.e., the provision is approved; most elements are of good quality, with identifiable areas of excellence. Some areas for improvement may be noted.
- b) **Approved:** i.e., the provision is approved; most elements are of good quality, with identifiable, but not significant, areas for improvement.
- c) **Approved, subject to the following time-limited conditions:** i.e., some identifiable and significant weaknesses that can be addressed. The nature of the weaknesses should be clearly identified, and the conditions should be time-bound so that they can be effectively monitored.
- d) **Failing:** i.e., the provision is inadequate, and a recovery plan is required, to include arrangements for the management of any suspension of provision.

- 6.10.6 The panel may also identify as commendable or failing specific areas of activity or provision within the judgements on quality of provision.
- 6.10.7 Recommendations may be made in respect of all judgements other than those of 'failing'. These should be monitored through the normal Annual Monitoring and Reporting processes (AQF Section 5: Annual Monitoring & Reporting).
- 6.10.8 In addition to the above possible outcomes, the panel may set 're-approval conditions' in accordance with AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval & Modification. These will be differentiated from judgement conditions and will require a response and completion prior to the next commencement of the operation of the course to which they pertain using the approach to approval conditions specified in relation to the approval process.

6.11 PERIODIC COURSE REVIEW REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO THE OUTCOME

- 6.11.1 Periodic Course Review and Course Approval processes enable the UCO to demonstrate public accountability for the standards achieved by its courses. Peer groups' academic judgements, and the evidence on which they are based, must be substantiated and accessible through reports.
- 6.11.2 The secretary to the PCR Event Panel will draft a Periodic Course Review Outcome, Conditions and Response Form (AQF06-04) that will provide the Course Team with the outcome and any (re)approval conditions, recommendations and commendations immediately following the event to enable Course Teams to begin work on any conditions.
- 6.11.3 The secretary to the PCR Event Panel will also draft a formal and more detailed Periodic Course Review outcome report, normally within two weeks of the PCR Event, and circulate this to the members of the panel for confirmation. The secretary then circulates the confirmed outcome report to the Course Leader(s), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), and Head of Quality & Partnerships (as a minimum).
- 6.11.4 The outcome report will identify and confirm continued approval (or otherwise) for all provision within the review, and any approved variations to this process. It will also confirm the date of operation in post-review form of the courses reviewed. Where the panel requires essential action other than as (re)approval conditions, it will report these as conditions, identifying responsibilities and a timescale. Other suggested actions may be reported as recommendations and should be responded to as part of the normal annual monitoring process. (Re)approval conditions will be identified in relation to specific courses and have separate timeframes for response and completion.
- 6.11.5 The detailed outcome report will provide a clear indication of the discussions to explain the panel's conclusions and any conditions and recommendations, together with the dates by which they should be met.
- 6.11.6 In respect of judgement conditions, specified arrangements for monitoring, review and sign-off will be specified in the outcome reports.
- 6.11.7 Where it is found that a course requires suspension, the External Examiners for that course will be informed of the start and end dates of the suspension and the reasons for the suspension.
- 6.11.8 The Course Team, in consultation with the Head of Quality & Partnerships, is required to respond to the Periodic Course Review outcome report using the Periodic Course Review Outcome, Conditions and Response Form (AQF06-04) within an agreed timeframe.
- 6.11.9 The Course Team's response should be submitted to the Quality Team who will forward it on to the PCR Event Panel for review and approval.

- 6.11.10 The PCR Event Panel must be satisfied with the Course Team's responses to their conditions and recommendations, and which will be authorised by the Chair of the panel.
- 6.11.11 The authorised response form together with the Periodic Course Review Outcome Report will be considered by the TQSC prior to being submitted to the Academic Council for formal re-approval of the course as recommended by the Chair of the PCR Event Panel.
- 6.11.12 Further to the Academic Council approving the outcome report and response, a Periodic Course Review Confirmation Form (AQF06-05) is produced and signed off by the Chair of the Academic Council. The confirmation form details the outcome of the PCR Event, the length of time for which the course is approved, and the date of the next periodic review of the course. It also serves as confirmation that the Periodic Course Review process is concluded, and that the submitted course documentation is approved for implementation as specified in the Periodic Course Review outcome report.
- 6.11.13 The signed confirmation form and approved course documentation is then circulated to Course Leaders and other relevant staff by the Quality Team as confirmation of course re-approval and conclusion of the PCR.
- 6.11.14 Monitoring of ongoing approval conditions and recommendations is overseen by the CPSC / TQSC in respect of educational matters and the Senior Management Team (SMT) in respect of institutional matters.

6.12 PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROVISION ACCREDITED BY A PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY & REGULATORY BODY (PSRB)

- 6.12.1 Where a course is accredited by a PSRB, the PSRB's re-accreditation / review process shall be followed.
- 6.12.2 Where possible, internal PCRs will normally be scheduled to coincide with PSRB reviews to manage workload.
- 6.12.3 The Course Team responsible for the accredited provision shall liaise with the UCO's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Quality Team to confirm:
 - a) The point of contact for the PSRB.
 - b) Documentation requirements.
 - c) Meeting / visit requirements by the PSRB.
- 6.12.4 An internal preparatory PSRB review event will normally take place prior to the PSRB event to critically review and recommend enhancements to the required PSRB review documentation.
- 6.12.5 The internal preparatory PSRB review event will be co-ordinated by the Quality Team.
- 6.12.6 The internal preparatory PSRB review event will be undertaken by a panel appointed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Head of Quality & Partnerships normally consisting of the panel members identified in [Table 6.4](#).
- 6.12.7 The Internal Preparatory PSRB Review Event Panel will undertake a desk-based review of the proposed PSRB review documentation referring to guidance and requirements published by the PSRB to identify enhancements to the documentation and lines of enquiry.

- 6.12.8 The Preparatory PSRB Review Event Panel will then meet to discuss the findings of their desk-based review and meet with the Course Team to pursue any lines of enquiry and discuss enhancements.
- 6.12.9 The Course Team will review the PSRB review documentation and make revisions in line with the Preparatory PSRB Review Event Panel's recommendations.
- 6.12.10 The Course Team will provide the Preparatory PSRB Review Event Panel with a response to describe how they have acted on the recommendations, which will be confirmed by the Panel prior to submission to the PSRB.
- 6.12.11 Following submission to the PSRB, the PSRB's review process shall be followed.
- 6.12.12 The outcome to the PSRB review event will be noted by the TQSC and Academic Council.
- 6.12.13 Any conditions resulting from a PSRB review event will be monitored by the TQSC on behalf of the Academic Council.

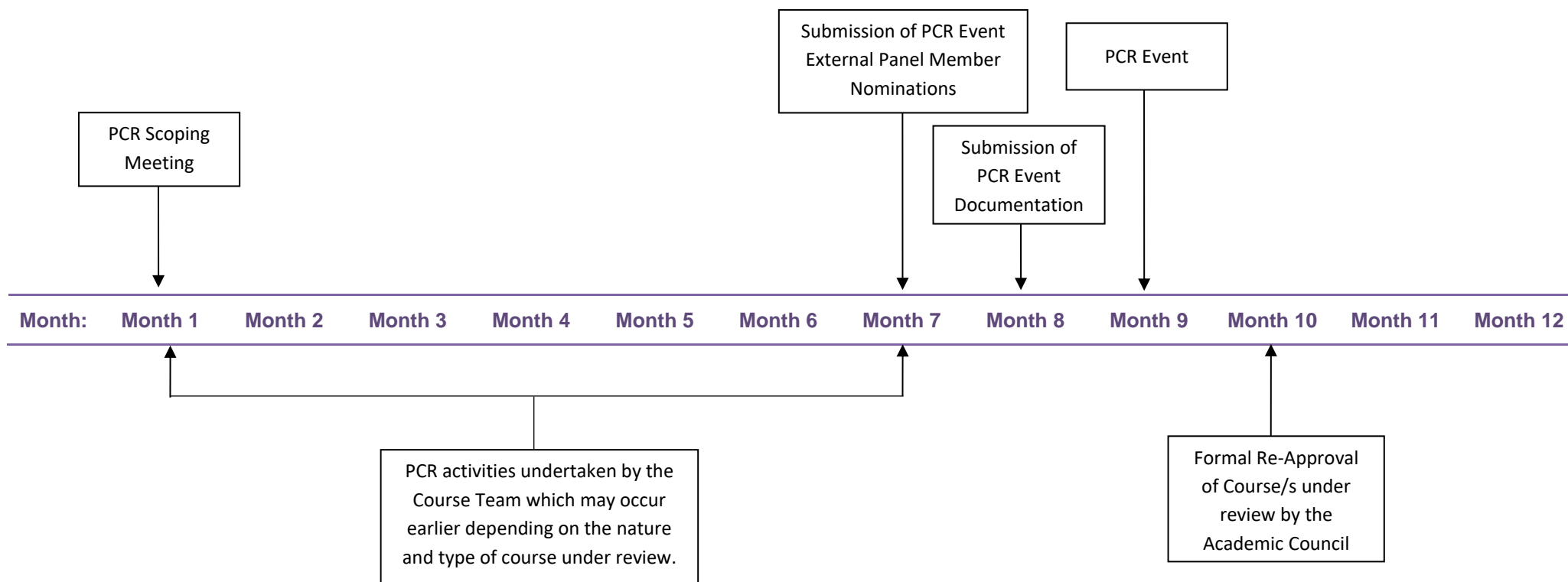
TABLE 6.4: INTERNAL PREPARATORY PSRB REVIEW EVENT PANEL

Panellist	Criteria for Appointment	Panel Role
Chair	The Chair is a senior member of academic staff who has not had direct involvement with the PSRB review submission.	<p>The Chair of the panel is expected to ensure that discussions during the event are developmental and enhance the review submission.</p> <p>The Chair should use the initial private meeting of the panel to agree who will lead on which themes, which areas should be highlighted for clarification as well as the order of topics.</p> <p>The Chair will open the event by clarifying the aims and objectives of the event and will close the event by summarising the conclusions and outcomes. Issues which are not fully clarified should be pursued and any areas of concern should be shared with the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee.</p> <p>The Chair approves the response to any conditions arising from the event.</p>
One Internal Academic Representative	<p>The Internal Academic Representative should not have had direct involvement with the PSRB review submission.</p> <p>They will normally have expertise within the subject area under review.</p>	The role of the academic representative is to draw upon his/her experiences within his/her own academic area to provide an objective and independent view of the quality of the review submission.
One External Representative	The External Academic Representative should not have	The role of the external representative is to draw upon their subject specialism and / or professional experience to provide an

	<p>had direct involvement with the PSRB review submission.</p> <p>They will normally have academic and / professional experience within the subject area and will normally be registered with the PSRB undertaking the review.</p>	<p>objective and independent judgement of the quality, standards and coherence of the review submission.</p> <p>It is expected that external representatives will undertake the role of a “critical friend” and constructively challenge viewpoints or assumptions that are held by the Course Team or institutionally.</p>
A Student Representative	<p>The Student Representative should be a student within the same subject area as that of the review submission and to have been a student for at least one year.</p>	<p>The role of the student panel member is to contribute to the assessment of all areas of the review submission, but with a particular focus on the student experience.</p>
A Quality Assurance Representative	<p>The Quality Assurance Representative should be a member of the UCO's Quality Assurance Team.</p>	<p>The role of this representative is to advise on quality assurance and regulatory issues and to confirm that the review submission considers UCO regulations, policies, and other quality matters.</p>
Secretary	<p>The Secretary is usually assigned by the Quality Team.</p>	<p>The role of the Secretary includes taking notes at the event and preparing the outcome report of the event in liaison with the Chair of the Panel.</p>

DIAGRAM 6.1: TYPICAL TIMESCALE FOR PERIODIC COURSE REVIEWS

NB. This diagram shows minimum timescales for typical PCR's and may take longer depending on the nature of course under review.



AQF06: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
AQF06-01	Periodic Course Review Form
AQF06-02	Periodic Course Review External Panel Member Nomination Form
AQF06-03	Periodic Course Review Self-Evaluation Document Template
AQF06-03a	SED Appendix 1: Market Research Summary
AQF06-03b	SED Appendix 2: Competitor Analysis Summary
AQF06-03c	SED Appendix 3: Student Data
AQF06-03d	SED Appendix 4: External Benchmark Mapping
AQF06-03e	SED Appendix 5: UCO Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy Mapping
AQF06-03f	SED Appendix 6: Course Approval Criteria
AQF06-03g	SED Appendix 7: Course Equality Impact Assessment
AQF06-04	Periodic Course Review Outcome, Conditions and Response Form
AQF06-05	Periodic Course Review Confirmation Form



Academic Quality Framework

Section 7: Academic Regulations

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 7: Academic Regulations

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of interest to all members of the UCO.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Academic Registrar	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V1.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Academic Registrar	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	August 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update staff role titles and email system.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update staff role titles, weblinks & footnotes and to reflect current practice.	Head of Quality Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect new committee structure.	Head of Quality Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V7.0	Dec 2020 TQSC & Academic Council	Major Amendments to: Section 7.22 RPL to reflect an increase in the number of credits permitted for RPL at Level 5 from 60 to 120.	Head of Quality Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

		<p><i>Section 7.40 Computer Based Assessments amended to incorporate the Computer Based Assessment Policy into these regulations.</i></p> <p><i>Section 7.41 New section added to provide regulations regarding online marking of practical & clinical assessments.</i></p>		<p><i>Published Version: Website</i></p>	
V8.0	<p><i>Aug 2021 PRAG Chair</i></p>	<p><i>Administrative Amendments to correct typographical errors, update staff roles and titles, reflect rescinded policies and current course portfolio, update weblinks and associated section forms.</i></p>	<p><i>Head of Quality</i></p>	<p><i>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i></p>	<p><i>Annually and on an “as required” basis.</i></p>
V9.0	<p><i>July 2022 Academic Council</i></p>	<p><i>Administrative Amendments to correct and update staff role, policy, and committee titles.</i></p> <p><i>Major Amendment to reflect and include revised Assessment Scrutiny Process.</i></p>	<p><i>Head of Quality & Partnerships</i></p>	<p><i>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i></p>	<p><i>Annually and on an “as required” basis.</i></p>
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
<p>If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk</p>					

Academic Quality Framework

Section 7: Academic Regulations

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PART A: AWARDS & COURSES

This section of the Academic Quality Framework summarises the UCO's regulations regarding awards and courses and provides information on the approved awards delivered by the UCO, award certificates and transcripts, honorary degrees, credits awarded and language of instruction. It should be of interest to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students and to all staff.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

- 7.1.1 The UCO has been recognised as an institution approved to deliver its own academic taught awards. The UCO must therefore ensure that the Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other academic awards and distinctions delivered and conferred by it are comparable in standard with awards granted and conferred throughout the university sector in the United Kingdom; all courses approved by the UCO must be of such an academic standard as to fulfil these requirements. Accordingly, the UCO pays due regard to the Office for Students¹ and Quality Code for Higher Education² published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)³ in the management of the academic quality and the standards of its courses.
- 7.1.2 For each Academic Award it establishes, the UCO states a benchmarked definition with reference to The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ)⁴, Higher Education Credit Framework for England⁵, relevant subject benchmark statements⁶ and degree characteristics statements⁷ published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), and Credit Level Descriptors published by SEEC⁸ which are the most detailed descriptors for assessing levels of academic learning and are widely used by HE providers across the UK, in addition to standards and competencies published by relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), to ensure that all of the courses that lead to an award of the UCO are mapped against nationally recognised academic benchmarks.
- 7.1.3 The UCO offers programmes of study leading to credits and award qualifications at the following higher education levels:
- Level 3: Access to Higher Education Diplomas and Foundation Years
 - Level 4: Certificates of Higher Education
 - Level 5: Diplomas of Higher Education and Foundation Degrees
 - Level 6: Bachelor's Degrees / Bachelor's Degrees with Honours
 - Level 7: Postgraduate Certificates / Integrated Master's Degrees / Taught Master's Degrees
- 7.1.4 Detailed description of the expectations at Levels 3 to 7 is provided within the qualifications framework (FHEQ) published by the QAA and corresponding level descriptors are provided in the Credit Level Descriptors for Higher Education published by SEEC.

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/>

² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

³ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/home>

⁴ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks>

⁵ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/higher-education-credit-framework-for-england>

⁶ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>

⁷ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/characteristics-statements>

⁸ <https://seec.org.uk/>

- 7.1.5 The UCO uses a credit scheme for taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses and qualifications leading to an award of the UCO and uses credits in a system of recognition of prior learning to support student mobility and progression. The number of credits awarded for each qualification is in line with those typical of credit value arrangements in England published by the QAA⁹ ([Section 7.9: Credits Awarded & Progression of Courses of Study](#)).
- 7.1.6 Regulations regarding entry with advanced standing, recognition of prior learning and limitations about the re-use of credit are described in [Section 7.21: Recognition of Prior Learning](#), and further information may be found in the UCO's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy¹⁰.

7.2 APPROVED AWARDS DELIVERED BY THE UCO

- 7.2.1 The UCO delivers its own approved awards and an Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) awarded by LASER Learning Awards. In each case the standard of the award is that expected of a student who, having met the relevant admissions requirements, has successfully completed the programme of study to a defined threshold of knowledge and competence for a defined range of credits.
- 7.2.2 The UCO's own approved awards are defined with a formal award description and an abbreviated form, e.g.:
- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Formal Award Description: | Integrated Masters in Osteopathy |
| Abbreviated Form: | M.Ost |
- 7.2.3 Approved awards at the UCO give recognition to different standards of student achievement by the award of commendation, distinction or classification ([see Section 7.64: Awards with Commendation, Distinction or Classification](#)).
- 7.2.4 Those achieving undergraduate or postgraduate awards may use the abbreviated form of the award after their name (e.g. Ms. Anne Other, M.Ost.).
- 7.2.5 Courses of study may be approved leading to any of the UCO's approved awards, and courses may be designated with more than one award outcome as an intermediate or exit award within an approved course.
- 7.2.6 Approved awards such as Certificate of Higher Education, Diploma of Higher Education, Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma may be considered as intermediate or exit awards.
- 7.2.7 Approved awards may be discontinued for the purpose of future courses but will be retained on the UCO's records where students have been conferred with such awards.
- 7.2.8 A summary of the UCO's course portfolio and courses validated by external bodies can be found in AQF Section 2.9: Course Portfolio & Teaching & Learning Practices.

7.3 APPROVAL OF ACADEMIC AWARDS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- 7.3.1 The UCO's Academic Council holds the authority to approve and establish new academic awards and qualifications for the UCO.
- 7.3.2 In considering proposals for new academic awards and qualifications, the Academic Council consults widely and reviews the internal and external context, including the FHEQ, noting especially the following:
- a) The potential position of the new award within the FHEQ.

⁹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/higher-education-credit-framework-for-england>

¹⁰ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/how-apply/recognition-prior-learning-rpl>

- b) The characteristics and level that would both distinguish the new award from existing UCO awards and relate it to them and to the qualifications of other higher education or awarding bodies.
- c) The potential for new courses and programmes of study under such a new award.
- d) The relationship to existing awards and suitability of existing awards for new courses and programme(s) of study.
- e) The potential for programme(s) of study capable of leading to this award and likely scale of demand.
- f) The new award's potential for recognition by the academic community, other institutions and professions, applicants, students, and employers.

7.3.3 The procedure for submitting a proposal for new awards is like that required for a new course leading to an existing award (see AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval and Modifications).

7.4 AWARD CERTIFICATES

7.4.1 The UCO produces one award certificate for each student achieving an approved award of the UCO.

7.4.2 The award certificate will normally include the following information:

- The student's full name.
- The title of the award (including whether a student gained the award with Distinction as appropriate).
- The name of the UCO as the awarding institution.
- The name of the partner institution delivering the course (as applicable).
- The language of delivery of the course if this is not English.
- The date of the award.

7.4.3 All award certificates should be signed by the Vice-Chancellor of the UCO and the Chair of the UCO's Board of Directors.

7.4.4 For awards validated by LASER Learning Awards, the UCO complies with LASER's regulations regarding award documentation and certification¹¹.

7.4.5 Students successfully completing the Introduction to Healthcare Sciences or other pre-entry courses do not normally receive a certificate due to these courses being unaccredited and typically serving as a condition of entry onto the UCO's undergraduate degree courses.

7.4.6 Graduates of the UCO requiring replacement or duplicate degree certificates should contact the Academic Registry (registry@uco.ac.uk). This may incur an administrative fee.

7.4.7 Where an award is issued by the University of Bedfordshire (the UCO's previous validating institution), the UCO will comply with the University of Bedfordshire's regulations regarding the provision of certificates.

7.5 ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPTS & HIGHER EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT RECORD

7.5.1 The UCO provides an academic transcript to each student at the end of each academic year, which states the grade of each assessment, overall unit grade, and the number and level of credits awarded for each unit and in total for that academic year.

¹¹ <https://www.laser-awards.org.uk/>

- 7.5.2 Existing and past students and graduates of the UCO may request an academic transcript directly from the UCO by contacting the Academic Registry (registry@uco.ac.uk). This may incur an administrative fee.
- 7.5.3 Academic transcripts requested should be printed using the UCO's approved logo and stamped with the official UCO stamp.
- 7.5.4 Academic transcripts will normally contain the following information:
- The title of the award (including mode of study).
 - The name of the validating body of the award.
 - The full name of the student/graduate.
 - The student's/graduate's candidate number.
 - The student's/graduate's intake year.
 - The grade achieved for each assessment.
 - The overall unit grade as appropriate.
 - The number and level of credits awarded for each unit as applicable.
 - The total number and level of credits achieved for each academic year as applicable.
 - The year of graduation as applicable.
- 7.5.5 Where requests from students with awards approved by the University of Bedfordshire are received, the UCO will comply with the University of Bedfordshire's regulations regarding the provision of academic transcripts in line with the University of Bedfordshire's Academic Regulations¹².

7.6 HONORARY DEGREES

- 7.6.1 Honorary degrees are awarded by the UCO to selected persons of distinction in line with the Honorary Degrees, Academic Awards & UCO Titles, or Honorary Awards Criteria & Award Structure (AQF07-01).
- 7.6.2 Honorary degrees may be awarded to individuals who have made a significant contribution to the work of the UCO, or who have earned distinction at a regional, national, or international level, or in a particular field, especially the development or application of an appropriate subject discipline or work aligned to the UCO's mission.
- 7.6.3 Those receiving an Honorary Doctorate degree are normally expected to have contributed to nationally significant developments in their field of study.
- 7.6.4 Honorary degrees are not normally awarded to current directors, current staff, or registered students of the UCO.
- 7.6.5 The Academic Council is responsible for determining the procedures for the recommendation of honorary degrees.
- 7.6.6 The Honorary Degrees, Academic Awards and Titles Committee will consider nominations in line with its Terms of Reference and will recommend nominations to the Academic Council. The Academic Council will then formally approve the conferment of the honorary degree(s).

¹² <http://www.beds.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/academic-information>

- 7.6.7 Nominations for honorary degrees conferred by the UCO must include the title of the proposed honorary award, a brief biography of the nominated individual and a statement justifying the nomination in line with the stated criteria and award structure.
- 7.6.8 Circumstances may arise when the basis on which an honorary degree was awarded is called into question. Any decision to rescind an honorary award must be made after due investigation and consideration of the outcome by the Honorary Degrees, Academic Awards and Titles Committee – this is a matter which cannot be delegated via Chair's Action.

7.7 HONORARY AWARDS OR TITLES

- 7.7.1 Other UCO titles and recognition are given on behalf of the UCO on the authority of the Board of Directors with the approval of the Academic Council in line with the UCO's Honorary Degrees, Academic Awards & UCO Titles or Honorary Awards Criteria & Award Structure (AQF07-01).

A) HONORARY UCO FELLOWSHIP

- 7.7.2 The UCO may confer Honorary UCO Fellowships on individuals who have made a particular contribution to the work or development of the UCO. Nominations will be considered by the Honorary Degrees, Academic Awards and Titles Committee, and decisions on whether to confer an honorary fellowship will be recommended to the Academic Council by this Committee.
- 7.7.3 Honorary UCO Fellowships are not conferred on current directors, current staff, or registered students of the UCO.

B) ACADEMIC TITLES – PROFESSOR, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, FELLOW

- 7.7.4 Through its Academic Council, the UCO may, on advice from the Honorary Degrees, Academic Awards and Titles Committee, confer the title of "Professor", "Associate Professor" or "Teaching/Research Fellow/Senior Research Fellow" on those staff who meet the Honorary Degrees, Academic Awards & UCO Titles or Honorary Awards Criteria confirmed by the Academic Council.
- 7.7.5 The Academic Council may also confer the title of "Visiting Professor", "Visiting Associate Professor" or "Visiting Research Fellow/Visiting Senior Research Fellow" to individuals who meet the Honorary Degrees, Academic Awards & UCO Titles or Honorary Awards Criteria confirmed by the Academic Council.

7.8 COURSES OF STUDY LEADING TO AWARDS OF THE UCO

- 7.8.1 Courses of study leading to awards of the UCO are developed through UCO academic structures, considered in light of external academic and professional advice, and approved under delegated authority of the Academic Council through its committees.
- 7.8.2 Arrangements for the approval of new courses that lead to an award of the UCO are defined in AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval and Modification, which also applies to those delivered in collaborative partnership with other education institutions.
- 7.8.3 The current portfolio of courses that lead to an award of the UCO can be found in AQF Section 2: Teaching & Learning at the UCO.
- 7.8.4 Definitive information about courses is published in information forms; unit information specifications are defined in Unit Information Forms (UIFs) and course information specifications in Course Information Forms (CIFs). They, or extracts from them, serve as the basis for the information about courses provided for students in Course Handbooks and on the Virtual Learning Environment.

7.8.5 The named award to which a course leads reflects the level, nature, and subject focus of the course, is determined at course approval, and is included on the award certificate.

7.8.6 Official award certificates are produced by the UCO as the awarding institution.

7.9 CREDITS AWARDED & PROGRESSION OF COURSES OF STUDY

7.9.1 The normal number of credits awarded for academic awards are shown in Table 7.1 below and are in line with the FHEQ published by the QAA.

TABLE 7.1: THE NORMAL NUMBER OF CREDITS AWARDED FOR ACADEMIC AWARDS

Award	FHEQ Level	Total Number of Credits Required	Minimum Number of Credits at Highest FHEQ Level
Certificate of Higher Education	4	120	90 at FHEQ Level 4
Diploma of Higher Education Foundation Degree	5	240	90 at FHEQ Level 5
Bachelor's Degree	6	300	60 at FHEQ Level 6
Bachelor's Degrees with Honours	6	360	90 at FHEQ Level 6 / 7
Postgraduate Certificates	7	60	40 at FHEQ Level 7
Postgraduate Diplomas	7	120	90 at FHEQ Level 7
Integrated Master's Degrees	7	480	120 at FHEQ Level 7
Taught Master's Degrees	7	180	150 at FHEQ Level 7

A) CREDITS AWARDED & PROGRESSION SPECIFIC TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

7.9.2 The number of credits awarded per year of study of undergraduate full-time courses is normally 120.

7.9.3 The period of study of undergraduate degree courses is typically the equivalent of at least three full-time academic years.

7.9.4 Students are expected to complete an undergraduate course within the normal period of time as approved at validation, i.e., typically three years for full-time courses and four years for part-time courses.

7.9.5 The maximum time for a student to complete an undergraduate course is the normal period of time as approved at validation plus 2 years.

B) CREDITS AWARDED & PROGRESSION SPECIFIC TO INTEGRATED MASTER'S DEGREES

- 7.9.6 Integrated Master's degrees normally comprise of 480 credits of which 120 must be at FHEQ Level 7.
- 7.9.7 The period of study of Integrated Master's degrees is typically the equivalent of at least four full-time academic years.
- 7.9.8 Students are expected to complete an Integrated Master's course within the normal period of time as approved at validation, i.e. four years.
- 7.9.9 The maximum time for a student to complete an Integrated Master's course is the normal period of time as approved at validation plus 2 years.

C) CREDITS AWARDED & PROGRESSION SPECIFIC TO TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATES

- 7.9.10 The number of credits awarded per year of study of Postgraduate Certificate courses is normally 60.
- 7.9.11 The period of study of Postgraduate Certificate courses is typically the equivalent of at least one-third of a full-time academic year.
- 7.9.12 Students are expected to complete Postgraduate Certificate course within the normal period of time as approved at validation, i.e., one year.
- 7.9.13 The maximum time for a student to complete a Postgraduate Certificate course is the normal period of time as approved at validation plus 2 years.

D) CREDITS AWARDED & PROGRESSION SPECIFIC TO TAUGHT MASTER'S DEGREES

- 7.9.14 The number of credits awarded per year of study of postgraduate full-time Master's courses is normally 180.
- 7.9.15 The period of study of Taught Master's degrees is typically the equivalent of one year of a full-time academic year.
- 7.9.16 A Master's course comprises 180 credits at FHEQ Level 7 which normally include a dissertation or equivalent assignment of independent work of value up to 60 credits at FHEQ Level 7 (normally of 20,000 words). Where the dissertation or equivalent unit is less than 60 credits, the remaining units comprising the dissertation stage shall be agreed at course approval and published in the Course Information Form or Course Handbook.
- 7.9.17 Students are expected to complete a Master's course within the normal period of time as approved at validation, i.e. one year.
- 7.9.18 The maximum time for a student to complete a Master's course is the normal period of time as approved at validation plus 2 years.

E) CREDITS AWARDED & PROGRESSION SPECIFIC TO PSRB REQUIREMENTS

- 7.9.19 At course approval, and as a requirement of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), the Academic Council of the UCO may agree that it is a prerequisite for progression that:
 - a) Students pass certain specified units.
 - b) Students pass a certain number of credits at a particular stage.
 - c) Failure in certain units cannot be compensated.

7.9.20 At course approval, the Academic Council may agree a specific attendance policy that applies to a particular course, or one which specifies regular attendance for prescribed parts of the curriculum. Such information is recorded in Course or Unit Information Forms.

7.10 LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

7.10.1 English is the language of instruction and assessment on all courses of study.

7.10.2 Exceptions to this regulation may only be approved through the course approval processes detailed in AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval and Modification.

7.10.3 Support is provided to students with English as a second language (see AQF Section 10: Student Guidance & Learner Support).

7.11 LEARNING & TEACHING METHODS

7.11.1 The following table provides details about the indicative learning and teaching methods used at the UCO:

Learning & Teaching Method	Definition	Description
Lecture	A presentation or talk on a particular topic.	The term 'lecture' covers everything from the traditional model, where a single member of the institution's staff or an affiliate ¹³ introduces ideas or delivers facts to a group of students, to approaches that might be much more interactive, involve a variety of contributors, make use of a range of media and technologies, and take place virtually as well as in person. Lectures are assumed, in general, to involve larger groups of students than do seminars and tutorials but size will vary depending upon the nature of what is being taught, the size of the overall student cohort, and practical concerns.
Seminar	A discussion or classroom session focusing on a particular topic or project.	Seminars are defined as sessions that provide the opportunity for students to engage in discussion of a particular topic and/or to explore it in more detail than might be covered in a lecture - the extent of interaction will depend on the delivery method. A typical model would involve a guided, tutor-led discussion in a small group. However, the term also encompasses student or peer-led classes with a staff member or affiliate present. As with lectures, use of technology means seminars may take place virtually. Seminars are assumed in general to involve smaller groups of students than lectures, but size will vary depending upon the nature of what is being taught, the size of the overall student cohort, and practical concerns.

¹³ i.e., a lecturer, researcher, technician, member of support staff or graduate teaching assistant of the institution or a visiting or external specialist.

Tutorial	A meeting involving one-to-one or small group supervision, feedback or detailed discussion on a particular topic or project.	<p>Tutorials may be distinguished from seminars for the stronger emphasis that they place on the role of the tutor in giving direction or feedback.</p> <p>Tutorials can happen virtually as well as face-to-face.</p>
Project supervision	A meeting with a supervisor to discuss a particular piece of work.	<p>The term 'project supervision' is used to refer to the meetings that a student or group of students would have with a supervisor, to plan, discuss, and monitor progress on a particular piece of work, such as a dissertation or extended project.</p> <p>Meetings can take place virtually or in person. The size of a project supervision meeting will depend upon the number of students involved in the work concerned and the nature of that work but supervisions will frequently also take place on a one-to-one basis.</p>
Demonstration	A session involving the demonstration of a practical technique or skill.	<p>Examples might include the demonstration of laboratory skills, clinical skills, performance art or fieldwork techniques.</p> <p>Demonstrations can take place virtually or in person. The size of a demonstration is likely to depend upon the number of students involved in the work concerned, as well as the nature of that work, but could also take place on a one-to-one basis</p>
Practical classes and workshops	A session involving the development and practical application of a particular skill or technique.	<p>Examples are wide ranging and could include a laboratory class, recital, artefact handling/identification, language conversation, sports match and so on. Practical classes and workshops might incorporate elements of teaching or guided learning, and they are at least likely to be supervised or observed. These sessions are more likely to take place in person but, depending on the nature of the subject, may also be conducted remotely.</p> <p>The size of a practical class or workshop will depend upon the nature of the activity.</p> <p>Workshops are likely to involve at least a small group of students, but practical classes could take place on a one-to-one basis.</p>
Supervised time in studio/workshop	Time in which students work independently but under supervision, in a specialist facility such as a studio or workshop.	<p>Examples might include time spent in an art or design studio, or in a rehearsal space such as a workshop theatre. It could be timetabled or take place on an ad hoc basis. Peers as well as staff or affiliates may be involved. Due to the nature of the activity, it is unlikely</p>

		to take place virtually. Supervised time in a studio/workshop might involve a group or individual.
Fieldwork	Practical work conducted at an external site.	Examples of fieldwork might include survey work and other forms of data collection, excavations and explorations. The work might be unsupervised or supervised, and supervision could be provided by staff or appointed representatives. Some fieldwork may be conducted virtually. Fieldwork might be conducted in groups of various sizes, or by individuals, depending on the nature of the work involved.
External visits	A visit to a location outside of the usual learning spaces, to experience a particular environment, event, or exhibition relevant to the course of study.	Examples are wide ranging and could include a visit to a business or industrial site, built environment site, museum, or collection, to attendance at a performance or exhibition. These visits might be unsupervised or supervised, and supervisors could include staff or appointed representatives. Site visits may be carried out in groups of varying sizes, or by individuals, depending on the nature of the visit and the location.
Work-based learning	Learning that takes place in the workplace.	The term covers any learning that takes place through an organised work opportunity, rather than in a university or college setting, and includes managed placements. Some supervision or monitoring is likely to be involved and may be carried out either by a member of staff or a mentor within the host organisation. Due to the nature of the activity, work-based learning is unlikely to take place virtually. Students might undertake work-based learning individually or in groups, depending on the nature of the workplace and the learning involved.
Clinic Observation / Experience	Learning that takes place in the UCO Clinic.	Pre-registration osteopathic students are required to undertake at least 1000 hours of timetabled osteopathic clinic practice learning in the clinical environment ¹⁴ . Learning within the clinic consists of managing and treating patients and clinic tutorials.
Independent Study / Directed Study	Autonomous learning with little or no supervision.	Students undertake study on their own to advance and consolidate their learning typically using course materials and other recommended learning resources provided by their tutors.

¹⁴ <http://www.gaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/general-osteopathic-council-review>

PART B: ADMISSION & REGISTRATION

This section of the Academic Quality Framework summarises the UCO's regulations regarding student admission and registration and provides information about student admission, entry requirements, registration, attendance, withdrawal, and recognition of prior learning. It should be of interest to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students and to all staff involved in these areas.

7.12 ADMISSION OF STUDENTS TO THE UCO

- 7.12.1 Admission is the process through which an individual (the applicant) applies to become a student of the UCO.
- 7.12.2 Each applicant is considered on their own merit in line with the UCO's Admissions Policy and Procedures¹⁵ and the entry requirements specific to each course of study.
- 7.12.3 The admission of a student to the UCO is at the UCO's discretion, and is based on the reasonable expectation that the student is able to:
- a) Show the ability to study at Higher Education (HE) level.
 - b) Complete the objectives of the course or programme of study.
 - c) Achieve the standard required for the award.
- 7.12.4 An applicant must fulfil specific entry requirements for the course and subject to be studied prior to entry which normally include specific educational levels and / or qualifications that align with the academic level of the course and subject to be studied, a required level of written and spoken English, and other pre-requisites as agreed at course approval.
- 7.12.5 Applicants are admitted to study and can become students of the UCO on condition that they:
- a) Have fulfilled all entry requirements satisfactorily before the start date of the course for which they have applied.
 - b) Attended and participated in all required interview events.
 - c) Have confirmed their place on the course with the Admissions Department.
 - d) Have received confirmation of a place on the course for which they have applied from the Admissions Department.
 - e) Attend and complete all registration, orientation and induction events and procedures.
 - f) Agree to comply with the UCO's academic regulations, rules, codes of conduct, policies and other procedures as approved by the Academic Council, Vice-Chancellor and / or the Board of Directors.
 - g) Have paid the required tuition fees.
- 7.12.6 If someone is under 18 years old when they expect to register and become a student of the UCO, formal consent is required from those legally responsible for the applicant. This must be through a consent form signed by the parent or legal guardian and by someone who is ordinarily resident in the UK to confirm their approval. The person resident in the UK is responsible for the student concerned until they are over 18 years old. Where the parent or guardian is not ordinarily resident in the UK, the UCO requires evidence that satisfactory arrangements for guardianship of the applicant are in place prior to the registration of the prospective student.

¹⁵ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/how-apply>

- 7.12.7 Applicants are required to disclose all facts and information that might be relevant to their application for admission.
- 7.12.8 The UCO reserves the right to withdraw any offer of admission to study at the UCO, or cancel any acceptance of such an offer, where the offer has been made as a result of using false or misleading information, or by the non-disclosure of information that would have affected the decision about the application for admission.
- 7.12.9 The UCO similarly reserves the right to stop the registration or terminate the studies of an existing student who is subsequently found to have gained admission by providing false or misleading information, or non-disclosure of information in support of the application. Such students will have no right to a refund of their fees, and any credits or awards they have achieved may be withdrawn.
- 7.12.10 The UCO establishes arrangements for students with disabilities to be supported and assessed as appropriate and will make reasonable adjustments as required to enable disabled students to follow the course of study on which they register.
- 7.12.11 Applicants with a disability are encouraged to declare their disability to the UCO during the admission process or as soon as possible thereafter.

7.13 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- 7.13.1 The UCO publishes detailed information on the qualifications and pre-requisites required for admission to its courses on its website and on Course Information Forms.
- 7.13.2 Satisfying the indicated entry requirements does not guarantee an applicant a place on the course for which they have applied. Applicants must comply with the selection and admission processes outlined in AQF Section 8: Student Recruitment & Admissions and published Admissions Policy & Procedures.

A) MINIMUM ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS FOR UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

- 7.13.3 The minimum entry requirement qualifications for undergraduate awards are shown in Table 7.2 below.
- 7.13.4 Extended undergraduate degrees may have specific entry requirements that are agreed at course approval.
- 7.13.5 The UCO may also accept evidence of experience in appropriate employment as qualifying the applicant for entry in line with the UCO's RPL policy.

TABLE 7.2: MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENT QUALIFICATIONS FOR UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

Undergraduate Award	Minimum Entry Requirement Qualifications
Foundation Degrees	One A-Level (or equivalent)
Higher National Diplomas	One A-Level (or equivalent)
Certificate of Higher Education	Two A-Levels (or equivalent)
Diploma of Higher Education	Two A-Levels (or equivalent)
Bachelor's Degrees	Two A-Levels (or equivalent)

Bachelor's Degrees with Honours	Two A-Levels (or equivalent)
Integrated Master's Degrees	Two A-Levels (or equivalent)
Graduate Diplomas	A Bachelor's Degree with Honours from a UK University (or equivalent)

B) MINIMUM ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS FOR POSTGRADUATE AWARDS

7.13.6 The minimum entry requirement qualifications for postgraduate awards are shown in Table 7.3 below.

TABLE 7.3: MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENT QUALIFICATIONS FOR POSTGRADUATE AWARDS

Postgraduate Award	Minimum Entry Requirement Qualifications
Postgraduate Certificates	A Bachelor's Degree with Honours from a UK University (or equivalent)
Postgraduate Diplomas	A Bachelor's Degree with Honours from a UK University (or equivalent)
Taught Master's Degrees	A Bachelor's Degree with Honours from a UK University (or equivalent)

7.13.7 The UCO may exceptionally accept evidence of previous advanced study, research or professional experience as an alternative to the minimum entry requirement qualifications shown in [Table 7.4](#).

C) MINIMUM ENGLISH QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALL AWARDS

7.13.8 Applicants with English as a second language or whose previous education has not been delivered in the English language are required to provide evidence of their proficiency in English.

7.13.9 Students requiring a visa to study in the UK will be required to provide evidence of specific English as appropriate to comply with policies published by the UK Home Office (UK Visas & Immigration)¹⁶.

7.14 STUDENT REGISTRATION

7.14.1 Student Registration is the process whereby new and existing students are formally confirmed as students of the UCO.

7.14.2 Students must complete Student Registration when they commence their course of study, and re-register annually as and when required throughout their course of study.

7.14.3 Student Registration includes a binding contractual commitment by a student who has been accepted onto / is currently studying on a course of study at the UCO, providing a declaration acknowledging their obligations to the UCO, including payment of course fees, and compliance with the UCO's terms and conditions, regulations, policies, and procedures.

7.14.4 This binding contractual commitment takes place when the student signs the Student Registration Form or otherwise indicates an intention to be bound by its terms in a way that is acceptable to the UCO, following provision of personal and academic information electronically

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa/knowledge-of-english>

and / or in person and paying all they owe or a part of the course fees with an agreed payment plan.

- 7.14.5 Every student must complete Student Registration (or Re-Registration for continuing) within the first four weeks of their course start date (or the first day of the academic year for continuing students).
- 7.14.6 If a continuing student does not re-register within the specified registration period at the start of a programme, they may be presumed 'withdrawn'.
- 7.14.7 No person is recognised as being registered as a student of the UCO (and is therefore not a student) until:
 - a) Course fees have either been paid in full for the current academic year, or other arrangements have been approved for that payment of fees which are acceptable to the UCO.
 - b) All other fees and sums due to the UCO incurred in the previous academic year or academic period have been discharged in full.

7.15 COURSE REGISTRATION

- 7.15.1 Course Registration takes place as part of Student Registration (see [Section 7.13](#) above) and occurs when the student signs the Student Registration Form electronically and / or in person.
- 7.15.2 The UCO may exceptionally permit students to register for two courses of study concurrently.
- 7.15.3 The establishment, delivery and continuation of courses of study are subject to the availability of viable numbers of students and their continuing attendance.
- 7.15.4 Where the circumstances are reasonable, the UCO reserves the right to discontinue a course, to divide, discontinue or combine units or classes, to vary the time or place of classes, and to alter courses of study as circumstances may require. This will be processed and approved through the appropriate Course and Unit Modification process contained in the Academic Quality Framework (AQF) Section 4.
- 7.15.5 Course structures are subject to annual review. All units comprising a course of study are listed in the relevant Course Information Form and are offered subject to the constraints of the timetable, the availability of specialist staff, and any restrictions on the number of students who may be taught on a particular unit.
- 7.15.6 The establishment, delivery and continuation of units are subject to the availability of viable numbers of students and their continuing attendance, and therefore units comprising a course may not necessarily be offered every year.
- 7.15.7 Students are expected to complete their course/s of study within the normal period of time as designated at course approval and as stipulated on the Course Information Form.
- 7.15.8 Students are considered to have exited their course of study and have concluded their registration with the UCO once they have been conferred with an award by the appropriate Board of Examiners.
- 7.15.9 A student may lose the right to continue on a course or study, have their registration with the UCO terminated, and be withdrawn from the UCO where:
 - a) The student's academic performance has been considered by a Board of Examiners and having failed to make sufficient academic progress in their view, there is an academic decision that the student shall not be allowed to continue on their course of study or remain registered as a student of the UCO.

- b) The student has not completed Student Registration by the published date for end of registration for new or continuing students as appropriate.
- c) The student is not in good financial standing with the UCO / partner institution and has failed to make acceptable arrangements to pay what is owed.
- d) The student is absent from their course(s) of study without the agreement of the UCO / partner institution on grounds of absence, and therefore assumed withdrawal.
- e) The student has demonstrably not engaged with their course(s) of study.
- f) The outcome of the investigation of an academic offence, or of the presentation of false or misleading documentation, or the non-disclosure of information, recommends that the student is withdrawn from their course(s) of study, their registration terminated and is withdrawn from the UCO.
- g) The Vice-Chancellor has accepted a recommendation that the student's registration should be terminated on disciplinary grounds under the terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

7.15.10 A student whose studies are terminated and is withdrawn from the UCO as a consequence of any of the above must formally apply for re-admission if they wish to return to a course of study with the UCO. The circumstances of the student's withdrawal from the UCO will be taken into account when their application is considered.

7.16 STUDENT INDUCTION

a) NEW STUDENTS

- 7.16.1 The UCO is aware that the start of a student's experience in higher education is a critical and sensitive period. The UCO provides an induction programme that aims to ease the transition and helps prepare students for their academic and social experiences.
- 7.16.2 Induction for all new students normally includes a welcome to the UCO by the Vice-Chancellor; introduction to key personnel including the Registrar (or equivalent), course leaders and student support team, and sessions from course tutors to introduce students to the units of study they are about to embark upon. There are also sessions from the library and IT teams to introduce learning resources.
- 7.16.3 Student induction is normally complemented by social events, a freshers' fair, and a welcome event hosted by the Vice-Chancellor and / or Students' Union.
- 7.16.4 In addition, part-time students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, are invited to induction events. These cover topics such as: returning to study (in recognition that these students have often been out of education for a number of years), an introduction to higher education, and how to study on a part-time programme.

b) CONTINUING STUDENTS

- 7.16.5 Continuing students are provided with a modified induction programme, which introduces them to the next phase of the course they are undertaking.
- 7.16.6 This covers issues such as regulatory changes, changes to support, and how the UCO responded to the feedback from students in the last academic cycle. The UCO believes that it is very important to 'close the feedback loop' with students, so they can see what actions the UCO has taken in response to the issues they raised.

7.17 TIMETABLING OF COURSES

- 7.17.1 Courses are timetabled in line with the UCO's Timetable Policy¹⁷, which provides a framework for support staff involved in the preparation and production of the teaching timetable, and aims to:
- Support the delivery of high-quality learning and teaching in appropriate accommodation.
 - Provide access to timely and accurate timetabling and room booking information.
 - Optimise utilisation of general teaching space.
 - Ensure that a single central system contains a live, up to date record of all learning and teaching activities which use the UCO's resources, which is available on-line 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

7.18 MONITORING STUDENT PROGRESSION

- 7.18.1 The academic progress of students throughout their course is determined by Progression Criteria that are agreed at course approval. These are specific for each course and published in Course Information Forms and / or Course Handbooks.
- 7.18.2 Progression Criteria ensure that students fulfil the requirements of each phase of their course before being permitted to progress to the next.
- 7.18.3 Student progression between phases is agreed and confirmed by Boards of Examiners (see AQF Section 12: Boards of Examiners)
- 7.18.4 Students' progress throughout their time at the UCO is monitored using a number of mechanisms, including:
- Formative assessment.
 - The review of interim assessment results by Course Teams.
 - Academic Tutor interviews.
 - The regular monitoring of student attendance by the Engagement & Monitoring Group (ERG).

7.19 STUDENT TRANSFER

- 7.19.1 A student who is registered on a course may be permitted to transfer to another course via the Student Transfer Policy¹⁸. Informal advice regarding this issue can be sought from the Registrar or Course Leader.
- 7.19.2 Any student wishing to transfer from one course to another should in the first instance discuss their circumstances with their Course Leader.
- 7.19.3 Students wishing to transfer to another institution should formally withdraw from their course ([see Section 7.21 on Suspension of Studies & Withdrawal](#)) and apply directly to that institution.

7.20 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

- 7.20.1 All students are expected to maintain their academic progress, registration, and attendance, and have any absence period approved as an agreed interruption to their study on a course.

¹⁷ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

¹⁸ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- 7.20.2 Every student registered with the UCO on a course of study is expected to attend regularly and engage with all formal learning opportunities, scheduled classes, and other supervised studies of their course/s, undertake independent and other studies as required, and complete all assessment requirements, as confirmed through the course approval process and in line with the Student Attendance Policy¹⁹.
- 7.20.3 Students must comply with course and unit specific attendance requirements as stipulated on Course and Unit Information Forms.
- 7.20.4 Student attendance at formal learning opportunities is monitored through the use of attendance registers, which are produced and maintained by the Academic Registry.
- 7.20.5 Tutors are responsible for monitoring registration for their class.
- 7.20.6 Students are responsible for registering their attendance and must not register attendance for any other student and will be subject to disciplinary procedures should they do so.
- 7.20.7 All tutors are responsible for monitoring the attendance of their class/es and should raise any issues concerning the attendance of students to the relevant Unit or Course Leader. In addition, the Engagement & Monitoring Group (ERG) monitors student attendance and will notify relevant support, academic and clinical staff in cases of concern.
- 7.20.8 Non-attendance is used as a measure of engagement in study and as an indicator of students experiencing difficulties with their studies or personal life. Identifying students with a low level of attendance enables the UCO to implement appropriate support measures and solutions to address issues that may be affecting a student's attendance, and thereby increase the student's likelihood of success.
- 7.20.9 Where a student is unable to attend or will knowingly be absent from a formal teaching session, they should follow the procedure for notifying the UCO in the Student Attendance Policy.
- 7.20.10 A student who fails to attend, without good cause or due notice, the course on which they are registered for a period of 15 working days, can be considered to have disengaged from the course or programme of studies, and the UCO has the right to terminate that student's studies and registration and withdraw the student from the UCO.
- 7.20.11 Students must also observe the reporting requirements of their funding bodies or sponsors as appropriate.

7.21 SUSPENSION OF STUDIES & STUDENT WITHDRAWAL

- 7.21.1 Students may elect to suspend and return to their studies at a later date (normally in exceptional circumstances), or withdraw from their course, at any point during their course.
- 7.21.2 A student who is considering suspending their studies or withdrawing from their course should follow the Suspension of Studies & Student Withdrawal Policy and Procedure²⁰ to ensure that they receive the appropriate support and complete the required suspension of studies/withdrawal procedures as necessary.
- 7.21.3 Students who suspend their studies surrender eligibility to apply for and participate in student schemes or discounts, including Council Tax exemptions and student travel or photo card schemes, for the duration of the suspension of their studies. Eligibility is restored following their return to study upon receipt of a completed Student Registration Form.

¹⁹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

²⁰ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- 7.21.4 A student who is intending to withdraw from their course must inform the UCO's Finance Department using the procedures published in the Course Fee Policy²¹.
- 7.21.5 Students who withdraw from the course must return (as appropriate) their:
- i. Student card.
 - ii. Locker key.
 - iii. Borrowed library books / resources.
- 7.21.6 Where a student has been unable to fulfil the specific regulations of their course of study but has fulfilled the UCO's Academic Regulations and criteria for progression, the UCO, on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners, may withdraw the student from the course of study for which they were originally registered, and transfer them to an alternative course.
- 7.21.7 Where a student withdraws or has been withdrawn from the UCO, the Board of Examiners will consider the student's performance and the credits they have achieved to date and confer the highest award for which the student is eligible. A student receiving an award in this way may be subsequently considered for re-admission under the arrangements for Recognition of Prior Learning.

7.22 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

- 7.22.1 The UCO's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy²² demonstrates its commitment to support widening participation, and to acknowledge and recognise appropriately students' previous academic achievements and experience.
- 7.22.2 The UCO operates a transparent and responsive system for the recognition of prior learning, which considers all students equally (full-time, part-time, home and international).
- 7.22.3 The UCO's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy enables students to demonstrate and provide evidence for their prior learning and to join courses at an appropriate stage commensurate to their prior academic achievements. It also enables the UCO to prepare the student for subsequent parts of the course appropriately.
- 7.22.4 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) may comprise of the accreditation of prior certificated learning (APCL) and / or accreditation of prior experiential or otherwise un-assessed learning (APEL).
- 7.22.5 Procedures for considering RPL applications for each specific course are contained within course specific RPL handbooks, which are approved by the Academic Council, and which provide applicants with additional guidance and information on RPL applications.
- 7.22.6 Approval of prior learning credit must be completed as part of the admissions process, and prior to registration on a course or programme of study.
- 7.22.7 A tariff of fees for the consideration of RPL applications are contained within RPL handbooks.
- 7.22.8 For all courses, credit for prior learning (whether certificated or experiential) may count towards the requirements of a named or unnamed award, up to a specified limit as shown in [Table 7.4](#) below, unless a variation to this is agreed at course approval.

²¹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/course-fees/course-fee-policy>

²² <https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/how-apply/recognition-prior-learning-rpl>

TABLE 7.4: THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF CREDITS NORMALLY CONSIDERED THROUGH RPL APPLICATIONS

Award	Maximum Number of Credits Normally Considered through RPL	FHEQ Level	% RPL Considered for Award
Certificate of Higher Education	60	4	50%
Foundation Degree	120	4	50%
Diploma of Higher Education	120	4	50%
Diploma in Professional Studies/Professional Practice	60	4	50%
Bachelor's Degrees	120	4	75%
	120	5	
Bachelor's Degrees with Honours	120	4	75%
	120	5	
Postgraduate Certificate	30	7	50%
Postgraduate Diploma	60	7	50%
Integrated Master's Degree	120	4	50%
	120	5	
Master's Degree	90	7	50%

7.23 ACADEMIC APPEALS

7.23.1 Although rigorous procedures are followed to ensure that all student assessments and examinations are conducted and marked fairly and appropriately (see [Part C: Assessment Regulations for Taught Degrees](#)), students may appeal against a decision made by the Board of Examiners in the following circumstances:

- i. Exceptional extenuating circumstances.
- ii. Operational problems impacting on academic outcome.

7.23.2 Academic appeals should be considered in line with the Academic Appeals Policy²³.

²³ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

7.24 ACADEMIC OFFENCES

7.24.1 Academic offences include:

- i. Collusion.
- ii. Fabrication.
- iii. Cheating.
- iv. Impersonation.
- v. Plagiarism.

7.24.2 This above list is not exhaustive. More information regarding academic offences and their prosecution, along with guidance on good academic practices, is described in detail in the UCO's Academic Discipline Policy²⁴.

7.25 STUDENT FITNESS TO STUDY

7.25.1 There is a growing awareness of the need for Higher Education Institutions to respond appropriately to situations where visible signs of ill health (including mental health difficulties, psychological, personality, or emotional disorders) may have an impact on the functioning of individual students, and the wellbeing of others around them. Students who present with difficulties should, wherever possible, be considered from a supportive perspective.

7.25.2 The UCO is committed to promoting positive attitudes towards students with physical or mental ill health.

7.25.3 The UCO also has a duty of care to respond appropriately where there are substantial concerns relating to a student's health and wellbeing, and the impact that may have upon the individual and/or other members of the UCO's community.

7.25.4 The UCO's Support to Study Policy / Managed Support Plan²⁵ outlines the procedures and the support available where a student's health and wellbeing deteriorates to the point where they may not be fit to study, including where they may be at risk of harm to themselves and/or others and is designed to ensure a consistent and sensitive approach to managing situations.

7.25.5 Tutors and Course Leaders are the staff members most likely to identify issues and are therefore provided with guidance and advice from the Student Support Department to enable them to manage situations where students' fitness to study is of concern.

7.25.6 The UCO is committed to supporting students with physical and mental ill health to enable them to fulfil their potential and complete their chosen course of study.

7.26 STUDENT FITNESS TO PRACTICE

7.26.1 Students registered on courses that lead to a professional osteopathic qualification are made aware of their responsibilities regarding the standard of professional behaviour expected of them as detailed in the Student Fitness to Practice Policy²⁶ for their course, which is produced in line with the relevant PSRB practice standards.

7.26.2 This acknowledges the responsibility the UCO has towards its students, and their interactions with the public, regarding professional behaviour, responsibility, and safety.

²⁴ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

²⁵ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

²⁶ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

7.27 CONDUCT

- 7.27.1 The UCO is a community that expects its students and staff to behave professionally and respectfully to each other, its patients, the public, and UCO property at all times.
- 7.27.2 Codes of Conduct are expected to be followed by students and staff to ensure that a pleasant and supportive environment for study and work is provided for all. Should these be contravened, disciplinary procedures as contained in the Code of Conduct Policies will be initiated as appropriate.
- 7.27.3 The following policies²⁷ are in place should any misconduct need to be reported:
- i. Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy for Students.
 - ii. Code of Conduct for Staff.
 - iii. Dignity at UCO Policy.
 - iv. Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy.
 - v. Relationships between Students & Staff Policy.

7.28 COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

- 7.28.1 The UCO encourages students and staff to resolve academic and non-academic issues of concern on an informal level where possible. However, if this is not possible, established Complaints and Grievance Procedures²⁸ may be used to report and seek redress for both academic and non-academic issues.
- 7.28.2 Support for students and staff (as specified in policy documents) is provided where required in cases of conduct, complaint, or discipline.

²⁷ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

²⁸ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

PART C: ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS FOR TAUGHT DEGREES

This section of the Academic Quality Framework summarises the UCO's assessment and examination policies and practices and provides information on graduation and transcripts. It should be of interest to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students and to all staff involved with assessments and examinations.

7.29 INTRODUCTION

- 7.29.1 This section provides information on the regulations, policies, and procedures relating to assessment, along with guidance on the design and use of assessment methods and tools.
- 7.29.2 The UCO recognises that assessment practice and processes must be robust and conform to internal and national expectations, ensuring confidence in the reliability, validity and authenticity of grading.
- 7.29.3 The UCO identifies the purposes of assessment as follows:
- To objectively measure students' achievements against the intended learning outcomes of the unit and course (summative assessment).
 - To assist student learning by providing appropriate feedback on performance (formative assessment).
 - To provide a reliable and consistent basis for Boards of Examiners to determine the progression of, and conferment of awards to students.
- 7.29.4 Assessment is an integral part of our approach to facilitating student learning. It prepares students for life after study and is part of a progressive process by which students learn to develop their criticality and their ability to analyse and take responsibility for their own work.
- 7.29.5 The UCO's approach to assessment is designed to align to the QAA's Quality Code of Higher Education regarding Assessment²⁹.

7.30 ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

- 7.30.1 When assessing learning, we are primarily concerned with supporting and assessing the achievement of the course learning outcomes and progress towards those outcomes. Unit outcomes should clearly contribute to the achievement of those at the course level.
- 7.30.2 Assessment strategies should:
- Be coherent and developmental across the course, supporting learner development and enabling students to achieve their potential.
 - Strike a balance between low-risk formative assessment and higher risk summative assessment.
 - Enable students to experience a wide range of increasingly complex assessment activities designed to support the development of their wider attributes and skills.

²⁹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment>

7.31 ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

- 7.31.1 Assessment practices and processes must be robust and conform to internal and national expectations and standards, thereby ensuring confidence in the reliability, validity, and authenticity of grading.
- 7.31.2 Assessment criteria should be clearly specified, aligned to the level of the unit, and used as the basis for marking and grading.

7.32 ASSESSMENT TASKS

- 7.32.1 Assessment tasks should relate to the learning outcomes of the unit and support the overarching assessment strategy. Assessment practices should be inclusive and equitable; the methods, tasks and processes should not advantage or disadvantage any group or individual, and assessment task design should support academic integrity and minimise opportunities for plagiarism.

7.33 ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- 7.33.1 Students should be supported in developing an understanding of expectations through detailed assessment briefs and active engagement with the assessment process and criteria.
- 7.33.2 Assessment tasks should enable student self-regulation and reflection, giving students the confidence and skills to use the variety of feedback available to them to monitor and regulate their performance.
- 7.33.3 Realistic and balanced assessment workloads should spread the assessment loading and ensure adequate time for the associated learning.

7.34 REVIEWING AND EVALUATING ASSESSMENT

- 7.34.1 Assessment is a collegiate activity, which necessitates Course Teams discussing and agreeing assessment expectations and sharing experiences.
- 7.34.2 Assessment practice should be continuously reviewed and refined to ensure that it effectively supports students and their learning and meets stakeholder requirements.

7.35 TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

- 7.35.1 In general, the UCO seeks to follow a mixed method of assessment appropriate to the nature of individual courses.
- 7.35.2 Assessment at the UCO is divided into two categories: formative assessment and summative assessment.

a) FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- 7.35.3 All courses are required to have effective mechanisms in place to ensure that students receive feedback that enables them to continuously improve their academic performance (i.e. formative assessment).
- 7.35.4 The UCO emphasises the value of early formative assessment to promote both the development of skills and engagement with course material.
- 7.35.5 Participating in formative assessment is not normally a requirement for progression.

b) SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- 7.35.6 The purpose of summative assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the learning outcomes of their course, and the units therein, to the standard required for the award for which they are registered.
- 7.35.7 Learning outcomes are specified on Course Information Forms (CIFs) and Unit Information Forms (UIFs) at the time of approval of courses and units, or through subsequent modification through the UCO's agreed processes (see AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval and Modification).

7.36 SETTING AND ARRANGING ASSESSMENTS

a) ASSESSMENT ELEMENTS, METHODS, AND TASKS FOR TAUGHT COURSES

- 7.36.1 The method of assessment and relative weighting of assessments is determined at the time of course approval or revision of a unit and are specified on Unit Information Forms (UIFs).
- 7.36.2 Each 30-credit unit, based on 300 notional learning hours, should normally have a minimum of two, and a maximum of three, assessment elements.
- 7.36.3 Each 15-credit unit, based on 150 notional learning hours, should normally have a maximum of two assessment elements.
- 7.36.4 Assessment elements represent the reporting point for Boards of Examiners.
- 7.36.5 Each assessment element may be made up of one or more assessment components (i.e. individual tasks) combined together for reporting purposes. Where multiple assessment components contribute to an assessment element, the means of determining the overall grade should be indicated on the UIF (for example, whether students need to complete all of the tasks successfully or only a set number of them).
- 7.36.6 The methods of assessments and their weighting should be the same for all students taking a unit, regardless of their mode of study, unless an alternative method has been agreed to respond to the needs of a particular student (for example, a student with a disability, or where learning outcomes are to be demonstrated through work-related assessment).
- 7.36.7 In designing the core and optional components within a subject area, Course Teams must ensure that the students' experience encompasses a balance of assessment methods, and that these are appropriate to the objectives of the course. Assessment methods should be varied in order to enable different aspects of students' aptitudes and skills to be developed and tested, and in order to provide the UCO with sufficient evidence to verify the authenticity of individual students' work.

b) TIMINGS OF ASSESSMENT FOR TAUGHT COURSES

- 7.36.8 The timings of assessments are specified on UIFs, with the weeks of assessment being clearly noted to aid student planning of work.
- 7.36.9 The period for which a unit runs must be clearly specified on the UIF so that it concludes with the final assessment. Exceptions will rarely be permitted. Where units depend heavily on field work or work-based learning outside the normal academic year, the period allowed for this must be defined and specified on the UIF.
- 7.36.10 Course Leaders should ensure that there is an appropriate spread of examination and assessment submission dates across the academic year.

7.36.11 The Registrar will provide a definitive schedule of examinations and assessment submission dates which will be published on the UCO's Virtual Learning Environment well in advance of the examination period.

c) ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK & WORKLOAD FOR TAUGHT COURSES

7.36.12 The UCO uses a broad assessment framework to enable assessment workload for taught courses to be considered by Course Teams. Course Teams are expected to have a clearly articulated assessment strategy that is benchmarked against the framework, with variances to the framework considered and justified as part of the course approval and review process.

7.36.13 The assessment framework is designed to enable Course Teams to:

- Design effective assessment strategies.
- Reduce the potential for over-assessment which can lead to a 'surface' approach to learning.
- Ensure that students are informed about the amount of time typically required to complete any given assessment task to an acceptable standard.
- Enable students to plan their workload.

7.36.14 The framework uses notional learning hours as the measure for comparability, since measuring assessments in terms of word length focuses students on outputs and may encourage a 'copy and paste' approach, where students see the number as a target and are not concerned about the quality of the work they are producing. Furthermore, it recognises that it may take more student time to produce quality work within a low word limit than within a high word limit.

7.36.15 This information can be useful for students in gaining a better understanding of the effort required, and thus the planning of their studies. It is therefore the total time (i.e. the projected time taken for the preparation and compilation framework components combined) that should be used in estimating the workload associated with a particular assessment.

7.36.16 In some subjects it is recognised that it is hard to differentiate assessment from teaching and learning activities. In such cases, and where activities can be variable in terms of assessment time depending on their nature and scope, Course Teams should use the framework as a reference point when seeking to estimate the notional learning hours associated with each task.

7.36.17 In defining assessment strategies for units and courses, Course Teams should ensure that the percentage of the notional learning hours associated with assessment is between 20% and 30% of the total notional learning hours for a unit. Higher and lower values are permissible depending on subject, level and purpose, but should be justified as part of the approval process (see AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval and Modification).

7.36.18 It is recognised that, where appropriate, there will also need to be clear specification of word lengths, intended as 'guardrails' so that students understand the volume of work they are expected to produce, and to prevent staff from having to read and grade voluminous assessments.

7.36.19 The total word-count associated with assessment for a 30-credit unit should not normally exceed 10,000 words and the total word-count for a 15-credit unit should not normally exceed 5,000 words.

7.36.20 The Assessment Framework referred to above is outlined in [Table 7.5](#) and is used as guidance that informs assessment strategy design to ensure that assessment methods are effective, appropriate, clear, and comprehensive to students.

TABLE 7.5 INDICATIVE LIST OF ASSESSMENT METHODS

An indicative list of Assessment Methods described below may be used by the UCO to assess students.

Assessment Type	Definition	Description
Written Exam	A question or set of questions relating to a particular area of study.	Written exams usually occur at the end of a period of learning and assess whether students have achieved the intended learning outcomes. They may be 'seen', where the student is aware in advance of the question(s) they are expected to answer, or 'unseen', where the questions are only revealed 'on the day'. In an 'open-book' exam, a student is allowed to use a selection of reference materials during the assessment. The questions asked as part of a written exam may be essay, short answer, problem or multiple-choice. Written exams usually (but not always) take place under timed conditions.
Written Assignment (including Essay)	An exercise completed in writing.	Written exercises that typically have deadlines attached but which are not carried out under timed conditions. A well-known example is the essay, where students are required to write about a particular topic or answer a question in depth. Other examples include written briefings on particular topics.
Report	A description, summary or other account of an experience or activity.	There are many different kinds of report - often students are required to produce a report after participating in a practical activity such as fieldwork, laboratory work, work experience or placement. Reports typically have a prescribed format.
Dissertation	An extended piece of written work, often the write-up of a final-year project.	A dissertation is a substantial piece of writing deriving from research that a student has undertaken. Dissertations are the result of a student's independent work, carried out under the guidance of a supervisor. Different subject areas may follow different conventions in relation to the production of dissertations. (Note that other outputs from projects are listed separately.)
Portfolio	A collection of work that relates to a given topic or theme, which has been produced over a period of time.	Typically, a portfolio contains a number of pieces of work, usually connected by a topic or theme. Students are usually required to organise the collection of examples and the portfolio often includes some reflective accounts (diaries/logs). Examples include, in education, that students may collect in a portfolio essays around particular teaching methods, lesson plans, teaching

		materials that they have developed and a report about the teaching experience itself.
Project output (other than dissertation)	Output from project work, often of a practical nature, other than a dissertation or written report.	Students are assessed on the output of a period of project work (other than in the form of a dissertation or written report). Examples are diverse and include the staging of a play or other performance, a piece of artwork, a new product or a poster.
Oral assessment and presentation	A conversation or oral presentation on a given topic, including an individual contribution to a seminar.	Examples of oral assessments and presentations might include conversations, discussions, debates, presentations, and individual contributions to seminars. This category would also include the viva voce exam which is typically used by institutions in specific circumstances such as clarifying assessment decisions reached via other means.
Practical skills assessment	Assessment of a student's practical skills or competence.	Practical skills assessment focuses on whether, and/or how well, a student performs a specific practical skill or technique (or competency). Examples include clinical skills, laboratory techniques, identification of or commentary on artwork, surveying skills, language translation or listening comprehension, and so on.
Set exercises	Questions or tasks designed to assess the application of knowledge, analytical, problem-solving or evaluative skills.	Examples might include data interpretation and data analysis exercises and problem-based or problem-solving exercises.

d) CHANGING ASSESSMENTS AND ASSESSMENT WEIGHTINGS FOR TAUGHT COURSES

7.36.21 The assessment strategy for a unit will normally be agreed when the unit is approved and may only be varied subsequently through the appropriate quality assurance process (see AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval and Modification).

e) DESIGN OF ASSESSMENT TASKS FOR TAUGHT COURSES

7.36.22 Unit Leaders are responsible for preparing assessments, in consultation with those involved with the delivery of a course, and in line with the approved UIF. While questions should relate to the course delivered, they may include reference to material not actually taught, if students have been told explicitly (e.g., in the course documentation and assessment brief) that a particular subject would form part of the course aims and learning outcomes, and that students would be expected to undertake self-directed learning on such material.

7.36.23 In designing assessments Course and Unit Leaders (or equivalent) must ensure that tutors prepare students sufficiently for assessment, and should ensure that assessments:

- a) Vary as appropriate from year to year.
- b) Are developmental from level to level.

- c) Are distinctive and require the demonstration of higher order skills and application of knowledge, not just the knowledge itself, especially at FHEQ Levels 6 and 7.
- d) For highly weighted elements, such as projects and dissertations, contain mechanisms to monitor progress and the development of the final submission.
- e) Are unit specific.
- f) Are set in relation to any practical skills that may be required

7.36.24 If an assessment is structured and / or is in several parts, the assessment brief / exam paper should indicate the weighting that will be apportioned to each component; this will assist candidates in allocating an appropriate proportion of the examination time to answer a particular question.

7.36.25 Course Leaders should ensure that full details of their course assessments, including a course assessment timetable, are submitted to the Academic Registry by 31 October each year, thus ensuring that all assessments are considered through the Assessment Scrutiny Process in enough time to enable students to undertake the assessment effectively.

7.36.26 The UCO provides guidance on designing assessments, and different assessment methods, to faculty as and when required.

F) ASSESSMENT SCRUTINY PROCESS

7.36.27 The Assessment Scrutiny Process (Diagram 7.1) assures that assessments are designed in line with the approved course summative assessment strategies, and that assessment briefs, exam papers, marking criteria and any additional supporting guidance align and reflect the appropriate level of learning. It also assures external input of the scrutiny process by appropriate External Examiners.

7.36.28 In all cases, re-sit assessments should be set and scrutinised at the same time as initial assessments and undergo the same level of scrutiny and approval as set out in Diagram 7.1.

7.36.29 Assessment Scrutiny Process templates (AQF07-02, AQF07-03, AQF07-04 and AQF07-05) should be followed and used to ensure that scrutiny of assessments, assignment briefs, exam papers, marking criteria and assessment guidance documentation requirements are complete and consistent across all courses.

7.36.30 The Scrutiny Board must approve all assessment briefs, examination papers, marking criteria and associated assessment guidance prior to their publication to students in line with the UCO's Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference.

7.36.31 Course Teams are responsible and accountable for the Assessment Scrutiny Process of all levels of Assessments in line with the Course Team Terms of Reference.

7.36.32 The Registrar is responsible for overseeing the Assessment Scrutiny Process in liaison with Course Teams in line with the Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference.

7.36.33 The Course Leader is responsible for liaising with Unit Leaders to produce and scrutinise Assessment Briefs, Exam Questions, Marking Criteria, and any additional guidelines to support the assessment in line with this process and within agreed timelines to assure that they are published to enable students to undertake the assessment effectively.

7.36.34 Unit Leaders are responsible for liaising with their teaching teams and for drafting Assessment Briefs, Exam Papers, Marking Criteria, and any additional guidelines to support the assessment using the required templates (see Paragraph 7.36.30), and any additional guidelines to support the assessment.

- 7.36.35 Unit Leaders are responsible for organising a Peer Review of their draft Assessment Briefs, Exam Papers, Marking Criteria, and any additional guidelines to support the assessment with another Unit Leader.
- 7.36.36 Unit Leaders responsible for peer-reviewing Assessment Briefs, Exam Papers, Marking Criteria, and any additional guidelines to support the assessment should liaise with the responsible Unit Leader regarding any recommended amendments, and should not sign off any Assessment Brief, Exam Questions, Marking Criteria, or any additional guidelines to support the assessment until they are satisfied that they meet the required criteria listed in the Assessment Scrutiny Checklist (AQF07-05).
- 7.36.37 Unit Leaders responsible for the assessment are responsible for forwarding peer-reviewed Assessment Briefs, Exam Papers, Marking Criteria, and any additional guidelines to support the assessment and the External Examiner Scrutiny Verification Form (AQF07-06) to the relevant External Examiner.
- 7.36.38 For non-awarding level assessments (i.e., those that do not contribute to a degree classification calculation), External Examiner approval is not normally required (unless a PSRB requires this) and are invited to comment on these assessments and should complete the Assessment Scrutiny Checklist accordingly.
- 7.36.39 For awarding level assessments (i.e., those that do contribute to a degree classification calculation) External Examiner approval is required and should complete the Assessment Scrutiny Checklist accordingly.
- 7.36.40 The Unit Leader is responsible for liaising with the relevant External Examiner and for implementing any recommendations made by the External Examiner. Where a Unit Leader does not act on all changes required by the External Examiner, or makes additional substantive changes to the paper, it must be returned to the External Examiner for their approval.
- 7.36.41 External Examiners should not sign off any Assessment Brief, Exam Questions, Marking Criteria, or additional guidelines to support the assessment until they are satisfied that they meet their approval (AQF07-06).
- 7.36.42 The Course Leader is responsible for assuring that Assessment Briefs, Exam Papers, Marking Criteria, any additional guidelines to support the assessment and Assessment Scrutiny Checklists have been completed by the Unit Leader responsible, Peer Reviewer Unit Leader and the External Examiner in the timelines agreed, and should complete and sign-off the Assessment Scrutiny Checklists, and collate approved Assessment Briefs, Exam Papers, Marking Criteria, any additional guidelines to support the assessment, Assessment Scrutiny Checklists and the External Examiner Scrutiny Verification Form.
- 7.36.43 Unit Leaders are then responsible for forwarding Assessment Briefs, Exam Papers, Marking Criteria, any additional guidelines to support the assessment, and completed Assessment Scrutiny Checklists and External Examiner Scrutiny Verification Forms to the Registrar for consideration and final approval by the Scrutiny Board within the required timeframe.
- 7.36.44 The Registrar is thereafter responsible for keeping a central record of all approved Assessment Briefs, Exam Papers, Marking Criteria, additional guidelines to support the assessment, completed Assessment Scrutiny Checklists and External Examiner Scrutiny Verification Forms for each cohort of students, and for publishing the approved Assessment Briefs, Marking Criteria, and any guidelines to support the assessment to students on the UCO VLE in the agreed timelines to enable students to complete the assessment.
- 7.36.45 The Registrar is responsible for printing approved Exam Papers / Questions in advance of any written or practical assessments as appropriate and for administering these assessments, liaising with the Unit Leader responsible as appropriate.

7.36.46 The Course Leader is responsible for following up on the scrutiny of any outstanding assessments with relevant Unit Leaders and for assuring that Unit Leaders fulfil their responsibilities.

7.36.47 The Registrar is responsible for providing the TQSC and Academic Council with an annual report of the Assessment Scrutiny Process to provide assurance that all levels of assessment have been scrutinised in line with this Assessment Scrutiny Process, identifying any issues or good practice, and bringing to the attention to the DVCE any matters of concern immediately.

DIAGRAM 7.1: ASSESSMENT SCRUTINY PROCESS



7.37 STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

7.37.1 Students are provided clear Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria for each unit that they study, which is contained within each UIF.

7.37.2 Students are also provided with detailed assessment briefs.

7.37.3 When submitting assignments, students should be encouraged to engage in self-assessment by using the aforementioned information.

7.38 ASSESSMENT OF GROUP WORK

- 7.38.1 Group and team working skills are important abilities and are features of most curricula. The importance of group working skills to students' employability (the ability to listen, question, persuade, participate and, where necessary, lead) means that group work should feature in assessment practices. However, for the purpose of summative assessment students' grades at all levels must reflect their individual abilities rather than those of the group of which they are part. Therefore, no collective group grades are normally permissible.
- 7.38.2 Unit Leaders must have in place processes to ensure that individual grades can be ascribed. This may include a range of activities including supervisory meetings, observation, journals, individualised activities within a group project, personalised reflection, etc. It may not use a process in which students ascribe grades to other students' contributions, although such practices can be used for formative feedback.
- 7.38.3 In some subject areas the production of collective output can be fundamental to the learning outcomes of the unit. In such circumstances group grades may be permissible. However, they are:
- a) Only allowed at FHEQ Levels 4 and 5 (because of the increased significance of grades to distinction calculations at FHEQ Levels 6 and 7).
 - b) Restricted to a maximum of 20% of the overall assessment weighting of a unit.
 - c) Permitted only once at any academic level.
- 7.38.4 Claims for exemption must be explicitly identified on the appropriate UIF and agreed through the course approval and review process by justification to academic peers in the context of the course and its intended outcomes.

7.39 WRITTEN EXAMINATION PAPERS

- 7.39.1 Written examinations have an important role to play in assessment strategies and help to authenticate the level of attainment of the student.
- 7.39.2 In designing written examinations, the following should apply:
- a) Written examinations must test the higher order skills appropriate to the academic level of study.
 - b) Written examinations must vary appropriately from year to year.
 - c) Written examinations should not normally be of more than three hours' duration.
 - d) FHEQ Level 4 examinations should not normally be of more than two hours' duration.
 - e) Alternative forms of written examination may be shorter; for example, multiple-choice and computer-based examinations may be of one-hour duration.
 - f) Since written examination papers are available to students, examiners are advised that questions should not generally be repeated within a period of three years.
 - g) Where a written examination is of the open book kind, in which students are permitted access to texts and other materials during examinations, the nature of the questions must not be such that students are dependent on one or more specific texts to which not all may have access. If students require access to specific material, such as a case study, or a professional standard, or a statute, copies should be provided for any student who has not brought a copy to the examination room. Open book exams may also be designed to take place online where students may have access to other resources including the internet. In

all cases, the UCO's Open Book Exam Regulations (AQF07-07) should be applied, and Open Book Exam Guidance for Students (AQF07-08) be provided as appropriate.

7.40 COMPUTER-BASED EXAMINATIONS

- 7.40.1 A Computer Based Examination is defined as any assessment which is delivered electronically, e.g., on a PC through the UCO's VLE system.
- 7.40.2 Computer-Based Examinations (CBEs) are subject to the same regulations as any other examination, and are normally undertaken only using server-based, centrally supported system(s) scheduled through the Academic Registry Department.
- 7.40.3 CBEs may be set at any level of study up to and including FHEQ Level 7, provided that the assessment approach and question design are appropriate.
- 7.40.4 Unit Leaders wishing to deliver a summative CBE are required to inform the Registrar. The Registry department will then inform all relevant departments, including IT and AV
- 7.40.5 Students must be familiar with the CBE system to be used before they undertake a summative exam. This may be in the form of a formative exam or the creation of example exams on the VLE.
- 7.40.6 Any member of academic staff responsible for a CBE, or their representative must be present at the assessment to brief students / staff on the assessment.
- 7.40.7 A member of IT staff must be made available for the hour preceding and the duration of the CBE.
- 7.40.8 A paper copy of each CBE must be available in the Academic Registry Department for duplication if the electronic delivery of the CBE cannot be accomplished.
- 7.40.9 In the event of technical problems or system failures, the Registry department may either:
 - a) Extend the examination time to allow for disruption.
 - b) Restart the exam using paper copies of the examination.
- 7.40.10 An increased number of invigilators should be used for Computer Based Assessments to eliminate the risk of online cheating.
- 7.40.11 At the beginning of the assessment, a register of attendees will be taken. This will be checked against the number of assessment submissions
- 7.40.12 The procedure for converting the percentile outcome of a CBE to the UCO's 16-point Grading Scale should be agreed in advance.

7.41 COMPUTER-BASED MARKING OF PRACTICAL / CLINICAL ASSESSMENTS

- 7.41.1 Computer-Based Marking is where an assessor uses an electronic device to record and mark student performance normally during a practical or clinical exam.
- 7.41.2 Computer-based marking is subject to the same marking regulations as described in this framework including those related to the use of Marking Schemes, Grading Schemes, Assessment Moderation Processes and Agreeing Grades.
- 7.41.3 Computer-based marking must be undertaken through the UCO's VLE in line with marking of coursework and to assure the security marked work.
- 7.41.4 In all cases paper copies of mark sheets must be immediately available to all assessors should an electronic device fail during the assessment.

7.41.5 It is the Unit Leader's responsibility to:

- a) Liaise with the IT Department and assessors in good time to organise the set up and availability of electronic devices for marking purposes this includes the number of devices required, ensuring that they are fully charged and that chargers for the devices are available.
- b) Ensure that marking sheets are set up on the VLE for each student.
- c) Ensure that all assessors are fully briefed on how to use the electronic device, access the marksheet and marking scheme and know where paper copies may be sourced should the device fail during the assessment.
- d) Ensure that each device and any chargers are returned to the IT Department to the Unit Leader (or other delegated staff member) at the end of the assessment.

7.41.6 It is the responsibility of each assessor to comply with the Unit Leader's instructions and to ensure that the electronic device they are provided with remains with them at all times and adhere to data protection and confidentiality of the assessment.

7.42 RE-SIT ASSESSMENTS

7.42.1 Re-sit assessments should be set at the same time as initial assessments and undergo the same level of scrutiny and approval.

7.42.2 The type and format of the re-sit assessment should, as far as is practical, be similar to those of the assessments of the initial presentation.

7.42.3 Re-sit written examination papers should differ from those set in the initial assessment but be of a similar format.

7.42.4 In determining the nature of the re-sit task for assessments other than written examinations, Unit Leaders should consider how students can demonstrate the learning outcomes whilst maintaining the integrity of the assessment system. The academic level and nature of the assessment task will be a key factor. For example, assessments based on project work may require re-submission whilst those based on essay topics may require a new topic to be set to prevent plagiarism.

7.42.5 Re-sit tasks will be completed to a specified deadline ensuring that students have adequate time to complete the task set.

7.42.6 Re-sit examinations will be held at specified time periods, unless otherwise confirmed through academic appeal or Special Circumstances.

7.42.7 Re-sit assessments or re-submission of failed work will be awarded a maximum (capped) grade of D- (or % equivalent). However, students will be provided with the grade that the work would have received prior to being capped.

a) RE-SIT REQUIREMENTS

7.42.8 Students will be notified of the nature and timing of re-sit examinations and assessments.

7.42.9 Students are responsible for observing information about re-sit requirements, including details of the re-sit assessment and dates and times of re-sit examinations.

b) RE-SIT ATTEMPTS

- 7.42.10 Normally students are only allowed to re-sit an assessment once, and only within the re-sit assessment period scheduled at the beginning of each academic year.
- 7.42.11 If the student fails to pass the assessment at the re-sit attempt, the Board of Examiners may offer the student the opportunity to retake the Unit, including all of its assessment components, in the next academic year, in line with the progression criteria for the course of study.

7.43 PROVIDING INFORMATION TO STUDENTS REGARDING ASSESSMENTS

- 7.43.1 Unit Information Forms must inform students about the form and likely timings of examinations and assignments. In addition, students must be informed about how they may access regulations specific to their course of study, including regulations for progression (progression criteria), eligibility for awards, and appealing against academic decisions.
- 7.43.2 The Registrar will provide a definitive schedule of examinations and assessment submission dates which will be published on the UCO's Virtual Learning Environment well in advance of the examination period.
- 7.43.3 All academic staff must be made aware of the following information concerning assessments and communication with students:
- a) That great caution must be exercised when informing students about the content (as opposed to the structure) of an assessment and should be sufficiently broad so as not to give students an unfair advantage in completing the assessment.
 - b) That the structure and / or content of an assessment should be provided in writing and made available to all students (preferably in the Unit Information Form).
 - c) That the actual examination paper must be consistent with the information provided to students.
 - d) That all assessments must relate to the learning outcomes for a course and should be indicated in the Course Information Form given to all students at the start of a course.
- 7.43.4 Information for students regarding assessments, including the deadlines for submission of in-course assignments and the consequences and penalties for late or non-submission of material for assessment, should be provided to all students at the beginning of each academic year.

7.44 ASSESSMENT BRIEFS

- 7.44.1 For each assessment, students should be provided with clear details of the nature of the assessment task, the associated assessment criteria and other relevant information in the form of an assessment brief.
- 7.44.2 Typically, an assessment brief will be produced in line with the Scrutiny Process Guidance and Templates document (AQF07-02) and will include the following elements:
- a) Title of the assignment.
 - b) The task clearly articulated.
 - c) Contribution of the assignment to the unit overall grade (as a % weighting, or, where multiple assessments contribute to the final grade point, the nature of the contribution from this assessment).
 - d) The relationship of the task to the unit through details of the learning outcomes being assessed.

- e) Information on how the task can be completed successfully through guidance and / or the provision of the associated assessment criteria, and any additional appropriate guidance.
- f) Details / entitlement of any support available during the period up to submission, including any opportunities for the developmental review of progress.
- g) Any word-limit / time-limit specifications.
- h) Any expectations about the presentation of work (for example the file format accepted: PDF, MSWord, etc.).
- i) Opportunities for reflection on the task, including self-assessment opportunities.
- j) The procedures for submitting the work, making the presentation, etc.
- k) The projected date for the return of assessed work where appropriate (students should receive feedback on in-course assessments within 6 weeks of submission).
- l) Details of how the feedback will be provided.

7.45 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- 7.45.1 Assessment criteria set out what is expected of students and should relate to the learning outcomes set for the unit.
- 7.45.2 The broad criteria for assessment are set out in the UCO's Common Assessment Grading Scheme (CAGS) (See [Section 7.58](#)).
- 7.45.3 Assessment criteria should be shared with students in advance of the completion of assessments via UIFs or assessments briefs where applicable.

7.46 MARKING SCHEMES

- 7.46.1 Marking schemes are aids used by examiners to assist in the marking of student assessments. They vary with the nature of assessments and should be considered as a much more detailed version of assessment criteria, since individual marks may be attached to identifiable components of the assessment.
- 7.46.2 While assessment criteria are made known to students via UIFs and assessment briefs to assist them in preparing their assessments with the necessary content and to the necessary standards, marking schemes are normally withheld from students as they contain details of acceptable answers or solutions to questions. They may be disclosed to students as part of the feedback process.
- 7.46.3 Marking schemes should be prepared at the same time as when the assessment is designed and should be submitted for scrutiny in the same way as assessment questions. Comparisons between what the students have been requested to do for the assessment and the associated marking scheme may highlight areas of ambiguity in the question or the task.
- 7.46.4 Marking schemes must be sent to the External Examiner along with draft examination papers, for their approval prior to being implemented.
- 7.46.5 An agreed marking scheme is essential in cases where there is more than one first marker, and to support consistency across work that is double or second marked.
- 7.46.6 Where appropriate, it is good practice to modify the marking scheme after reviewing a sample of student work to ensure that common misinterpretations of the questions or unforeseen alternative answers can be accommodated within the marking scheme.

- 7.46.7 Tutors are provided with sample marking schemes to assist them in preparing their own. Ultimately, Tutors are expected to exercise autonomous judgement concerning the extent to which learning outcomes have been demonstrated by students.

7.47 FEEDBACK ON DRAFT ASSESSMENTS

- 7.47.1 The UCO does not prohibit feedback on draft assessments. However, any such practices must adhere to the policy and guidance provided in the Draft Assessment & Proof-Reading Policy and Guidance for Students and Staff³⁰, and should be noted on specific Assessment Briefs.
- 7.47.2 Tutors should not provide feedback on drafts that individual students submit to them for comment other than that specified on assessment briefs, since this may unintentionally favour those students.
- 7.47.3 All tutors must consistently use the agreed approach to the provision of feedback on draft work.
- 7.47.4 Only one instance of feedback per assessment is normally permissible (i.e. students cannot submit, amend, and then re-submit for additional formative feedback) before the final submission, unless this has been agreed as part of the approval process as in some subject areas. Where such feedback is provided, it should be within a set timeframe, which enables students to receive the feedback from the tutor at least two weeks before the final submission date to allow students to respond to any issues raised.
- 7.47.5 Feedback on draft assessments may be constrained by a specific word limit (e.g. a rough draft of not more than 1000 words or an outline structure).
- 7.47.6 Feedback on draft assessments should give guidance on general areas of improvement but must not include re-writing of text or other forms of direct tutor amendment of the student's work.
- 7.47.7 Assessment briefs should give an indication of the scope of the feedback that will be provided. For example, in some instances, tutors may agree only to briefly scan a submission and provide feedback on style and presentation, whilst in others they may decide to provide more detailed general comments.
- 7.47.8 There is no grading of formative work and students should be informed that any feedback provided for a formative assessment is not indicative of the final grade that summative work will receive.

7.48 EXAMINING AND ASSESSMENT WHERE A MEMBER OF STAFF HAS A PERSONAL INTEREST, INVOLVEMENT OR RELATIONSHIP WITH A STUDENT

- 7.48.1 Whilst it is actively discouraged for staff and students to pursue any form of relationship other than that of student and tutor, the UCO is aware that in exceptional circumstances a relationship between a member of staff and a student that extends beyond this professional boundary may develop. This includes friendship as well as any romantic relationship.
- 7.48.2 The UCO has therefore established a policy aimed at ensuring the integrity of the teaching, learning, and examining environment within the UCO regarding relationships between students and staff.
- 7.48.3 The Relationships between Students & Staff Policy³¹ provides important safeguards for staff and students in close personal relationships, with the objectives of ensuring that the progression of the student is managed entirely on a professional basis and protecting staff from potential allegations of favouritism and unfairness.

³⁰ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

³¹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- 7.48.4 Members of staff are required to declare any personal interest, involvement, or relationship with a student to their Line Manager.
- 7.48.5 The member of staff shall not have advance sight of questions which are to be answered under examination conditions across all units in the course of study in the year in which the student is enrolled.
- 7.48.6 It is mandatory that a member of staff does not undertake assessment of the student's work, and examination papers should be prepared independently of the member of staff.
- 7.48.7 The student's assessed and examined work (in the particular year of study) shall be double marked and forwarded to the relevant External Examiner(s) for approval as appropriate.
- 7.48.8 The member of staff shall temporarily withdraw from any meetings, including Boards of Examiners, when the student's specific case is being discussed.

7.49 EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

- 7.49.1 There are specific rules and regulations regarding the conduct of examinations. These are detailed in the Examination and In-Course Assessment Regulations³² and in the Examination Invigilators' Procedures & Guidelines³³.

7.50 COMPLETING ASSESSMENTS ON TIME

- 7.50.1 It is the responsibility of students to make themselves aware of and available to attend examinations at the specified time and place, properly equipped and prepared, and to submit assessments as required in line with the UCO's Examination and In-Course Assessment Regulations.
- 7.50.2 Tutors may not approve extensions to deadlines for assessments. Only the Registrar may approve extensions to deadlines for assessments.

7.51 SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 7.51.1 Students must provide the Registrar with any relevant information regarding personal circumstances that may have affected their on-going performance or a specific assessment, which they wish to be considered. This information should be provided as soon as is reasonably possible, using the Special Circumstances Policy & Procedure³⁴.
- 7.51.2 All claims for Special Circumstances should be considered in line with the approved UCO process detailed in this policy.

7.52 STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC PRACTICE

- 7.52.1 A guide to good academic practice is included in the UCO's Academic Discipline Policy and Procedures³⁵.
- 7.52.2 If a student is found to have cheated or has attempted to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment, disciplinary procedures will be implemented.
- 7.52.3 The Academic Conduct Panel has the authority to deem the student to have failed part or all the assessment and may determine whether the student shall be allowed to be reassessed.

³² <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

³³ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

³⁴ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

³⁵ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

7.53 ACCESSING FEEDBACK AND GRADES

- 7.53.1 Assessment feedback is normally provided electronically, in line with the UCO's Student Feedback Policy ([Section 7.71](#)).
- 7.53.2 Provisional assessment grades are also made available to students electronically.
- 7.53.3 Students are responsible for collecting, accessing and engaging with any assessment feedback provided.

7.54 SUBMISSION OF WORK

- 7.54.1 Written assignments must be submitted by students in accordance with the procedures in the Examination & In-Course Assessment Regulations, and by the deadlines specified in assessment briefs.
- 7.54.2 Proof of submission will be provided and must be retained by the student as evidence that the work has been submitted.
- 7.54.3 Other forms of in-course assessments, such as oral presentations, must be acknowledged by written confirmation given to the student that the assessment task has been carried out.
- 7.54.4 When submitting work for assessment, students are expected to comply with all instructions issued in the assessment brief.
- 7.54.5 All text-based assignments are normally submitted through the Turnitin Similarity Detection Service.
- 7.54.6 Where the assessment brief specifies that both on-line and hard copy submission is required, then failure to submit either element counts as a failure and will receive a fail grade (Grade F or 0%).
- 7.54.7 Students are responsible for submitting the correct piece of work and version, and for any work submitted on their behalf and at their request by another.
- 7.54.8 Written work presented for assessment must be word processed (unless stated otherwise), legible and comprehensible.
- 7.54.9 Examiners may reject work which does not meet reasonable standards of presentation, and this may result in a fail grade being awarded.
- 7.54.10 All written work must be presented in English, or the language of study confirmed at course approval.

7.55 ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES

- 7.55.1 The week in which assignments are due for submission is stated in the UIF.
- 7.55.2 The date and time by which submission is required is determined by the Unit Leader and will be included on the assessment brief.
- 7.55.3 Submission, whether by electronic or other means, is normally by 3pm (15.00) for full-time students and 8pm (20.00) for part-time students on the designated date.

7.56 ANONYMITY

- 7.56.1 All written examination scripts and assignment submissions must be anonymous, meaning students should only be identified by candidate number to markers.

- 7.56.2 Wherever feasible, in-course assessments should be submitted and graded anonymously. The following exemptions apply:
- a) Assessments in which the identification of candidates is central to the process (e.g. OSPEs, presentations, vivas, the observation of professional practice, etc.).
 - b) Assessments in which the production of the work has been closely supervised by the assessor (e.g., projects, dissertations, some form of portfolio etc.).
 - c) Assessments for which anonymous grading would be in contravention of a code of practice of a professional accredited course.
 - d) Assessments which have a significant formative purpose (e.g. assessments early in the first stage) and which account for 20% or less of the grading for the unit.
 - e) Other circumstances which may be identified by Course Teams in accordance with the above principles.
- 7.56.3 Where students' assessments have been graded anonymously, the student's identity may be established as soon as internal grading and moderation is complete.
- 7.56.4 The staff who enter assessment grades and compile lists for Boards of Examiners should list students by name and not by number. Feedback to students may refer to students by name.
- 7.56.5 Exceptionally, in the student's interests, the "anonymity" rule may be waived and the circumstances relating to an individual candidate brought to examiners' attention by prior approval of the student and Registrar (for example students with disabilities).

7.57 WORK LOST AFTER SUBMISSION OR EXAMINATION

- 7.57.1 In the exceptional event of the grade for an assessment (recorded or receipted as completed) not being available due to unforeseen circumstances, students will be asked for a duplicate copy of the lost assessment where appropriate. If students are unable to provide a duplicate copy and there is clear evidence of a submission, then the Board of Examiners will derive an appropriate grade based on the overall performance by the student.
- 7.57.2 If work or grading sheets are lost by an examiner, the Unit Leader with the Course Leader and the External Examiner will review the situation and make a recommendation to the Chair of the Board of Examiners on students' performance. This may be based upon class performance or other sections of the assessment completed.

7.58 MARKING AND GRADING

a) COMMON ASSESSMENT GRADING SCHEME

- 7.58.1 The UCO uses a Common Assessment Grading Scheme (CAGS) (shown in [Table 7.6](#)) that is used to grade all taught courses leading to an award of the UCO. This ensures that a consistent and transparent approach to the way in which student assessment is marked and reported on across all taught courses is used. It also enables comparable levels of student achievement to be recognised (in line with the QAA's Quality Code for Higher Education regarding Assessment³⁶).
- 7.58.2 A variance to the CAGS, for instance due to specific course requirements or where collaborative partners proposed a variance, must be agreed at course approval. In such cases a Schedule of Variance will be confirmed at course approval noting the modified grading scheme and will be communicated to students through their Course Handbook.

³⁶ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment>

TABLE 7.6: COMMON ASSESSMENT GRADING SCHEME (CAGS)

PASS GRADES		
Grade	Equivalent Point on the Sixteen Point Grading System	Signifies
A +	16	Excellent work. Fully achieves the Learning Outcomes in accordance with the Level Descriptors.
A	15	
A -	14	
B +	13	Generally good work but with some minor defects. Ably achieves the Learning Outcomes in accordance with the Level Descriptors.
B	12	
B -	11	
C +	10	Generally sound work, but with a small number of errors or omissions. Satisfactorily achieves the Learning Outcomes in accordance with the Level Descriptors.
C	9	
C -	8	
D +	7	Adequate work but with a number of significant errors or omissions. Marginally achieves the Learning Outcomes in accordance with the Level Descriptors.
D	6	
D -	5	
FAIL GRADES		
Grade	Equivalent Point on the Sixteen Point Grading System	Signifies
E +	4	Unsatisfactory work with a significant number of serious errors and omissions. Marginally fails to achieve the Learning Outcomes according to the Level Descriptors.
E -	3	
F	2	Work of a very poor standard containing little of discernible merit. Clearly fails to achieve the Learning Outcomes according to the Level Descriptors.
F – N/S	0	No submission of course work.
G	0	Work contains cause for concern on issues of safety.

b) USING THE COMMON ASSESSMENT GRADING SCHEME

7.58.3 The CAGS uses a 16-point grading scale which equates to an alphabetical grade providing a measure of achievement.

7.58.4 Students' work should be graded using the alphabetical grade; the corresponding 16-point grading scale numbers are used to calculate average unit grades from individual pieces of work.

c) PASS GRADE AND CONDONED PASSES

- 7.58.5 The pass grade for assessments is a Grade D-. This pass grade applies to each piece of work in each unit and to each unit overall.
- 7.58.6 Assessors should be aware that students who gain an aggregate unit grade of a D- (5 Points), with a minimum grade of an E+ (4 Points) in any one element of assessment and thus has demonstrated achievement of the specified learning outcomes, will be awarded a condoned pass for the E+ grade and will therefore pass the unit concerned and obtain credit ascribed to that unit.
- 7.58.7 No more than one assessment may be condoned in any one year.
- 7.58.8 Further details of progression criteria can be found in Course Handbooks.
- 7.58.9 Grades awarded by assessors are subject to review through moderation processes and approval through the Boards of Examiners process (see AQF Section 11: External Examining and AQF Section 12: Boards of Examiners).

D) % GRADING SCHEME VARIANCE

- 7.58.10 The % Grading Scheme in Table 7.7 has been developed as a variance to the CAGS and shall normally be applied to taught degree courses where awards are classified, i.e. Bachelor's degrees.

TABLE 7.7 % GRADING SCHEME VARIANCE

% Grading Scheme	
PASS MARKS	
Grade	Mark Descriptor
70% - 100%	Excellent work. Fully achieves the Learning Outcomes in accordance with the Level Descriptors.
60% - 69%	Generally good work but with some minor defects. Ablly achieves the Learning Outcomes in accordance with the Level Descriptors.
50% - 59%	Generally sound work, but with a small number of errors or omissions. Satisfactorily achieves the Learning Outcomes in accordance with the Level Descriptors.
40% - 49%	Adequate work but with a number of significant errors or omissions. Marginally achieves the Learning Outcomes in accordance with the Level Descriptors.
FAIL MARKS	
35% - 39%	Unsatisfactory work with a significant number of serious errors and omissions. Marginally fails to achieve the Learning Outcomes according to the Level Descriptors. A mark that may be condoned by the Board of Examiners in line with Course Progression Criteria.
21% - 34%	Unsatisfactory work with a significant number of serious errors and omissions. Marginally fails to achieve the Learning Outcomes according to the Level Descriptors. A mark that may not be condoned by the Board of Examiners in line with Course Progression Criteria.
1% - 20%	Work of a very poor standard containing little of discernible merit. Clearly fails to achieve the Learning Outcomes according to the Level Descriptors.
0%	No submission of course work. Work contains cause for concern on issues of safety.

7.58.11 It shall be confirmed at Course Approval whether the % Grading Scheme shall be applied to a course, and this shall be communicated clearly to students in their Course Handbooks.

7.59 AWARDING OF ACADEMIC CREDIT

7.59.1 Academic credit is a means of quantifying and recognising learning whenever and wherever it is achieved.

7.59.2 Students may gain academic credit at the UCO by:

- a) Being awarded a pass grade for a unit in which case the credit given is specific credit.
- b) Being credited with a unit on the basis of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in which case the credit given may be specific credit for an individual in line with the RPL Policy.

7.60 THRESHOLD STANDARDS AND EXTERNAL BENCHMARKS

7.60.1 In establishing the threshold standards for awards, units, individual assessment tasks, and the way assessments are conducted, academic staff must make use of appropriate external reference points. These include:

- a) The QAA's Quality Code for Higher Education³⁷. This external reference point helps establish the standards of awards by providing expectations about the use of:
 - i. Qualification Frameworks including the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ)³⁸ which applies to degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other academic awards (other than honorary degrees and higher doctorates) granted by a higher education provider in the exercise of its degree awarding powers.
 - ii. Characteristic Statements³⁹ that describe the distinctive features of qualifications at a particular level within the Qualifications Frameworks.
 - iii. Credit Frameworks⁴⁰ as a means of quantifying and recognising learning whenever and wherever it is achieved.
 - iv. Subject Benchmark Statements⁴¹ that help to establish the standards set by different subjects at undergraduate level, and in some areas at Master's level, by providing expectations about the subject and qualification level of programmes of study.
- b) Credit level descriptors produced by SEEC, which help establish the academic level in a range of settings⁴².
- c) Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) standards or proficiencies, e.g. the Osteopathic Practice Standards⁴³ produced by the GOsC, which play a central role in the requirements for osteopathic training.

7.60.2 Each course that the UCO approves is required to be mapped to the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education to ensure that it meets QAA requirements.

7.61 CONSTRUCTIVE ALIGNMENT

³⁷ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

³⁸ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks>

³⁹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/characteristics-statements>

⁴⁰ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/higher-education-credit-framework-for-england>

⁴¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>

⁴² <http://www.seec.org.uk/resources/>

⁴³ <https://standards.osteopathy.org.uk/>

7.61.1 The constructive alignment of learning outcomes, teaching, and assessment must be evident in the design of all courses and units and in the associated assessment tasks.

7.61.2 Assessment tasks are designed to test the attainment of stated learning outcomes at the appropriate level of learning; teaching activities and the learning opportunities provided should help and support this process.

7.62 ASSESSMENT ELEMENTS, METHODS & TASKS

7.62.1 Methods of assessment together with their relative weightings are determined at the time of course approval or revision of a unit and are specified on Unit Information Forms.

7.62.2 The UCO has a defined range of assessment methods for recording and reporting purposes, including statutory data returns.

7.62.3 The UCOs agreed assessment methods are shown in [Table 7.8](#).

TABLE 7.8: AGREED ASSESSMENT METHODS

Assessment Type	Assessment Title	Description
Written Exam	Timed Written Exam	The traditional, timed written exam usually consists of a choice of questions - the number, degree of choice and length of answer required depending on the length of the exam – that is undertaken on paper.
Written Exam	Multiple Choice Question Exam	A timed exam whereby students are required to select the correct answer from a list of possible answers - the number of questions depending on the length of the exam.
Written Exam	Computer Based Exam	A timed exam consisting of a choice of questions - the number, degree of choice and length of answer required depending on the length of the exam – that is undertaken on a computer.
Written Exam	Patient Management Problem (PMP)	PMPs are 'paper patients' that enable students the opportunity to see how they manage a standardised clinical situation. Students are given information about a patient and asked to outline their thinking about the problem, including what additional information they require. They are then given more information and asked how this changes their view. PMPs assess students' thinking and analytical ability.
Written Exam	Script Concordance Test (SCT)	An SCT assesses reasoning skills, specifically in situations with uncertain scenarios such as those in clinical subjects. It presents initial information and intended course of action or hypothesis. It then shows some further information and asks to what extent this supports the original course of action/hypothesis. This type of question does not have a correct answer so the marks for the different options are calculated from the opinions given by

		several experts. SCTs are typically undertaken using a computer.
Written Exam	Open Book Exam	A timed exam where students are permitted to take notes, texts, or resource materials into the exam, enabling them to find and apply information and knowledge. Open Book Exams are normally used to assess subjects where reference to written materials are required, e.g., legislation or statistics.
Written Assignment (including Essay)	In-Course Essay	In-course essays usually consist of essay-type questions that students complete in their own time over a pre-determined period of time.
Written Assignment (including Essay)	Reflective Essay	Reflective essays enable students to analyse their experiences to gain further insights into their knowledge and to learn and improve by reflecting on their own experiences, opinions, events, and new information.
Written Assignment (including Essay)	Portfolio Essay	An essay drawing on evidence and information collected as part of a Portfolio (see below). Relevant use of literature to critically inform the essay may also be expected as part of this assessment.
Written Assignment (including Essay)	Case Study	A written account providing information about a particular individual, group, or situation over a period of time.
Written Assignment (including Essay)	Project Proposal	<p>A Project Proposal is a detailed description of a series of activities aimed at solving a certain problem or research question. The proposal shall normally include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A valid and feasible research question or focused argument. • A background literature search on the research question or argument. • An appropriately justified Methodology section, including proposed methods for data collection and/or analysis. • Ethical considerations and approvals needed. • A project management plan.
Written Assignment (including Essay)	Business Plan	A formal statement of intended career development including business goals and plans for attaining them.
Written Assignment (including Essay)	Poster	A Poster assessment usually involves a topic for the student to research and present on a poster.

Portfolio	Portfolio	A portfolio consists of a collection of learning materials comprising a representative sample of students' work to demonstrate their ability and progress. Portfolios are normally used in association with practical and clinical work. They have two main purposes: the first is to provide students with an on-going record of their achievement and progress on the course; the other is to provide evidence that students have met the learning outcomes associated with the programme. Portfolios are not normally assessed directly. Instead, a Portfolio Report is assessed to demonstrate what students have learned and the developments they have made, by drawing on the material in your portfolio which is used as evidence to demonstrate students' achievement.
Report	Portfolio Report	A written report drawing on evidence from a Portfolio (see below) to demonstrate what students have learned and the developments they have made.
Report	Portfolio Action Plan	An action plan drawing on evidence from a Portfolio (see below) that may be related to personal or professional development and may also draw on students' learning experiences, classroom based learning and relevant literature.
Report	Clinic Tutor Reports	Clinic Tutor Reports are produced by clinic tutors and assess students' progress within the clinic environment. They are based on what clinic tutors observe during students' work in the clinic and will assess several elements including communication skills, diagnostic ability, and students' ability to apply the more theoretical aspects of the course to patient problems as well as using osteopathic concepts to understand the conceptual nature of the patient's problem. Clinic Tutors will also report on students' professionalism including their general manner, behaviour and dress in and around the clinic.
Practical skills assessment	Video Analysis	A video analysis may be used to assess a practical task or simulate a particular environmental setting, such as clinical case history taking. The assessor evaluates students' performance and subsequently reviews the recording with the student.
Practical skills assessment	Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)	An OSCE is a more practical version of the PMP. The aim of an OSCE is to assess students' data-gathering skills, clinical reasoning, and clinical management of a patient. Students are given information about a clinical case, but this time shall be asked to demonstrate the clinical procedures

			they would use to gain information to obtain an evaluative a hypothesis (or hypotheses). Students discuss the case with an assessor rather than writing their response, which gives them more opportunity to demonstrate the depth of their knowledge and understanding. An OSCE normally comprises of several 10-20-minute short assessments (known as stations).
Practical assessment	skills	Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE)	Similarly, to an OSCE an OSPE comprises of a series of 10–20-minute stations, each asking students a different question, normally related to performing an osteopathic technique (or equivalent). OSPE's are generally of a practical nature but may also contain written stations.
Practical assessment	skills	Objective Structured Clinical & Practical Examination (OSCPE)	A combination of the OSCE and OSPE as detailed above.
Practical assessment	skills	Mini Clinical Exam (MCE)	An MCE is a clinical assessment that assesses students in relation to their competency and fitness to practise as an osteopath. Students will normally be asked to see new and continuing patients, gather relevant historical and examination evidence and critically discuss their understanding of the patient with the examiners. Assessors will be looking to see that students are able to competently assess, evaluate, diagnose, and treat patients osteopathically by employing appropriate and effective skills and techniques in a logical and reasoned fashion, whilst maintaining a professional standard of practice, are able to take responsibility for making justified and safe clinical decisions in the best interests of the patient, and are able as to treat and manage them appropriately.
Oral assessment and presentation		Group Presentation	Students work in small groups to produce a presentation based on a specific topic or question. During the presentation students shall be required to discuss their views and be expected to support their work by drawing on classroom and experiential evidence to inform your discussion. Students will then normally answer questions from a panel of assessors at the end of their presentation.
Oral assessment and presentation		Case Presentation	Case Presentations are opportunities for students to present a case study in depth. Case Presentations include identifying the salient features of the problem, clarifying difficult or ambiguous issues, and coming to some kind of conclusion. Normally a Case Presentation will have a particular focus – for

		example to demonstrate some of the health care concepts inherent in a clinical case.
Oral assessment and presentation	Dissertation Oral Presentation	The Dissertation Oral Presentation requires students to provide a synopsis of their research which integrates new knowledge by considering provided feedback on the written submission. Students may also be required to reflect on how osteopathy may be integrated with their existing clinical practice, taking excellence in patient care into account.
Oral assessment and presentation	Viva	An examination where students answer questions verbally.
Dissertation	Research Paper / Project / Dissertation	A major piece of academic research work enabling students to demonstrate that they have an enquiring and analytical mind.

7.62.4 Additional assessment methods for inclusion in the above listing may be included at Course Approval (see AQF Section 4: Course and Unit Approval Modification).

7.63 WORK NOT MEETING THE THRESHOLD STANDARD

- 7.63.1 The established pass mark of all assessments leading to an award of the UCO is a Grade D- (or approved % equivalent). Similarly, the established unit pass mark is also a Grade D- (or approved % equivalent).
- 7.63.2 If a summative assessment does not meet the threshold standard (i.e., the established pass mark), assessors will be asked to make an academic judgement as to whether it can be condoned by good performance elsewhere in the unit. If assessors judge that it is condonable this is reported to the Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners may then award a Condoned Pass for that assessment.
- 7.63.3 Normally Grades of E+ and E- (or approved % equivalents) only are considered to be in the condonable range provided the Unit has been passed with a Grade D- (or approved % equivalent) overall.
- 7.63.4 Some units or assessment elements may not be eligible for condonement due to professionally relevant or practical elements. These units shall be identified in Course Handbooks and / or Course Information Forms or in a policy as appropriate.
- 7.63.5 Students may hand in assignments up to a week after the deadline date. These will be identified as a late submission). Grades for late submissions will be capped at a Grade D- (or approved % equivalent).
- 7.63.6 Students who do not hand in their assignments over a week late (and have no approved special circumstances) are deemed to have failed that element of assessment and will receive a non-submission (F - N/S or 0%) in the grade column and a 0 score.
- 7.63.7 Internal examiners should use the full range of grades available to them in the process of confirming the mark for a composite assessment task, in line with the relevant Grading Scheme (see [Table 7.6](#) and [Table 7.7](#)).
- 7.63.8 If a student has failed to meet the threshold standard due to particular circumstances, for example a student with disabilities or Special Circumstances, these may be brought to

examiners' attention by prior approval of the student and the Registrar. This will then be considered by the Board of Examiners.

7.64 GRADING ON A PASS/FAIL BASIS

- 7.64.1 Grading on a pass/fail basis is not permitted except for zero weighted assessments. All other assessments leading to the award of academic credit must be graded on the 16-point grade or equivalent % grading scale.

7.65 WORD LENGTH AND FORMAT OF ASSIGNMENTS

- 7.65.1 If written assignments exceed the stipulated number of words by a margin of more than 10%, normally the first part of the text up to the assignment limit only should be graded.
- 7.65.2 If work is not submitted in the specific format required, the work may be downgraded, or the Board of Examiners may resolve that it should not be graded.

7.66 VIVA VOCE EXAMINATIONS

- 7.66.1 Examiners may exceptionally choose to examine any student using a viva voce examination in addition to the assessment/s specified on the UIF.
- 7.66.2 This form of assessment should be applied only sparingly, but may properly be used:
- a) As part of the validated assessment for a unit; typically, vivas are used for extended pieces of work such as dissertations or projects, and it is important that the assessment process is open to the same security as other forms of assessment, including provision for the External Examiner to review the outcomes.
 - b) Where recognised disability means that a viva is an appropriate and approved form of assessment replacing the normal assessment task.
 - c) Where, whatever the initial assessment task, there are concerns about the authenticity of the student's work; in these circumstances vivas must not be used to grade work.
- 7.66.3 The UCO does not viva students in borderline distinction classifications.
- 7.66.4 Students must attend viva voce examinations as required. Students should normally be given at least five working days written notice of a potential viva. Where students do not attend, tutors will make judgements on the basis of the information available to them, and students will have no right to request another viva opportunity.
- 7.66.5 Further information is provided in the Guidance on the Conduct of Viva Examinations (AQF07-09).

7.67 CLASSIFICATION OF AWARDS

a) MASTER OF OSTEOPATHY (FULL-TIME)

- 7.67.1 The UCO awards distinction for its M.Ost (Full-Time) award according to the following calculation:
- i. For the final two years of the M.Ost (Full-Time) course (i.e. for those units studied at FHEQ Level 6 and Level 7) students' overall unit grades are allocated scores as follows:
 - A = 6
 - B = 5
 - C = 4

- ii. These scores are totalled over the final two years of study.
- iii. Students who achieve a total score of 45 or more over the final two years of study are eligible to be awarded an M.Ost with Distinction.

7.67.2 Boards of Examiners do not have the discretion to award an M.Ost with Distinction where the totalled score is 44 or less.

b) MASTER OF OSTEOPATHY (PART-TIME)

7.67.3 The UCO awards distinction for its M.Ost (Part-Time) award according to the following calculation:

- i. For both FHEQ Level 6 and Level 7 units studied during the final three years of the M.Ost (Part-Time) course, students' overall unit grades are allocated scores as follows:

A = 6

B = 5

C = 4

- ii. These scores are totalled over the final three years of study.
- iii. Students who achieve a total score of 45 or more over the final two years of study are eligible to be awarded an M.Ost with Distinction.

7.67.4 Boards of Examiners do not have the discretion to award an M.Ost with Distinction where the totalled score is 44 or less.

c) BSc (HONS) IN OSTEOPATHIC STUDIES (FULL-TIME) EXIT AWARD

7.67.5 Students who satisfy the requirements for a BSc (Hons) in Osteopathy (Full-Time) as an exit award may be awarded one of the following levels of classification:

- First
- Upper Second
- Lower Second
- Third

7.67.6 A formula, based on overall unit grades at FHEQ Level 5 and FHEQ Level 6, shall be used to calculate the level of classification. Any Level 7 credits are counted as Level 6 for the purpose of classification calculation.

7.67.7 Points are allotted for the unit total grade for each unit completed at Level 5 and Level 6 as follows:

- A = 4 points
- B = 3 points
- C = 2 points
- D = 1 point

7.67.8 Students are required to successfully complete all units at Level 5 and Level 6.

7.67.9 Any units that have been credited through Recognition of Prior Learning will not contribute to the calculation.

7.67.10 There are five units at Level 5 and five units at Level 6. Each overall unit grade is given a value that is weighted in relation to the number of credits the unit carries. Level 6 units are also counted at twice the value of Level 5. The total score for each student is calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Number of Points of Level 5 Units (Level 5 Credit Value x Grade Point Equivalent)} \\ &+ \\ &\text{Number of Points of Level 6 Units (Level 6 Credit Value x (Grade Point Equivalent x2))} \\ &= \text{Total Number of Points Awarded} \end{aligned}$$

7.67.11 The range of scores for which a classification may be awarded is between 1440 and 360. Classifications are awarded within 4 bands within this range:

- First: 1171-1440
- Upper Second: 901-1170
- Lower Second: 631-900
- Third: 360-630

d) BSc (HONS) IN OSTEOPATHIC STUDIES (PART-TIME) EXIT AWARD

7.67.12 Students who satisfy the requirements for a BSc (Hons) in Osteopathy (Part-Time) as an exit award may be awarded one of the following levels of classification:

- First
- Upper Second
- Lower Second
- Third

7.67.13 A formula, based on overall unit grades at FHEQ Level 5 and FHEQ Level 6, shall be used to calculate the level of classification. Any Level 7 credits are counted as Level 6 for the purpose of classification calculation.

7.67.14 Points are allotted for the unit total grade for each unit completed at Level 5 and Level 6 as follows:

- A = 4 points
- B = 3 points
- C = 2 points
- D = 1 point

7.67.15 Students are required to successfully complete all units at Level 5 and Level 6.

7.67.16 Any units that have been credited through Recognition of Prior Learning will not contribute to the calculation.

7.67.17 There are seven units at Level 5 and six units at Level 6. Each overall unit grade is given a value that is weighted in relation to the number of credits the unit carries. Level 6 units are also counted at twice the value of level 5. The total score for each student is calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Number of Points of Level 5 Units (Level 5 Credit Value x Grade Point Equivalent)} \\ &+ \\ &\text{Number of Points of Level 6 Units (Level 6 Credit Value x (Grade Point Equivalent x2))} \\ &= \text{Total Number of Points Awarded} \end{aligned}$$

7.67.18 The range of scores for which a classification may be awarded is between 1440 and 360. Classifications are awarded within 4 bands within this range:

- First: 1171-1440
- Upper Second: 901-1170
- Lower Second: 631-900
- Third: 360-630

7.67.19 If a student successfully completes the Research and Enquiry credits at level 7 in year 4, for the purpose of this calculation, these credits may be considered equivalent to level 6 credits if the student fails to achieve 20 credits at level 6 in either The Functioning Human or Patient Care. If their grade for Research and Enquiry in year 4, Level 7 is higher than either of Functioning Human or Patient Care in year 4, level 6 it will contribute to their honours classification calculation and will replace the lower grade in either of the other two 20 credit units in year 4.

e) % GRADING SCALE BSc / BA CLASSIFICATION CALCULATION

7.67.20 For BSc or BA Courses that use the % Grading Scheme described in Table 7.7 the following calculation is used to determine the classification of the award.

7.67.21 Students who satisfy the requirements may be awarded one of the following levels of classification:

- First (70% - 100%)
- Upper Second (60% - 69%)
- Lower Second (50% - 59%)
- Third (40% - 49%)

7.67.22 A formula, based on overall unit grades at FHEQ Level 5 and FHEQ Level 6, shall be used to calculate the level of classification.

7.67.23 Students are required to successfully complete all units at Level 5 and Level 6.

7.67.24 Any units that have been credited through Recognition of Prior Learning will not contribute to the calculation.

7.67.25 Each overall unit percentage is given a value that is weighted in relation to the number of credits the unit carries. Level 6 units are also counted at twice the value of Level 5. The total score for each student is calculated as follows:

Total Number of Points of Level 5 Units (Level 5 Credit Value x Overall Unit Mark (%))

+

Total Number of Points of Level 6 Units (Level 6 Credit Value x Overall Unit Mark (%) x2)

= Total Number of Points Awarded

7.67.26 The maximum number of points available is 36000. This theoretical maximum is calculated on each unit mark being 100% and then multiplied by the credit value.

7.67.27 The range of scores for which a classification may be awarded therefore is between 36000 and 14400. Classifications are awarded within 4 bands within this range:

- First (70% +): 25200 - 36000
- Upper Second (60% - 69%): 21600 - 25199
- Lower Second (50% - 59%): 18000 - 21599
- Third (40% - 49%): 14400 – 17999

7.67.28 The overall percentage achieved by an individual student can be calculated as follows:

Total Number of Points Awarded / 36000 x 100

f) MASTER'S TAUGHT AWARDS

7.67.29 Students who satisfy the requirements for a Master's degree may be awarded a Master's degree with Distinction if they have fulfilled the following criteria:

- i. Attained a grade of 14/A- or above in 60 credits, including the dissertation stage, and
- ii. Attained a grade of 13/B+ or above in at least half the remaining credits.

7.67.30 Students who satisfy the requirements for a Master's degree may be awarded a Master's degree with Commendation if they have fulfilled the following criteria:

- i. An average grade of 11/B- or greater, and
- ii. no more than 30 credits with a grade of less than 8/C-.
- iii. If there are 15 credits of less than 8/C- there must be 15 (or more) credits with a grade of more than 13/B+, or
- iv. If there are 30 credits of less than 8/C- there must be 30 (or more) credits with a grade of more than 13/B+.

g) POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA AWARDS

7.67.31 Students who satisfy the requirements for a Postgraduate Diploma as an exit award may be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction if he or she has attained a grade of 13/B+ or above in at least 60 academic credits.

7.67.32 Students who satisfy the requirements for a Postgraduate Diploma as an exit award may be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma with Commendation if a majority of his or her credit is at 11/B- or higher.

7.68 FACTORS AFFECTING ASSESSMENT AND BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

7.68.1 This section provides information specifically on marking and other factors affecting assessment and its relationship to the Board of Examiners. Full details about the function of Boards of Examiners are provided in AQF Section 12: Boards of Examiners.

7.68.2 Where a member of the academic staff believes that one or more students have been impacted by UCO action, or by circumstances other than personal circumstances processed by the Registrar (an example being unexpected disturbance of an examination, or an assessment profile that does not appear to have operated effectively etc.), this must be raised in advance of the Board of Examiners with the relevant Course Leader, thus allowing them to consider any actions that might be recommended to the Board of Examiners.

7.68.3 Such factors affecting assessment must be considered by the relevant Course Team and Pre-Board of Examiners.

7.68.4 Similarly, where the performance profile of a unit is at variance with the general performance of the cohort or reflects a continuing problem in the operation of the unit such that the grades may reasonably be held not to reflect satisfactory assessment of a unit, this should be identified by the relevant Course Leader (or equivalent) to the relevant Course Team for consideration in advance of the Board of Examiners.

7.68.5 In all of the above cases:

- a) The relevant Course Team and Pre-Board of Examiners must have considered the issues in advance of the Board of Examiners.
- b) Course Teams must consider the circumstances and their impact to determine whether there was material impact on a students' performance (e.g., in respect of their performance in other similar assessments and units).
- c) External Examiners must be part of the process of consideration of any alteration to be made to the expected outcome (e.g., an additional attempt allowed).
- d) The decision and the reasons must be minuted in detail to ensure that the basis for any changes made is clear.

7.68.6 Students have the right to appeal against decisions made by the Board of Examiners. The UCO has an established Academic Appeals process and the criteria for any academic appeal against a Board of Examiner's decision are detailed therein.

7.69 SANCTIONED STUDENTS

7.69.1 Students who are not in good financial standing but submit work for assessment will have their work assessed alongside that of other students for consistency but may not have their grades processed by the Board of Examiners.

7.70 PROVIDING FEEDBACK AFTER ASSESSMENT

7.70.1 The provision of timely and high-quality assessment feedback to students following assessment is considered to be of particular importance. It contributes to students' learning and enables them to identify areas in which they have performed well and areas in which they need to improve.

7.70.2 The UCO has an institutional policy regarding the provision of feedback to students (see [Section 7.71](#)), offers staff guidance on providing effective feedback to students and provides students with guidance on how to use the feedback they receive to effectively improve their performance.

7.70.3 Course tutors should emphasise to students the importance of using feedback to improve their performance.

7.71 ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK POLICY

a) FEEDBACK ON ASSIGNMENTS

7.71.1 Work which is assessed during the course or unit, including project work and written assignments, must be returned as quickly as possible if it is to have a formative value for students (normally within six weeks of the submission date).

7.71.2 Exceptionally, where this is not achievable (for example due to staff absence), students must be notified as soon as is reasonably possible of the revised date and the reason behind the change.

- 7.71.3 All in-unit summative assignments must provide post-marking formative feedback via the approved UCO process as a minimum unless otherwise agreed as part of the approval of the unit concerned.
- 7.71.4 Students may have other opportunities to receive formative feedback, for example through in-class activities, practical classes and clinic. Where this is an additional part of the curriculum, Unit Leaders are free to amend such processes without further UCO approval, provided that all students within the cohort are treated equitably.

b) FEEDBACK ON EXAMINATIONS

- 7.71.5 Students may be provided with generic or specific feedback on their individual performance in final assessments (including examinations) on request.
- 7.71.6 The Unit Leader or the tutor responsible for that assessment will, by appointment, review the paper with a student. Students will not be given their examination scripts to take away.
- 7.71.7 In addition, students normally receive generic examination feedback that considers their performance as a cohort.

7.72 ACCESS TO MATERIAL AFTER ASSESSMENT

a) ACCESS TO MARKED ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMINATION SCRIPTS

- 7.72.1 Hard copies of written coursework assignments, other than copies retained for external examining and archiving purposes, will normally be returned to students with any associated feedback.
- 7.72.2 Where students are not available to receive returned assignments, any uncollected work held by the Academic Registry will be confidentially destroyed at the end of the calendar year following the academic year of submission (e.g., uncollected work submitted at any point in the 2015/2016 academic year would, therefore, be destroyed on or after 31st December 2016).
- 7.72.3 All examination scripts will be retained until the end of the calendar year following the academic year of completion (e.g., exam scripts relating to the 2015/2016 academic year, would be destroyed on or after 31st December 2016), except for a sample of scripts, which will be retained for the full academic year (e.g. a sample of examination scripts relating to the 2015/2016 academic year would, therefore, be retained until the end of the 2016/2017 academic year).

b) ACCESS TO PAST & SPECIMEN EXAMINATION PAPERS

- 7.72.4 The Academic Registry releases past examination papers to students two years after the original assessment was taken.
- 7.72.5 The Academic Registry is also responsible for publishing past examination papers and associated marking schemes on the Virtual Learning Environment for reference by students; exceptions may be determined at the request of the Unit Leader with the approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 7.72.6 Papers not normally released are multiple choice papers, computer-based examination papers, and those based on case studies which may be in part individual to particular students.
- 7.72.7 Specimen papers, however, for all types of assessment are made available to students.

7.73 ADMINISTRATION OF ASSESSMENTS

- 7.73.1 The UCO has in place a range of assessment processes to ensure that standards are set at an appropriate level and are consistently applied. These involve assignment setting, moderation, external examining, and collective decision making at Boards of Examiners.

a) DRAFTING OF EXAMINATION PAPERS & ASSIGNMENTS

- 7.73.2 Unit Leaders draft examination papers and assignments for assessment and present them to the appropriate Head of Area for consideration, in line with dates confirmed by the Registrar. The Registrar convenes the Scrutiny Board, whose role it is to ensure the peer review of all assessments, assessment briefs, and marking guidelines.
- 7.73.3 Cover sheets are required be prepared for every examination paper in accordance with the specimen cover sheet. The cover sheet should provide details of the title, the duration of the examination, any special conditions that may apply, any materials that should be supplied to candidates, and direction to candidates about the choice of questions.
- 7.73.4 The Academic Registry is responsible for inserting the date and start time of the examination onto the cover sheet in line with the Assessment Schedule for the course of study.
- 7.73.5 The Registrar is responsible for the distribution of examination papers to External Examiners for comment, and will liaise with External Examiners, Unit Leaders and Course Leaders to ensure that standards are achieved, and that there are appropriate audit trails regarding the drafting and production of examination papers and assignment questions for Quality Assurance purposes.

b) ASSESSMENT MODERATION PROCESS

- 7.73.6 In seeking to achieve equity, validity, and reliability in the assessment of student work, a range of moderation processes are employed at the UCO.
- 7.73.7 In the case of practical assessments such as Objective Structured Practical Examinations (OSPEs), a moderator is present at and oversees the assessment, to ensure that all examiners are assessing at the appropriate level and in a similar style.
- 7.73.8 In the case of in-course assessments and examinations, the Registrar ensures that all are marked in line with the UCO's Double and Second Marking Policy (see [Section 7.74: Double and Second Marking Policy](#)).
- 7.73.9 Course Leaders (or equivalent) are responsible for agreeing at Course Team level the appropriate moderation process for each assessment. This may involve the moderation of an initial sample prior to full grading, or moderation after the initial assessment of all the work by the principal marker.
- 7.73.10 Course Leaders may find it helpful to identify designated "moderation days" when all markers are present to engage in the moderation process.

c) MODERATION OF EXAMINATION PAPERS & ASSIGNMENTS

- 7.73.11 External Examiners are given the opportunity to moderate draft examination papers and assessment briefs where the work contributes to an award. Where computer-based examination is used, guidance on the moderation of such papers should also be given to External Examiners.
- 7.73.12 It is the responsibility of External Examiners and Course Teams to agree the extent to which assignments are considered. Such moderation is not normally applied to draft examinations and assessment details at FHEQ Level 4, however the UCO considers it good practice to provide all assessments at all FHEQ levels to External Examiners for review.

7.74 DOUBLE & SECOND MARKING POLICY

a) DOUBLE & SECOND MARKING PROCESSES

- 7.74.1 Double and second marking are moderation processes put in place to help ensure fairness and objectivity in the assessment process.

- 7.74.2 In “double marking” a second assessor reviews a representative sample of students’ scripts unaware of the grade or comments awarded by the principal marker.
- 7.74.3 In “second marking” a second assessor reviews a representative sample of students’ scripts with full knowledge of the grade and comments made by the first marker. This process is normally used at FHEQ Levels 4 and 5 where its purpose is to help ensure fairness and objectivity.
- 7.74.4 Second marking is also used to assist assessors less familiar with assessment at HE level and/or the UCO’s standards. In this case the second marker will be an experienced member of staff and should provide feedback to the principal marker on both the level and the nature of the feedback provided.
- 7.74.5 The double and second marking processes employed in relation to the range of the UCO’s provision are shown in [Table 7. 9](#) below.

TABLE 7.9: DOUBLE & SECOND MARKING PROCESSES

Context	Process
FHEQ Levels 4 and 5	Sample second marking: 20% of the cohort, all A’s and fail grades.
FHEQ Levels 6 and 7 (with the exception of projects and dissertations)	Sample second marking: 20% of the cohort (a minimum of 2 from each pass grade band), all A’s and fail grades; if concerns or questions regarding marking/performance arises a broader sample should be reviewed.
FHEQ Levels 6 and 7 Projects and Dissertations	Complete double marking.
G Grade (safety issues)	Complete double marking. In the cases of practical assessments, review by the Course Leader of all of the markers’ comments and rationale for the award of the G Grade.

b) DOUBLE & SECOND MARKING SAMPLE SIZE AND SELECTION

- 7.74.6 The sample size for double and second marking should typically represent 20% of the assessment with a minimum of eight and a maximum of 35.
- 7.74.7 Sampling should pay particular attention to students awarded grades A, E, and F (or their % equivalents).
- 7.74.8 Where scripts for an assignment are divided between several principal markers the sample must include scripts marked by each principal marker.

c) DOUBLE MARKING OF ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- 7.74.9 Although presentations should be moderated in the same way as other assessments (that is by an appropriate sample), it is regarded as good practice for two members of lecturing staff to be present during the assessment of oral presentations.
- 7.74.10 Double marking or second marking must take place on a sample basis.

7.74.11 Where operational considerations make the attendance of two members of staff impractical, some other means of recording and reviewing the event (such as video) must be utilised.

7.74.12 Sample presentations at FHEQ Levels 5, 6 and 7 must be available for scrutiny by External Examiners.

d) DOUBLE MARKING OF COMPUTER BASED ASSESSMENTS

7.74.13 Computer marked work is not double marked, but the system of checking results must be secure enough to obviate the necessity for additional scrutiny.

7.75 ASSESSMENT SAMPLES SENT TO EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

7.75.1 External Examiners receive samples of examination scripts and other assessed work in good time before Boards of Examiners meetings for moderation.

7.75.2 The minimum basis for sampling is outlined in [Section 7.74b: Double & Second Marking Sample Size and Selection](#) may be extended through agreement with External Examiners in advance.

7.75.3 Boards of Examiners should only be held after External Examiners have had the opportunity to scrutinise and moderate scripts for any or all the assessments in a unit, especially the end of unit assessments.

7.75.4 A clear schedule must be set and maintained for the dispatch and return of work for scrutiny. If the schedule is not adhered to, the Board of Examiners should be provided with a report for the internal and external examiners regarding the reasons for the deviation from the schedule.

7.76 VISITING LECTURERS AND EXTERNAL ASSESSORS

7.76.1 The UCO appoints External Assessors in line with the External Assessors' Policy⁴⁴.

7.76.2 Where visiting lecturers and external assessors are involved in the assessment of students, Unit Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the grading of the visiting lecturer or external assessor is included in the moderation process, and that appropriate additional steps are taken depending on his/her experience of the UCO and its standards.

7.77 AGREEING GRADES

7.77.1 Further to the Assessment Moderation Process (see [Section 7.73b](#)), first and second markers should seek to reach a consensus about the grade to be awarded for an assessment. In reaching agreement, markers should consider a range of factors such as level of experience, detailed subject knowledge, and differing levels of scrutiny by first and second markers.

7.77.2 Where consensus is not possible, and where the first assessor is an inexperienced member of staff, then for 'second marking' the entire set of scripts should be reviewed, and the grades awarded by the second marker applied after moderation by another experienced member of staff.

7.77.3 Where consensus is not possible, and where the first assessor is an experienced member of staff, then for 'second marking' and all 'double marking':

- i. Where there is close agreement (typically within a grade band, i.e., two grade points difference or less) between the first and second markers, the grade awarded will be the average of the two grades.

⁴⁴ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- ii. In the event of a serious disagreement on a piece of work between markers after discussion (typically more than a grade band, i.e. three grade point difference or more) a third marker may be assigned internally.
- iii. Exceptionally, if agreement proves impossible the work may be submitted to the External Examiner for final adjudication.

7.77.4 Where scripts are double or second marked both grades should be recorded but only the final agreed grade should be notified to the student.

7.78 ROUNDING UP AND ROUNDING DOWN

7.78.1 The UCO does not round up or down the grades for individual assessment points as recorded on its database. However, where multiple assessments contribute to one reporting point (e.g. multiple practical assessments contributing to one coursework mark) then the average grade for the assessments is determined to provide the final overall grade to be recorded on the UCO's database.

7.79 ANNOTATION OF EXAMINATION SCRIPTS

- 7.79.1 Students should receive clear and consistent feedback in line with the UCO's Assessment Feedback Policy (see [Section 7.71: Assessment Feedback Policy](#)).
- 7.79.2 There is no requirement to show on students' work that second or double marking has taken place. However, a clear record of the nature and extent of second and double marking should be kept by the Registrar and provided to the External Examiner.
- 7.79.3 Principal markers must mark all examination scripts, adding an indication where necessary of the reason(s) for the chosen grade.

7.80 MODERATION OF LATE SUBMISSIONS

7.80.1 Late submissions (i.e., after the moderation of the standard submission set), including any late submissions accepted based on Special Circumstances or academic appeal, must be subjected to moderation, regardless of whether the moderation process has been completed in full within the standard submission set.

7.81 COLLECTING AND COLLATING GRADES

- 7.81.1 The Registrar is responsible for dispatching a document containing a list of student candidate numbers of all students registered for particular units(s) to individual assessors, on which the assessors should record grade(s) awarded to each student.
- 7.81.2 It is the assessor's responsibility to ensure that the file is completed and returned to the Registrar within the timeline agreed by Course Teams.
- 7.81.3 The Unit Leader should check for accuracy the document containing students' grades prior to its return to the Registrar.
- 7.81.4 Assessors should indicate instances where students have not submitted an assignment, or have not attended an examination, on the candidate list. The Registrar will then cross-check that this correlates to submissions received by the Academic Registry and examination registers, to ensure that all scripts / assignments have been provided to the assessor.
- 7.81.5 When all assessments for a unit have been graded and confirmed to the Registrar, Academic Registry Staff input the grades into the exams database.
- 7.81.6 A unit result report is produced and cross-checked against the assessor's candidate list by Academic Registry Staff, to ensure that data entry has been accurate.

- 7.81.7 The unit result report is produced, considered, and confirmed by the relevant Course Team. If there are disparities with the results these should be discussed immediately, and action points decided.

7.82 INTERNAL MONITORING OF ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

- 7.82.1 The UCO places great emphasis on reviewing and improving assessment and examination processes.
- 7.82.2 The administrative processes associated with assessment are under constant internal scrutiny; grade entry and Boards of Examiners' processing are subject to a number of mechanisms to ensure that data is accurate and that outcomes are monitored continuously.
- 7.82.3 In addition, assessment moderation and external examining processes are constantly reviewed, to ensure that standards are of the highest quality.
- 7.82.4 The Academic Registry confirms assessment submission by students through a series of reports and logging methods, ensuring that records are auditable.
- 7.82.5 Unit information regarding assessment deadline dates and submission type is collated each academic year and is audited for accuracy by its comparison to Unit Information Forms.
- 7.82.6 Registers of attendance to examinations are maintained throughout examination periods. Non-attendance at examinations is monitored and reported to relevant Course Teams and the Engagement & Monitoring Group (ERG).
- 7.82.7 Registers also enable the accuracy of unit registration to be monitored, and any inaccuracies to be noted to the Academic Registry.

7.83 THE CONDUCT OF EXAMINATIONS

- 7.83.1 The Academic Council has approved Rules for the Conduct of Prescribed Assessments and Written Examinations for Degrees or Diplomas⁴⁵, which state that:
- The Academic Registry will centrally co-ordinate formal invigilated examinations as noted in the UCO's academic cycle. These may be a mix of main examination and referral examination sessions.
 - The Academic Registry will communicate with internal staff and students the main source of information regarding examination timings, locations, timetables, guidance, instructions for candidates, and a variety of other necessary information, normally via the Virtual Learning Environment.
 - The UCO will deliver examinations in several locations, details of which are made available to students; it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are in attendance at the specified location in a timely manner.
 - The timetable for each period of examination will be prepared as soon as practically possible after students are successfully registered for their units or for referral assessments, and as soon as Boards of Examiners have completed their deliberations. Normally the Academic Registry will aim to deliver exam timetables six weeks after the start of the course. However, these may be subject to change, and timetables should be checked regularly on the Virtual Learning Environment, where the most up to date copies are held.
- 7.83.2 If it is necessary to deliver examinations in consecutive sittings, for example OSPE's, the Academic Registry will notify candidates of their individual time, date and venue for the examination.

⁴⁵ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- 7.83.3 Changeovers between consecutive examination sessions will be controlled to ensure that student groups are kept separate.
- 7.83.4 In the case of some practical assessments where students complete their assessment before the last session of assessment has started, students will be allocated to a 'holding room' to ensure that they do not meet students yet to take their assessments. Once the last examination session has started, students will be permitted to leave the 'holding room'.
- 7.83.5 Mobile phones or other electronic devices that can connect to the Internet are not allowed into examination rooms or 'holding rooms'.

7.84 EXAMINATION RESULTS

a) RECORDING AND NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

- 7.84.1 The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that robust and reliable systems are in place for the computation, checking, and recording of assessment decisions, and for providing relevant information in time for the final meetings of Boards of Examiners.
- 7.84.2 Assessment data is centrally stored electronically within the UCO's Student Database, and on the Academic Registry Server where access is limited to Academic Registry staff.
- 7.84.3 The UCO's IT Department runs regular back-ups of data to ensure that records are saved securely.
- 7.84.4 Staff involved in the marking, recording, and collating of assessments should regard electronic and hard copies of assessment results and decisions as confidential documents and should store and dispose of them appropriately.
- 7.84.5 Provisional marks for undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses should be agreed by the relevant Course Team, inputted into the exams database, and on the list printed for the Board of Examiners meeting. During the meeting, the lists should be annotated and signed by External Examiners and the Chair of the Board of Examiners convened. Students are then notified of their results by the Academic Registry, and consideration is given to the implications for student progression / graduation as appropriate.
- 7.84.6 Access to assessment results and information regarding assessment judgements about individual students is restricted to Academic Registry staff and may be viewed by course teaching and support staff by request only.
- 7.84.7 Results are recorded using the following conventions:
- A grade per assessment is indicated using the relevant Common Assessment Grading Scheme (see [Table 7.6](#)).
 - An overall grade for each unit is indicated which has been calculated using the appropriate weightings of each assessment of that unit.
 - Non-submission of coursework, or non-attendance at a written or practical assessment or presentation, is awarded an F - N/S Grade (or % equivalent).
 - Any candidates who have experienced Special Circumstances affecting their continuous or exam performance have this information brought to the attention of the Board of Examiners, indicated by a tick in the 'SC' column on the results spreadsheet. Particulars of Special Circumstances (following agreement with the student in question) are considered by Pre-Boards of Examiners, who make any relevant recommendations to the Board of Examiners itself without compromising the confidentiality of the circumstances themselves.
- 7.84.8 Course results are processed as quickly as possible following confirmation by the Board of Examiners.

- 7.84.9 Students are normally informed in advance of the date of the release of results through their Assessment Schedule.
- 7.84.10 Results of assessments taken during the academic year are normally released to students' personal UCO email inbox by the Academic Registry. End of year progression results will normally be emailed at 13.00 on the date published on the Assessment Schedule. Information about who students can contact should they require clarification of their results or advice about their results will be included. Students will normally be notified through UCO email when results will be sent.
- 7.84.11 No results should be divulged to candidates until after the results, duly confirmed by the Board of Examiners and signed by External Examiner(s) and Chair of the Board of Examiners, have been submitted to, and published by, the Academic Registry. This regulation may be varied if it is deemed in the best interest of a student to notify them of their examination results early, e.g. due to exceptional circumstances or ill health. The decision to release examination results to students early must be made in consultation with and approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education). A file note shall be produced and retained in the student's file to record that their results were released to them early.
- 7.84.12 Results should only be given to students in person or by phone if steps have been taken to confirm the student's identity: they should NOT be disclosed to third parties (including parents) without a student's explicit consent. In view of the above, it is recommended that staff do not release any marks or results to candidates, but instead refer students to their UCO email accounts.

b) AMENDED RESULTS

- 7.84.13 Where examiners, including External Examiner(s), agree that a candidate's marks and / or course result should be amended as a consequence of an academic appeal being upheld, the Academic Registry will inform the student of the examiners' decision in writing, on receipt of confirmation of the amended mark or result.

7.85 DISPOSAL AND RETENTION OF WORK THAT CONTRIBUTES TO A DEGREE ASSESSMENT

a) RETENTION OF EXAMINATION SCRIPTS

- 7.85.1 Examination scripts which contribute to a final award are to be retained until the 31st of December following the date on which the student qualified, or was due to qualify, for an award.
- 7.85.2 Other work is retained for six months following the relevant Board of Examiners. For the purposes of archiving and review, sample assessments may be retained for longer periods.

b) RETENTION OF COURSEWORK

- 7.85.3 Submitted coursework is the physical property of the UCO.
- 7.85.4 Students retain the copyright and intellectual property of the coursework submitted for any form of assessment.
- 7.85.5 In accordance with UCO regulations, coursework may be returned to students (see [Section 7.70: Providing Feedback after Assessment](#)).
- 7.85.6 If coursework contributes to the final award, it should be retained until the 31st of December following the date on which the student qualified. Other work is retained for six months following the relevant Board of Examiners.

7.85.7 Students should be advised that they might be required to return coursework to the UCO at any time within these periods. This is communicated to students via the results letters they receive as the course progresses.

7.85.8 Students should keep copies of any coursework submitted for assessment, and maintain portfolios of their work, for scrutiny by External Examiners or tutors if required.

7.86 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

a) GENERAL PROVISIONS

7.86.1 If a student is unable, through disability, to be assessed by the normal methods prescribed for the course, the Student Support Officer will liaise with the Course Leader in order to determine a 'reasonable adjustment' to the method of assessment (bearing in mind the objectives of the course and the need to assess the student on equal terms with other students). This may involve the Occupational Health Committee.

7.86.2 The onus is on the student to ensure that the UCO is made aware of their disability and to apply for consideration of variation in assessment conditions commensurate with the disability; written evidence must be provided in the form of a medical or diagnostic report provided by a doctor or other appropriately qualified professional.

7.86.3 Students with a disability must be assessed in such a way that they are neither systematically penalised nor systematically advantaged compared with other students. To make judgments as to the nature and extent of the variation in assessment methods appropriate to any particular candidate, the Student Support Officer must make use of all the information available, including taking advice from within and outside the UCO where appropriate.

7.86.4 Students wishing to be considered for special assessment conditions must do so in good time for the first assessment. It may not be possible to accept applications received close to assessments, although the UCO will always attempt to deal with genuine cases of unforeseen need.

7.86.5 If students have disabilities, temporary or permanent, which are demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Student Support Officer but cannot be dealt with in the form of special conditions for assessment, the student will normally be expected to carry out the assessment under normal conditions, and the Board of Examiners will make whatever adjustments it considers appropriate when reviewing students' achievement and progression.

b) SPECIFIC ALLOWANCES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

7.86.6 Upon the recommendation of the Student Support Officer or the Occupational Health Committee, students with evidence of a specific learning disability are identified on examination papers by a system of coloured adhesive labels, which must be inscribed with the student ID number.

7.86.7 Students whose disability (e.g., dyslexia) permits them extra time in written and practical assessments allows the student to attempt the same content / number of questions as their cohort. The adhesive labels allow markers to compensate for presentational weaknesses, which no amount of extra time could put right.

7.86.8 Such students are normally permitted 25% extra time.

7.86.9 Additional examples for consideration are given below:

- i. Students with mobility impairment may be granted several breaks during an examination or similar task, to ease or exercise joints or muscles. This applies also to those with long term

or short term (e.g., broken limb) disabilities. Some students in this category may have no need of such breaks.

- ii. Students with impaired manual dexterity may need to dictate answers and therefore be separate from fellow students. Alternatively, a tape recorder may be used. If the student can write, but more slowly than most students, time may be allowed for this during the period of the examination, but this would normally be balanced by the student being required to undertake a lesser load under examination requirements and within the stipulated time period. Some limited extra time may be appropriate when an amanuensis is used.
- iii. Students with a visual impairment, up to and including total blindness, may be provided with an amanuensis for written exams, who will read the question paper and write answers at the student's dictation. Consideration may be given to the use of appropriate technology for the production of answers by the candidate. In examinations, extra time may be needed for reading and re-reading of the questions, but this would normally be accommodated within the stipulated time period.
- iv. Students with a mental health or stress-related disorder, or with physical conditions which cause excessive fatigue may, at the discretion of the Student Support Officer, and only where medical evidence is available to support the claim, be permitted additional time and / or be allowed to take an examination alone, with provision for breaks at suitable intervals if required. In severe cases, an alternative form of assessment may be used, such as a viva voce, but care must be taken that the standard of the assessment is safeguarded. Clear evidence of need must be provided in the form of a medical report from a GP or specialist.
- v. Students with chronic conditions causing excessive fatigue may be permitted to sit an examination in a separate room and have access to assistive technology, with provision for breaks at suitable intervals if required. In severe cases, a reduced load in the examination or an alternative assessment may be used, such as a viva voce, but care must be taken that the standard of the assessment is safeguarded. Evidence of need must be provided in the form of a medical report from a GP or specialist.
- vi. Students with specific learning disabilities (e.g. dyslexia) and related problems will normally be permitted extra time beyond the normal duration for the reading of the examination paper and for the writing of their answers. Such students may be permitted additional time for examinations and / or the use of an amanuensis, reader, or appropriate assistive technology. Question papers may be provided in alternative formats.

7.86.10 Students whose first language is not English will not normally be regarded as requiring special consideration in the sense of this section (British Sign Language is formally recognised as a language) and will be required to provide answers to questions in English.

7.86.11 Students are not normally permitted the use of any reference tools such as dictionaries in examinations.

7.87 REVIEWING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS OF ASSESSMENT

7.87.1 As part of the UCO's quality assurance and enhancement procedures, a review of the effectiveness of the assessments used to measure student learning is undertaken at assessment and unit level. This is considered by Course Teams and also by Boards of Examiners in their meetings. In addition, External Examiners are required, as part of their annual report, to comment upon the effectiveness of assessment procedures and how academic standards have been maintained.

7.88 DISCLOSURE OF EXAMINATION GRADES

- 7.88.1 It must be made clear to students that where grades have not yet been considered by External Examiners or a formal Board of Examiners, these grades are provisional, pending endorsement by the appropriate Board of Examiners and may be subject to change.

7.89 ACADEMIC APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 7.89.1 Academic appeals are the route by which students may seek reconsideration of Boards of Examiners' decision. They are the only basis on which changes, other than the correction of administrative errors, may be made. The criteria for appealing against a decision of the Board of Examiners are detailed in the UCO's Academic Appeals Policy⁴⁶.
- 7.89.2 The UCO will not consider appeals based solely on a student's disagreement with the examiners' academic judgement. Academic appeals will be considered only in matters of procedure, competency and / or prejudice. Further details are provided in the Academic Appeals Policy.
- 7.89.3 Complaints upheld in respect of Board of Examiners' decisions already made are transferred to the UCO's Academic Appeals process for action.
- 7.89.4 Where a student lodges an appeal that is upheld after the relevant Board of Examiners and is found, after submission, to be a valid academic appeal, notification of the outcome of the complaint should be sent to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), who will initiate a review by the Board of Examiners as an outcome of an appeal.

⁴⁶ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

PART D: CONFERMENT

This section of the Academic Quality Framework summarises the UCO's regulations regarding the conferment of awards and provides information on conditions of receiving and rescinding awards, award certification and graduation ceremony procedures. It should be of interest to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students and to all staff.

7.90 CONFERMENT OF AN AWARD

- 7.90.1 The UCO's Academic Council establishes Board of Examiners (or partner equivalents) to make recommendations for the conferment of approved awards on students who, having been registered as a student of the UCO, have followed an approved course or programme of study that leads to a UCO award.
- 7.90.2 An award of the UCO is deemed to be conferred on a student at the time of a UCO's Board of Examiners' (or partner's equivalent) decision. This conferment is through authority delegated by the UCO's Vice-Chancellor as the chair of the Academic Council to the designated Chair of the Boards of Examiners. Such conferment includes action taken by the chair of the respective Board of Examiners subsequently on its behalf.
- 7.90.3 Conferment is not made in absentia but face to face with the individual so honoured and in exceptional circumstances, as approved by the Academic Council, the award will be made through a ceremony specifically arranged for this purpose.
- 7.90.4 An honorary academic degree of the UCO is conferred on an individual at the UCO Graduation Ceremony in person by the chair of the Academic Council or designated senior member of the Academic Council acting in that capacity.
- 7.90.5 Students are considered to have exited their course of study and completed their registration with the UCO once the appropriate Board of Examiners has conferred them with an award.
- 7.90.6 Conferment of a UCO award is evidenced by the UCO through:
 - i. A formal degree award document which is provided to the student as certification that the academic award has been achieved and (i.e., the Award Certificate).
 - ii. A transcript or similar record document setting out in greater detail the course or programme of study followed, the units taken, the credits awarded, and the grades received from the UCO.

7.91 CONDITIONS FOR RECEIPT OF AN ACADEMIC AWARD

- 7.91.1 An award of the UCO will be conferred when the following conditions are satisfied:
 - i. The individual was a registered student of the UCO at the time of their assessment for an award and was in good financial standing with the UCO.
 - ii. The details of that individual's legal full name, date of birth, gender, course, or programme of study followed, and award to be conferred have been registered by the UCO.
 - iii. The award to be conferred is one approved by the Academic Council under its taught degree awarding powers.
 - iv. It has been confirmed that the individual as a student of the UCO has completed a course or programme of study approved by the Academic Council as leading to the award being recommended.

- v. The conferment of the award has been recommended by the Board of Examiners convened, constituted, and acting under regulations approved by the Academic Council under its taught degree awarding powers.
 - vi. The recommendation of the award has been signed by the Chair of the Board of Examiners and by the chair of the Academic Council or their appointed representative, confirming that the assessments have been carried out in accordance with the UCO's requirements and that the recommendations have received the consent of the External Examiners.
- 7.91.2 Once an academic outcome has been achieved, and an award conferred, that qualification is not withdrawn if a higher qualification is subsequently achieved.
- 7.91.3 In cases where students do not complete the course of study for which they are registered through lack of academic progress, withdrawal or premature termination of their studies and cancellation of their registration, the appropriate Board of Examiners may propose conferment of a lower-level qualification to recognise the level and extent of achievement provided the conditions indicated above are met.

7.92 CONFERMENT OF AN AEGROTAT AWARD

- 7.92.1 An award may be conferred as an aegrotat award where the following conditions are satisfied in addition to those in [Section 7.92: Conditions for Receipt of an Academic Award](#) above:
- i. The individual was a registered student of the UCO but had been unable to complete all the requirements for the award they sought, because they could not complete the course of study due to illness or similar valid cause for which evidence is provided at the time of consideration by the Board of Examiners.
 - ii. The appropriate Board of Examiners has sufficient evidence to judge that the student would have reached the required threshold standard for the qualification and, where feasible, secures additional evidence to make a judgement on the award of a distinction or similar.
- 7.92.2 A candidate may choose to decline an aegrotat award and continue to complete the course of study. However, the candidate cannot then claim the aegrotat award in the event of subsequent failure.
- 7.92.3 The term "aegrotat" will not be recorded on the Award Certificate or transcript unless the appropriate Board of Examiners decides it has insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the award of a distinction or similar.

7.93 CONFERMENT OF AN AWARD POSTHUMOUSLY

- 7.93.1 An award may be conferred posthumously and accepted on the deceased student's behalf by a parent, spouse, or other appropriate individual.
- 7.93.2 The following conditions must be satisfied in addition to those in [Section 7.92: Conditions for Receipt of an Academic Award](#) above:
- i. The individual was a registered student of the UCO but had been unable to complete all the requirements for the award they sought, at the time of their death.
 - ii. The appropriate Board of Examiners has sufficient evidence to judge that the student would have reached the required threshold standard for the qualification and, where feasible, secures additional evidence to make a judgement on the award of a distinction or similar.
- 7.93.3 At the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor financial good standing conditions may be waived in the case of a posthumous award.

7.94 RESCINDING AN AWARD

- 7.94.1 In exceptional circumstances (e.g., as a consequence of the investigation of an academic offence or an academic appeal) the Academic Council may rescind an award that has been conferred on a student.
- 7.94.2 Where an honorary award is to be rescinded, the decision cannot be delegated but must be formally considered by the Academic Council with the agreement of a majority of members.
- 7.94.3 Granting of an honorary award includes the decision to bring the award holder into the scholarly community of the UCO, and behaviour, actions, or the support of actions that run counter to the UCO's mission or damage its work will be considered in such cases.
- 7.94.4 Where an award is to be rescinded as a consequence of the investigation of an academic offence or an academic appeal, the decision to rescind may be taken on behalf of the Academic Council for UCO awards via Chair's action.

7.95 AWARD DOCUMENTATION AND CERTIFICATION

- 7.95.1 The UCO issues documents as formal award certificates to provide formal and legal evidence of the fact that an academic award has been made to an individual under the UCO's taught degree awarding powers.
- 7.95.2 The name of the individual appearing on award certification is the name held on the student's registration record at the time the award is conferred.
- 7.95.3 The printed format for the name normally follows the UK convention, but if the student's identity documents present the names in a different order from the norm in the UK, or evidence of an alternative international naming convention (as approved by the Registrar) is presented, names may appear in a different order.
- 7.95.4 Once issued, there is normally no change permitted to the wording on an award certificate, unless a specific inaccuracy is proved (e.g., a misspelling). However, a replacement certificate may be issued in the case of gender reassignment or legal name change, on production of documentary evidence of the change.
- 7.95.5 The document provided as a certificate of an award conferred by the UCO shall record:
 - i. The name of the UCO together with, if appropriate, the name of any other institution collaborating in the provision of the course of study leading to the award.
 - ii. The student's full and legal name as recorded on the UCO's registration record.
 - iii. The name and designation of the award as appropriate.
 - iv. The title of the award as agreed through the approval process for the course of study by the Academic Council, for the purposes of the certification.
 - v. The award of distinction or similar achieved by the student within the award, where appropriate.
 - vi. An approved endorsement or clarification, where appropriate (e.g., that the course was delivered through the medium of English, was by distance learning, etc.).
 - vii. The date on which the award was conferred which shall normally be the final date of the month in which the award was approved by the Board of Examiners.
- 7.95.6 The formal academic award document shall bear the signature of the chair of the Academic Council and have suitable security marking.

7.96 STATEMENT OF CREDIT –TRANSCRIPT

- 7.96.1 The UCO currently issues a statement of credit or transcript to a student who has successfully completed approved units of study or a stage of a taught course leading to an approved award.
- 7.96.2 The transcript shall record:
- The student's full and legal name as recorded on the UCO's registration record.
 - The units and elements of study successfully completed, with details of their length and level, grade achieved (where appropriate) and dates of registration and completion.
 - The details of any periods of supervised work experience or placement in the UK or abroad with grades where appropriate and dates.
 - The details of exposure to transferable skills if appropriate.
- 7.96.3 The UCO intends to include the transcript as part of a Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) in a format approved by the Academic Council. The UCO's transcript and HEAR document shall be signed on behalf of the Academic Council by an authorised person approved by the Chair of the Academic Council. This process is currently in development by the UCO.

7.97 GRADUATION CEREMONY

- 7.97.1 All students who have been conferred an award from the UCO are entitled to attend the UCO Graduation Ceremony.
- 7.97.2 Those attending the graduation ceremony as participants are required to wear the appropriate academic dress for which they are eligible, to comply with the UCO's regulations on professional behaviour and dress code, and to conform to graduation ceremonial procedures.

a) ACADEMIC DRESS

- 7.97.3 Ede and Ravenscroft Ltd is the graduation gown maker appointed by the UCO. They aid with the specification of the academic dress, and make the robes associated with the different awards.
- 7.97.4 All graduates and academic staff attending the graduation ceremony are required to ensure that they wear the correct gown, hat and hood when in full academic dress.
- 7.97.5 It is an academic offence to wear the gown associated with an award for which an individual is not eligible.
- 7.97.6 Gowns, hats, or hoods for awards of the UCO may not be replicated without the express authorisation of Ede and Ravenscroft and the UCO's Vice-Chancellor.

AQF07 APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
AQF07-01	UCO's Honorary Degrees, Academic Awards & UCO Titles or Honorary Awards Criteria & Award Structure
AQF07-02	Assessment Brief Template
AQF07-03	Exam Paper Template
AQF07-04	Marking Criteria Template
AQF07-05	Assessment Scrutiny Checklist
AQF07-07	Open Book Assessment Regulations
AQF07-08	Open Book Exam Guidance for Students
AQF07-09	Guidance on the Conduct of Viva Voce & Oral Examinations



Academic Quality Framework

**Section 8: Student Recruitment &
Admissions**

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 8: Student Recruitment & Admissions

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to academic management staff, applicants to the UCO and Course Teams.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author(s)	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Admissions Tutor	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Admissions Tutor	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	August 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Admissions Tutor	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to updated staff role titles and weblinks.	Admissions Tutor	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update staff role titles, weblinks & footnotes and to reflect current practice.	Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect new committee structure and broader provision.	Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update weblinks and reflect changes following Brexit.	Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

V8.0	June 2022 PRAG Chair TQSC	Administrative Amendment to update academic year dates.	Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

Academic Quality Framework

Section 8: Student Recruitment & Admissions

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8.1 RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS - AN OVERVIEW

- 8.1.1 The UCO's aim is to provide fair and equal access to Higher Education to all those who have the potential to succeed or benefit from it.
- 8.1.2 The UCO welcomes applications from motivated students with appropriate qualifications, traditional and non-traditional, academic, and vocational. Our students come from diverse backgrounds and have a whole range of qualifications both from the UK and overseas.
- 8.1.3 The UCO considers applicants to our courses solely based on their merit, ability and potential. Applications from mature students who have no formal qualifications may be considered provided they have relevant work experience.
- 8.1.4 The UCO considers all information contained within the application form and produced during the interview process. This might include past academic performance, predicted grades, personal statements, academic and personal references, and any other evidence of skills, aptitude and potential to succeed.

8.2 RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS POLICY & PROCEDURES

- 8.2.1 The UCO's Admissions Policy and Procedures¹ is aligned with Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code for Higher Education regarding Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access², and provides further information on the recruitment and admissions processes in operation at the UCO, including the monitoring and evaluation of these processes and the Admissions Complaints and Appeals procedure.
- 8.2.2 Responsibility for the UCO's Admissions Policy and Procedures lies with the Registrar. Course Teams have admission sub-groups (Course Recruitment Groups) who are allocated the responsibility of reviewing all applicants to that course.

8.3 ADMISSIONS PROFILES

- 8.3.1 The UCO makes available admissions profiles for all its academic courses.
- 8.3.2 All admissions decisions will be made against the criteria detailed in the admissions profile.
- 8.3.3 Each profile specifies:
 - a) Typical academic entry requirements.
 - b) Other accepted experience and/or qualities.
- 8.3.4 Admissions profiles are normally made available via the Course Information Form (CIF) on the UCO's website, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) website³ (for undergraduate full-time courses), and in the relevant prospectus for all other courses.
- 8.3.5 Applicants must demonstrate they have the skills necessary for successful study, evidence of motivation, and the commitment to succeed.
- 8.3.6 In addition to traditional academic qualifications the UCO recognises prior learning of applicants, either as a basis for entry to a course or to exempt applicants from some course requirements.
- 8.3.7 Recognition of prior learning is normally considered through:

¹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access>

³ <https://www.ucas.com/>

- a) Transfer of Credit (Advanced Standing), the process whereby the UCO grants applicants credit for educational experiences or courses undertaken at another institution;
- b) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), the process whereby the UCO evaluates the skills and knowledge of applicants acquired outside of the UCO to recognise their competence against specific learning objectives. Certified and experiential recognition of prior learning are considered at the UCO as defined in Section 7 (Academic Regulations) of the Academic Quality Framework.

8.3.8 The authority to consider requests for transfer of credit is delegated by the Academic Council to Course Leaders with authority to admit applicants to the relevant course.

8.4 THE APPLICATION PROCESS

a) UNDERGRADUATE FULL-TIME COURSES

8.4.1 All full-time undergraduate applications are submitted through UCAS, which forwards applications to the UCO's Admissions Department.

b) UNDERGRADUATE PART-TIME COURSES

8.4.2 Applications to undergraduate part-time courses are made directly to the UCO via the UCO's online or paper application form.

c) POSTGRADUATE COURSES

8.4.3 Applications to postgraduate courses are submitted directly to the UCO using the UCO's online or paper application form.

8.5 SELECTION CRITERIA

8.5.1 Applicants are selected according to the appropriate Admissions Profile for their chosen course.

8.5.2 Those applicants not meeting the selection criteria of their chosen course may be considered for, and offered, an alternative course.

8.5.3 If an application is unsuccessful the reason for rejection is recorded to provide applicants with feedback if requested.

8.5.4 Although minimum entry requirements for undergraduate courses are set in the CIF, conditional offers may be made in the context of the qualification being studied and offered for assessment for entry.

8.6 INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS

8.6.1 Applications from prospective international students will be considered and processed consistently with "Home" applications.

8.6.2 Applicants presenting overseas qualifications will be expected to have achieved the equivalent of the quoted minimum entrance requirements.

8.6.3 Assessment will be made using UCAS Qualification Information Profiles⁴.

8.6.4 All overseas applicants are required to provide the UCO with a verified copy of their qualifications and / or academic transcript in English.

⁴ <https://qips.ucas.com/>

- 8.6.5 Applicants that have English as a second language must be proficient in English in order to be admitted to a course and have the required English language qualification as stated in the relevant admissions profiles.

8.7 INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS - DEPOSITS AND VISAS

- 8.7.1 Applicants requiring entry clearance to enter/remain in the UK to study at UCO will be required to pay a £1000 non-refundable deposit as a condition of the release of their Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies⁵ at the UCO. This deposit provides the UCO with a measure of confidence of the seriousness of the applicant's intention to study and is in line with the recommendations of UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)⁶.
- 8.7.2 The £1000 deposit is only required to be paid for the first year of study and will subsequently be used as payment against the balance of tuition fees, which are paid at enrolment. Students will have the option of paying the remainder of their tuition fee by instalments.
- 8.7.3 Applications from overseas students are normally processed as per the normal admissions procedures. However, wording contained within conditional and unconditional offer letters will signal to applicants the necessity of making payment of the compulsory deposit once the applicant has reached "unconditional firm" stage.

8.8 APPLICATION FORM SIMILARITY DETECTION SERVICE

- 8.8.1 The UCAS similarity detection service⁷ reviews all personal statements within incoming applications. These are checked against a library of all personal statements previously submitted to UCAS and sample statements collected from a variety of web sites and other sources, including paper publications. Each personal statement received by UCAS is added to the library of statements after it has been processed.
- 8.8.2 Any statements showing a level of similarity of 10% or greater will be reviewed by members of the UCAS Similarity Detection Service team. Universities will be notified on a daily basis of any cases where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion. Applicants will also be notified that the UCAS Similarity Detection service has found that their personal statement merits investigation.
- 8.8.3 Following any notification from UCAS of Similarity Detection, it is the responsibility of the Admissions Officer to contact the applicant to request an explanation regarding the reasons for the similarity in their personal statement to one submitted in a previous application.
- 8.8.4 The applicant's response will then be discussed along with their application at the subsequent Course Recruitment Group meeting.

8.9 INTERVIEW EVENTS

- 8.9.1 All short-listed applicants are normally invited to attend an Interview Event at the UCO.
- 8.9.2 Applicants are informed in advance of details of the selection procedures, thus allowing them an opportunity to discuss any special requirements or needs prior to attending.
- 8.9.3 All Pre-Registration courses have their own Interview Events, and these are agreed by the individual Course Teams.
- 8.9.4 The purpose of Interview Events is to confirm whether candidates have the potential aptitude, motivation, and personal qualities to succeed on their desired course.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa/course>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

⁷ <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/filling-your-application/fraud-and-similarity>

8.9.5 Interview Events are designed to appeal to the needs of applicants, providing all applicants with an equal opportunity to demonstrate to Interview Teams that they have the potential to become successful students.

8.9.6 The interview process for all courses is normally reviewed annually and is developed each year as appropriate based on feedback from students, staff and faculty, and in response to any relevant sector, institutional, or course changes.

8.10 DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE (DBS) AND HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRES

8.10.1 Courses requiring Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)⁸ checks and the completion of a Health Questionnaire will have this clearly stated in their CIF and / or the course prospectus.

8.10.2 Successful applicants to Pre-Registration or other courses where this is required will normally be required to undergo a police record check (carried out by the DBS) and will be required to complete a Health Questionnaire as a condition of enrolment.

8.11 APPLICANTS WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS, CAUTIONS AND ARRESTS

8.11.1 Applicants to the UCO will be asked at the application stage to declare whether they have spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands, or warnings. Their attention will be drawn to the UCO's Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Policy & Procedure⁹.

8.11.2 A criminal conviction not yet spent shall not normally be a bar to entry to a course unless:

- a) The course provides entry to employment in an occupation covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order 1975.
- b) In the view of the UCO, the applicant might pose a threat to staff and/or other students.
- c) Specified by an accrediting Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body.

8.11.3 Whilst not wishing to penalise an ex-offender, the UCO has a duty of care to its students, patients and staff and there may be occasions when an academically suitable applicant will be refused entry based on a past offense. The UCO's policy states that applicants who declare a criminal conviction are initially reviewed on the same academic grounds that apply to all applicants.

8.11.4 It is the responsibility of applicants to inform the UCO of any convictions occurring after the application has been submitted and throughout their time at the UCO.

8.11.5 As a condition of acceptance/continuation, all registering students on courses specifying it are required to have completed and cleared an enhanced DBS check by a given deadline.

8.11.6 Where the applicant indicates a criminal conviction on the application form, following a successful interview event, in addition to an offer letter detailing all conditions of enrolment, the applicant will be provided with information regarding the UCO's DBS policy and risk assessment procedure, and will be required to complete an early enhanced DBS check. The Registrar will then notify the applicant of the outcome of the risk assessment procedure.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

⁹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

8.12 FEES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- 8.12.1 The UCO's course fees are approved annually by the Senior Management Team, and the fees for an individual student are determined with reference to these course fees, the student's course of study, mode of attendance, and their fee status.
- 8.12.2 Fee information for all our courses can be found on our website¹⁰.
- 8.12.3 Most full-time and part-time undergraduate UK students, who have not been awarded a previous degree, will be eligible for a Tuition Fee Loan from Student Finance England (SFE)¹¹ which will cover their fees. The loan, which is not dependent on household income, is paid directly to the UCO by the Student Loans Company on the student's behalf. Many students will also be eligible to apply for living cost support.
- 8.12.4 The UCO offers financial advice and support to its students, covering issues such as tuition fees, student loans, availability of grants and bursaries, and difficulties paying living expenses.
- 8.12.5 Financial assistance is available to UCO students and details about loan, bursary and funding schemes are published on our website¹².
- 8.12.6 Students are encouraged to contact the Student Support Officer if they have any queries about financial matters, before or during their studies.

8.13 DISABILITY AND DYSLEXIA SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS

- 8.13.1 Applications to the UCO's courses are assessed purely on academic grounds.
- 8.13.2 The Admissions Team identifies applicants who have declared a disability. These applicants are invited to meet a member of the Student Support Department to identify and agree relevant support requirements.
- 8.13.3 Where an applicant has complex needs, the Course Leader will also be invited to a preliminary discussion about course requirements. This may involve the Occupational Health Committee (OHC) and the use of an occupational health professional to provide guidance to the UCO on what reasonable adjustments can be made.
- 8.13.4 The OHC, guided by the Equality Act 2010, will inform the applicant of the reasonable adjustments the UCO can make in relation to their disability. Based on this information, it will be the applicant's decision as to whether to accept the offer of a place on a course. In the unlikely event that the UCO is unable to make a reasonable adjustment, the Student Support Officer, as Chair of the OHC, will inform the applicant as soon as possible.
- 8.13.5 All successful applicants to Pre-Registration or other relevant courses are required to complete a Health Questionnaire as a condition of enrolment.
- 8.13.6 The UCO will be proactive in encouraging disclosure, and will, when an offer is made, include the following sentence on its correspondence: 'If you have a disability, please contact the Student Support Officer to discuss your needs'.

¹⁰ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/course-fees>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-register-login>

¹² <https://www.uco.ac.uk/life-uco/student-support>

AQF08: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
N/A	N/A



Academic Quality Framework

Section 9: Student Guidance & Learner Support

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 9: Student Guidance & Learner Support

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of general interest to all students, and of particular interest to staff involved in the provision of support to students.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author(s)	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Student Support Manager	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Student Support Manager	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	August 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Student Support Manager	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to updated staff roles, email system, policy titles and weblinks.	Student Support Manager	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update staff role titles, weblinks & footnotes and to reflect current practice.	Student Support Officer	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update committee titles and weblinks.	Student Support Officer	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update department and policy titles and reflect current practice.	Head of Student Services	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V8.0	July 2022 Academic Council	Major Amendments to reflect current practice for supporting student learning, including the	Head of Student Services	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

		<i>removal of reference to Academic Tutors.</i>		<i>Published Version: Website</i>	
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

Academic Quality Framework

Section 9: Student Guidance & Learner Support

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9.1 SUPPORTING STUDENTS AT THE UCO

- 9.1.1 The UCO recognises that supporting students throughout their studies is paramount if they are to achieve their highest potential and be successful in their studies and their future career paths.
- 9.1.2 A dedicated Student Support Team provides students with welfare, learning, counselling, and disability support. Other staff, including Course Leaders, the Academic Registry and Finance Teams, and Head of Student Services also provide a range of support services, including advice regarding matters such as suspending studies, appeals, complaints, and other academic and pastoral issues. In addition, the UCO's Learning Hub and IT Teams provide students with services and support that enable them to develop independent study and research skills.
- 9.1.3 At an institutional level, guidance is provided to both teaching and non-teaching staff about identifying and responding to students in difficulty, and the Engagement Monitoring Group (EMG) closely monitors the attendance of students to identify those who, through non-attendance, may be experiencing difficulties with their studies. There is also a Student-Staff Liaison Consultative Group for full-time and part-time students (SSLCGs), and an Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee where students may raise any issues or concerns as appropriate.
- 9.1.4 Support is offered throughout the students' time at the UCO. For pre-registration students this includes support following graduation to support them in their first year of practise.
- 9.1.5 Student support policy has taken into consideration the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, regarding Enabling Student Achievement¹.

9.2 STUDENT CHARTER

- 9.2.1 The UCO's Student Charter², produced jointly by the UCO Students' Union and the UCO, outlines what students can expect from the UCO, and what is expected from students.
- 9.2.2 The UCO's Strategic Plan puts students at the centre of the UCO's activities, and the Student Charter is a contribution towards that goal, always aiming to provide high quality courses and services in alignment with national expectation and good practice.
- 9.2.3 The UCO and UCO Students' Union normally review the Student Charter together annually.

9.3 STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR STUDENT SUPPORT

a) THE HEAD OF STUDENT SERVICES

- 9.3.1 The **Head of Student Services** has overall responsibility for student support at the UCO, and line manages the Student Support Officer and Learning Advisors which make up the Student Support Team. Counselling services are available for students through referrals.
- 9.3.2 The Head of Student Services also provides students with a point of contact for support and guidance regarding their student experience and in this capacity their role is to:
 - a) Develop and coordinate the UCO's Student Voice activity in liaison with the Students' Union and senior management, including mechanisms for student consultation, surveys, and responding to student-raised issues.
 - b) Chair the UCO's Student-Staff Liaison Consultation Groups jointly with the Student Union President.

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/enabling-student-achievement>

² <https://www.uco.ac.uk/life-uco/student-life>

- c) Develop and deliver training, in conjunction with the Students' Union, for student representatives.
- d) Provide an impartial advisory service to students regarding appeals, disciplinary and complaints procedures, in liaison with the Students' Union
- e) Ensures policies and procedures are up to date and in line with student demand and expectation.

b) THE STUDENT SUPPORT OFFICER

9.3.3 The **Student Support Officer** is responsible for:

- a) Providing specialist advice, information and support regarding student finance and disabled students allowance, health, and personal issues.
- b) Advising on Higher Education student finance, bursaries, and loans available within the UCO and is able to provide students with assistance in sourcing other funding from outside organisations such as educational charities.
- c) Providing a confidential impartial service, where no information is disclosed without students' written consent.
- d) Referring students on to appropriate help within the UCO and the local community.
- e) Acts as Chair of the Occupational Health Committee ensuring all reasonable adjustments are appropriate and shared with relevant staff.
- f) Manages all requests for Special Circumstances and referring students to other agencies where appropriate.

c) THE LEARNING ADVISORS

9.3.4 The **Learning Advisors** support students with study skills, including:

- a) Essay writing skills
- b) Note taking
- c) Memory techniques
- d) Presentation skills
- e) Exam preparation and revision techniques
- f) Time management

9.3.5 One-to-one tutorial sessions with a Learning Advisor may also be arranged in any of the key areas mentioned above.

9.3.6 Students are encouraged to seek the support of the Learning Advisors if they have concerns about their learning.

9.3.7 Students with English as an additional language are also encouraged to book tutorials with the Learning Advisors.

9.3.8 Provide guidance on research techniques, building

D) STUDENT SUPPORT OFFICER AND LEARNING ADVISORS

The Student Support Officer and Learning Advisors work collectively to:

- a) Provide a welfare and disability advisory service for all students and to advise staff on related matters.
- b) Provide support to all students with declared disabilities, initiating and supporting students through the process involved in applying for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), and ensuring that a student's needs, once identified, are met by the UCO; this is a confidential and impartial service.
- c) Co-ordinate and arrange the dyslexia provision within the UCO; if students believe that they may have dyslexia or another specific learning difficulty, they are advised to see the Student Support Officer or Learning Advisor who, if appropriate, may arrange for the student to undertake a full diagnostic assessment.

E) THE STUDENT COUNSELLOR

- 9.3.9 The student counselling service is an external service which provides a confidential service to support students with personal and emotional issues and is available to help students deal with crises or issues affecting their mental well-being.
- 9.3.10 Sessions with the Student Counsellor are made by appointment only and may be made anonymously.
- 9.3.11 Students are offered up to six free sessions of counselling in a term, and these are arranged with Student Support agreement and referral.

9.4 COURSE LEADERS

- 9.4.5 Course Leaders act as key points of contact for student issues and direct students to appropriate support as needed.
- 9.4.6 Course Leaders also advise students should they wish to change their mode of study or are considering an interruption of studies.
- 9.4.7 Course Leaders also work with Student Support on arranging and agreeing reasonable adjustments in class and assessment. All reasonable adjustments that affect clinic, will be discussed with Head of Clinical Practice.
- 9.4.8 Course Leaders also lead on Induction and student consultation processes.

9.5 THE ACADEMIC REGISTRY

- 9.5.5 In addition to the Student Support Team, the Academic Registry also supports students throughout their studies by providing specific services.
- 9.5.6 This department operates an open-door policy and is in contact with students on a day-to-day basis.
- 9.5.7 The Academic Registry provides a wide range of student services and advice as listed below:
 - a) Student Registration & Attendance
 - b) Course Withdrawals and Deferrals
 - c) The Publication of Teaching & Assessment Timetables
 - d) The implementation of approved assessment adjustments and special Circumstances Applications
 - e) Assessment Submissions, Results and Feedback

- f) Student Details & Confirmation Letters
- g) Graduation
- h) Postgraduate Information
- i) Procedural guidance on student specific procedures, such as Academic Appeals, Academic Discipline, the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure (see also Section 9.12).

9.1 THE FINANCE TEAM

- 9.1.1 The Finance Team is responsible for providing students with information about their course fees and how to pay them.
- 9.1.2 The UCO recognises that students may encounter difficulties in paying course fees. To support students with their financial commitment to the UCO, a number of mechanisms have been implemented to enable students to continue with their studies. These include:
 - a) Payment plans, whereby students may request to pay their course fees by instalments.
 - b) Early payment discounts, which are offered to self-funding students who pay their fees in full on or before the beginning of the year.
 - c) A dedicated Student Support Officer who can provide advice and assistance on government financial support (loans and grants)
 - d) Funding via our Access and Participation Plan agreed by the Office for Students (OfS) which is available on our website (<https://www.uco.ac.uk/life-uco/student-support/access-and-participation>).

9.6 THE LEARNING HUB

- 9.6.5 The Learning Hub is a bright and open space, with room for private study and group work. It is staffed by an experienced team all of whom are on hand to assist students to locate appropriate resources.
- 9.6.6 Computers are available for student use with access to academic resources and medical databases, for which assistance and training is available.
- 9.6.7 The Learning Hub team provide inductions for new users and are a port of call for electronic resource queries.
- 9.6.8 The Learning Hub is open all year, including holiday periods and at weekends when part-time students are attending classes, or when assessments are due, to ensure that all available resources are accessible to students when needed.

9.7 THE IT TEAM & COMPUTING SERVICES

- 9.7.5 The IT Team provides IT, Audio Visual (AV), Multimedia and Web support services to teaching teams and departments within the UCO. This entails hardware and software support for all AV equipment, AV user support, technical support for academics engaged in producing high quality learning resources, and Multimedia and Web support for the UCO's Internet, portal, and virtual learning environment.
- 9.7.6 Computing services at the UCO are overseen by the IT Team.
- 9.7.7 The main computer and printing provision for study purposes is based on the third floor of the UCO's Borough High Street building.

- 9.7.8 The UCO has networked computers with a range of software including MS Office, Wi-Fi, e-mail, and digital information products and software to assist students with disabilities.
- 9.7.9 All students are allocated their own personal Office 365 OneDrive for their personal use in line with the UCO's IT Acceptable Use Policy³ and Code of Conduct Policy & Disciplinary Procedure for Students⁴.
- 9.7.10 Wireless access to the Internet is available throughout the UCO's Borough High Street and Southwark Bridge Road buildings.

9.8 IT INDUCTION & TRAINING

- 9.8.5 All students are formally introduced to computing services by attending an IT Training Session with the UCO's IT Team during their first weeks at the UCO. During this session, students are issued with their UCO username and password (to register on and access relevant computer services) and their email address. UCO students also receive training in the use of their UCO email account and BONE (the UCO's Virtual Learning Environment), to ensure that they become proficient users of these facilities.
- 9.8.6 Students are also provided with relevant computing information and assistance through a number of self-help resources that have been produced by the IT Team and are available on the UCO Student Portal.
- 9.8.7 Further information about the UCO's computing services, and the IT Team, can be found on the UCO Portal.

9.9 VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (BONE)

- 9.9.5 All students have access to the UCO's Virtual Learning Environment (BONE).
- 9.9.6 BONE utilises Moodle software and is a web-based learning environment that can be accessed from anywhere in the world, providing important resources for the UCO's student body.
- 9.9.7 The UCO's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy guides the development and enhancement of BONE.
- 9.9.8 Tutors can upload electronic learning content in a range of file types, as well as utilising other teaching and learning aids, including online quizzes and discussion forums.
- 9.9.9 The UCO ensures that its tutors are supported through its IT and audio-visual departments.

9.10 THE STUDENTS' UNION

- 9.10.5 The UCO believes that a strong, healthy, and vibrant Students' Union is vital to enhancing the student experience. The UCO has had a Students' Union for many years, and it works to support students, promoting the student voice within the UCO and organising social events.
- 9.10.6 The Students' Union Officers and Student Representatives are involved in the UCO's business, as defined in the Students' Union Constitution⁵.
- 9.10.7 The Students' Union also plays an important role in the development and review of key UCO documentation, such as the Student Charter⁶.

³ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

⁴ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

⁵ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

⁶ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/life-uco/student-life>

- 9.10.8 The Head of Student Services is the Students' Union nominated point of contact for advice on matters such as appeals and complaints.
- 9.10.9 The Students' Union President is a member of the UCO's Academic Council, co-chairs the Student-Staff Liaison Consultation Groups with the Head of Student Services and is also a member of disciplinary panels and fitness to practice panels as required.

9.11 THE STUDENT VOICE & STUDENT REPRESENTATION

- 9.11.5 By encouraging students to use the Student Voice, staff and the Students' Union hope that students will gain a greater sense of ownership over their experience at the UCO, and that their views will enhance the experience of the entire student body (see AQF Section 10: Student Voice for more information).
- 9.11.6 Student Representatives are elected from each cohort on an annual basis. They support their fellow students by voicing the views and suggestions of the student body to UCO management, staff and faculty. In addition, they can assist individual students by signposting them to relevant services and staff. The Head of Student Services provides them with training and on-going support in their role.
- 9.11.7 More information about Student Representation can be found in AQF Section 10 (The Student Voice).

9.12 STUDENT APPEALS, COMPLAINTS & DISCIPLINE

- 9.12.5 The UCO aims to deal openly, fairly and effectively with student appeals, complaints and disciplinary matters, and to offer appropriate support and remedy.
- 9.12.6 A range of formal appeals, complaints and disciplinary procedures are established at the UCO, which are published to students through the UCO's website⁷, and which are introduced during induction sessions each year.
- 9.12.7 The UCO encourages such matters to be addressed informally and discretely, to resolve any issue expediently and to the benefit of all parties where possible.
- 9.12.8 Both the Students' Union and the Head of Student Services can provide advice on submitting appeals and complaints. In all cases students are strongly encouraged to seek impartial advice concerning their complaint.
- 9.12.9 More information can be found within each of these procedures⁸, which are as follows:
- a) Academic Appeals Policy
 - b) Academic Discipline Policy
 - c) Dignity at the UCO Policy
 - d) Code of Conduct Policy & Disciplinary Procedure for Students
 - e) Complaints Policy & Procedure for Students
 - f) Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy
 - g) Fitness to Practice Policy

⁷ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

⁸ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

9.13 CAREERS ADVICE

9.13.5 The UCO acknowledges that the academic programmes it provides are a key stage in students' lives as they progress along their chosen career paths.

9.13.6 Students who choose to withdraw from the course attend an Exit Interview with the relevant Course Leader or the Student Support Officer, who provides impartial advice and are able to refer to external agencies.

a) PRE-REGISTRATION STUDENTS

9.13.7 Students studying on the UCO's pre-registration courses are studying to become qualified and practising health care professionals. The standards of practice of the relevant professional, statutory, and regulatory body are embedded within each of these courses to ensure that they adequately prepare students for their chosen career.

9.13.8 Pre-Registration Course Information Forms (CIFs) include a section on career/further study opportunities, and students are advised to read their CIF to be aware of future opportunities as outlined on these forms.

b) POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

9.13.9 Students studying on the UCO's postgraduate courses are primarily developing their careers as effective practitioners, educators, and researchers.

9.13.10 These courses are designed to enable students to immediately integrate new knowledge and skills into professional practice, and to develop specialist interests.

9.13.11 Postgraduate Course Information Forms (CIFs) include a section on career/further study opportunities, and students are advised to read their CIF to be aware of future opportunities as outlined on these forms.

AQF09: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
N/A	N/A



Academic Quality Framework

Section 10: Student Voice 2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 10: The Student Voice

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to all students. It is also relevant to all staff.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Student Experience Officer	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Student Experience Officer	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Student Experience Officer	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update staff role titles and email system.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update staff role titles, weblinks, & footnotes.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

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V6.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect new committee structure, update weblinks & inclusion of student questionnaires as section documents.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect current practice and section appendices.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V8.0	July 2022 Academic Council	Major Amendments to reflect current practice including changes to reflect Student Evaluation Questionnaire process.	Head of Student Services	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

Academic Quality Framework**Section 10: The Student Voice**

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10.1 Introduction to “The Student Voice”

- 10.1.1 All students are encouraged to have input into improving quality and standards at the UCO through giving their views and feedback, known as using “The Student Voice”.
- 10.1.2 The UCO considers students as partners in monitoring and improving the student experience and encourages them to participate and engage in quality assurance processes, in line with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education regarding Student Engagement¹.
- 10.1.3 The main purposes of promoting student engagement at the UCO and encouraging students to use the Student Voice, are to:
- a) Enhance the student experience.
 - b) Contribute to monitor and review of quality and standards.
 - c) Ensure the effectiveness of course design and delivery.
 - d) Identify good practice.
 - e) Identify the need for change.
- 10.1.4 Academic Council is responsible for agreeing and monitoring effective Student Voice mechanisms which are appropriate for students and the institution.
- 10.1.5 The range of informal and formal routes for students to make their views known and to contribute to decision-making at the UCO include an open-door policy, student representation, evaluation questionnaires, focus group and complaints and appeals procedures.
- 10.1.6 Systems of student engagement are considered as part of course and institutional approval and review processes undertaken by external approval bodies (see AQF Section 4: Course & Unit Approval and Modifications and Section 6: Periodic Review).
- 10.1.7 Responses to issues arising from student feedback are considered on an ongoing basis and as part of the UCO's Annual Monitoring and Reporting processes (see AQF Section 5: Annual Monitoring & Reporting).

10.2 KEEPING STUDENTS INFORMED

- 10.2.1 Students are informed about the ways in which they may engage with Quality Assurance and Enhancement processes at the UCO through the UCO Student Portal and during annual induction sessions.
- 10.2.2 During induction sessions, students are also informed about how the UCO uses their feedback and what enhancements have been made directly in response to their comments and suggestions. These are also communicated to students through the UCO Student Portal.
- 10.2.3 Throughout the academic year students are kept informed of Quality Assurance and Enhancement updates that may directly affect the Student Experience via Student Representatives, poster campaigns and newsletter items, and the UCO Student Portal.

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/student-engagement>

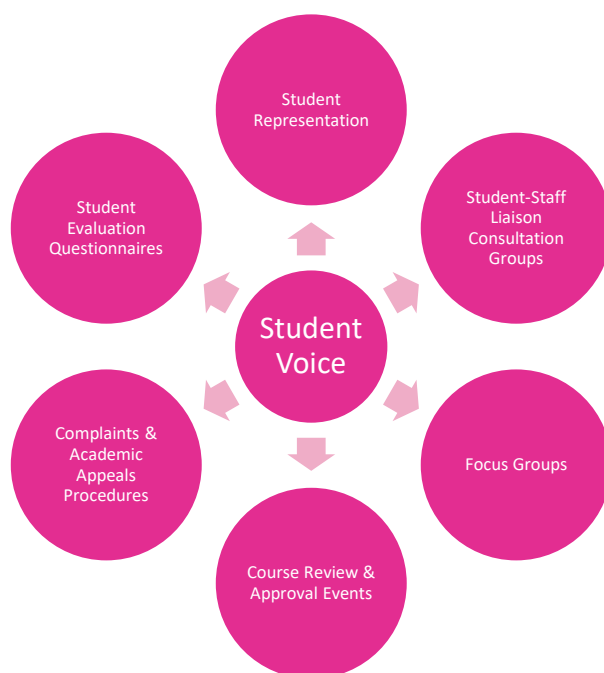
10.3 STUDENT VOICE MECHANISMS

10.3.1 The UCO has in place a variety of formal and informal Student Voice Mechanisms through which students may provide the UCO with feedback on their learning, institutional and overall student experience. These are designed to be effective and appropriate for all students at the UCO and are provided in [Figure 1](#) below.

10.3.2 Student Voice Mechanisms are reviewed and reported on annually to ensure that they remain effective as part of the UCO's Annual Monitoring and Reporting processes outlined in AQF Section 5.

10.3.3 The UCO's Student Voice Mechanisms are outlined in more detail in the sections below.

FIGURE 1: STUDENT VOICE MECHANISMS



10.4 STUDENT REPRESENTATION

10.4.1 Student representation provides the opportunity for students to:

- Act as a channel of communication between the student body and staff.
- Become active UCO committee members and thereby influence UCO policy and decision-making.
- Enhance the UCO's provision and services by gathering and reporting the views of the student body.

a) STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ROLES

10.4.2 There are two types of Student Representative role:

- The Course / Year Group Student Representative who represents the views of the course / year group to which the student belongs.
- The Committee Student Representative who represents the wider student body's views as a full member of a particular committee.

10.4.3 The above Student Representative roles may be shared so that students are more easily able to participate at committees across the UCO. In some instances, a student may hold a committee role due

to a particular interest or experience in the committee's business but not stand as a Student Representative for their course or year group.

b) STUDENT AND STAFF LIAISON CONSULTATION GROUPS

10.4.4 All Course / Year Group Student Representatives are members of the Student and Staff Liaison Consultation Group (SSLCG) to discuss and represent the views of their course and / or year group regarding institutional matters.

10.4.5 An indicative agenda for the SSLCG is as follows; additional items are added as necessary:

- a) Minutes of the last meeting.
- b) Matters arising from the last meeting.
- c) Comments, Compliments & Concerns (3Cs) raised by student representatives.
- d) Institutional matters for consultation by the UCO.

10.4.6 The Students' Union President is invited to co-chair meetings of the SSLCG.

10.4.7 Two SSLCGs are in operation at the UCO, one for full-time students (the meetings of which take place during the week) and one for part-time students (the meetings of which take place on part-time course weekends).

c) COMMITTEES WITH STUDENT REPRESENTATION

10.4.8 UCO committees that include a Student Representative as part of their membership to represent the wider student body are listed in [Table 10.1](#) which also outlines the role function of the Student Representative.

10.4.9 Terms of Reference for all committees are available on the [UCO Portal](#).

10.4.10 The UCO's Committee Handbook (available on the UCO Portal) also provides guidance for committee members and Chairs of committees which involve student members to support Student Representative engagement.

TABLE 10.1: STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP ROLES

Committee	Summary of committee functions	Student representative roles normally available	Student representative role function	Meeting frequency and committee reporting line
Board of Directors (BoD)	Sets the vision and strategy of the UCO. It governs the function of the UCO by overseeing its work and managing risk.	Two student members.	Contribute to BoD's work with views from the UCO's whole student body.	4 times per year plus the Annual General Meeting
Academic Council	Main academic decision-making body	1 representative from full time courses. 1 representative from part time courses. NB usually these representatives would be students who are familiar with the UCO and therefore at least in their second year	Contribute to Academic Council's decision-making with views from the UCO's whole student body.	4 times per year (Reports to Board of Directors)

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		at the UCO (where this applies).		
Research & Scholarship Strategy Committee	Leads research and scholarship strategy and initiatives	1 Student studying for a research-based award.	Contribute with views from the UCO's research degree students.	4 times per year (Reports to Academic Council)
Widening Participation Sub-Committee	Develops strategy for admissions and widening participation	1 representative from all courses at the UCO.	Contribute with views from the UCO's whole student body.	1 per term (Reports to the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee)
Student-Staff Liaison & Consultation Groups	Consultation forum for institutional matters raised by students and staff.	1-2 representatives per course and year group.	Bring forward matters for consultation with staff from the course/year group and respond to matters for consultation from staff.	1 weekday meeting per term and 1 weekend meeting per term (Attendance at either weekday or weekend is required, not both) (Reports to Course Teams)
Course Teams	Manages the day-to-day operation of a course	1 representative per course. NB usually these representatives would be a Level 6 or 7 student who are familiar with the UCO.	Contribute to the Course Team's work with views from the course/year group and bring forward course-specific matters from students to be discussed. Student representatives do not attend / participate during matters of confidential student business.	Monthly (this may involve electronic discussions rather than formal meetings) (Report to the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee)

d) ARRANGEMENTS FOR ELECTING & SUPPORTING STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

10.4.11 Students are provided with information about the UCO's Student Representative process and roles annually, normally during the Autumn Term.

10.4.12 Each year group will be asked for nominations for Course / Year Group and Committee Student Representatives and a vote taken by student peers, if necessary.

10.4.13 UCO's Head of Student Services is responsible for organising the nominations and election process, with support from the Students' Union.

10.4.14 New Student Representatives will typically be appointed to commence their term in the January of each academic year, enabling awareness-raising of student representation and Students' Union roles to take place in the autumn term. Student Representatives normally serve for a one-year term from January to December.

10.4.15 All Student Representatives are provided with training and ongoing support by the Students' Union and Head of Student Services. Guidance is also provided in the Student Representatives' Handbook (AQF10-01).

e) ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPOINTING & SUPPORTING STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS

10.4.16 When vacancies for new Student Board Members arise, they are appointed following a successful application process at the UCO's Annual General Meeting.

10.4.17 Student Board Members normally serve for a term of up to 3 years.

10.4.18 Student Board Members are provided with specific training which is facilitated by the Clerk to the Board.

10.4.19 The roles of both Student Representatives and Student Board Members are underpinned by job descriptions, which specify roles and responsibilities.

10.4.20 Induction and training sessions for both roles and a staff point of contact to provides ongoing guidance.

10.5 FOCUS GROUPS

10.5.1 Student may be asked to participate in Focus Groups to gain more in-depth student feedback about particular areas, for example on themes identified in questionnaire responses.

10.6 COURSE/UNIT REVIEWS AND APPROVAL EVENTS

10.6.1 Student Representatives and the wider student body are invited to contribute to course/unit reviews and approval events, including roles as panel members and as attendees.

10.7 COMPLAINTS & ACADEMIC APPEALS

10.7.1 The UCO publishes detailed information to students regarding the procedures to follow in complaints (through the Student Complaints Policy and Procedures²) and academic appeal matters (through the Academic Appeals Policy³).

10.7.2 The UCO's complaints and appeals policies are designed to deal students' specific concerns that cannot be resolved through the other Student Voice Mechanisms that have been implemented at the UCO as part of ongoing engagement with students to collect their individual and collective feedback about academic standards, quality of learning opportunities and their student experience.

10.7.3 The way in which students may make a complaint or academic appeal is contained within the above policies.

10.7.4 In both cases students are provided with impartial advice and support by the Head of Student Services and Students' Union. Mediation is also offered where appropriate.

10.8 STUDENT EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES

a) Student Pulse Surveys

10.8.1 UCO generated student pulse surveys (AQF10-02) are normally administered to all students on an annual basis by the Quality Team to gather formal anonymous student feedback that is used to inform annual monitoring reports, periodic reviews, new course development and modifications to existing courses and units.

10.8.2 Pulse Surveys are disseminated to students at different points throughout the year to gather feedback on different aspects of the student experience enabling the UCO to respond to matters of concern in a timely way.

² <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

³ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- 10.8.3 Results of Pulse Surveys are collated and disseminated to relevant staff members, including Course Leaders, Unit Leaders and Senior Managers by the Quality Team, identifying the extent of student satisfaction using the traffic light system provided in [Table 10.1](#).
- 10.8.4 Course and Unit Leaders in liaison with the Head of Student Services are responsible for disseminating results and response to feedback arising from Pulse Surveys to students and for using the feedback to inform annual reports, periodic reviews and course developments and modifications.

b) Service Area Questionnaires

- 10.8.5 Senior Managers may also use student evaluation questionnaires to survey students about their services independently to gather feedback on how students view their service, to consider enhancements and monitor student satisfaction in their area.

c) Subject Specific Evaluation Questionnaires

- 10.8.6 Subject teaching staff can choose to gather and use student feedback in ways that are tailored to them and their area.
- 10.8.7 Tutors are provided with guidance, including sample questions, which they can draw from and suggestions on methods to increase response rates using the Subject Survey Guidance & Example Survey (AQF10-03).
- 10.8.8 It is not compulsory for subject tutors to gather subject feedback from students, but the process and outcomes can be used to inform course and unit modifications and form part of an individual's Professional Development Review (PDR).
- 10.8.9 Tutors are advised to inform colleagues of significant matters arising from student feedback or those which are relevant to other subjects and are encouraged to close the loop to describe the main points of action that arise from subject specific survey/s for the current and/or new cohort of students.

d) Practice Educator Evaluation Questionnaires

- 10.8.10 In the clinical centre, student group feedback on Practice Educators is undertaken. This involves students providing group-moderated feedback on individual Practice Educators. Themes from group feedback and any related actions are normally summarised by the Head of Clinic every six months.

e) The National Student Survey

- 10.8.11 All final year undergraduate students are invited to complete the National Student Survey (NSS) administered by Ipsos MORI, an independent market research company.
- 10.8.12 The NSS is intended to give final year students an opportunity to report back on their student experience.
- 10.8.13 NSS results are published on the Discover Uni website⁴, the official website for comparing UK higher education course data that helps prospective students to choose the right course and university for them.
- 10.8.14 NSS results are also carefully analysed and reviewed and an NSS Annual Report is produced by the relevant Course Leaders. This includes an action plan in response to NSS feedback.
- 10.8.15 The NSS Annual Report is agreed by the Academic Council and considered by the Senior Management Team and Board of Directors as appropriate. It is also considered and monitored by the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee and Student-Staff Liaison and Consultation Groups.

⁴ <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>

10.8.16 The action plan undergoes a mid-point review midway through the year to review progress.

10.8.17 NSS results and responses are included in student induction presentations and disseminated throughout the UCO via the UCO Student Portal, Vice-Chancellor's briefings, and relevant UCO committees.

f) Responding to Student Evaluation Questionnaire Feedback

10.8.18 Results of and responses to student feedback received and action planning is informed by pre-set thresholds for levels of satisfaction and categorising student evaluation questionnaire results as shown in [Table 10.2](#).

Table 10.2: Pre-Set Thresholds (Traffic Light System) For Categorising UCO Student Evaluation Questionnaires

Red	50% or More Dissatisfaction / Mean Rating = 0.00 - 2.50 Response required including an explanation of why this area has been raised as an issue (as appropriate). Action plan to be developed and monitored to address the issue.
Amber	Neutral + Satisfaction > 50% / Mean Rating = 2.51 - 3.50 Recommended to be reflected upon in departmental / annual / unit reports and discussed with colleagues as an area to enhance.
Green	60% or More Satisfaction / Mean Rating = 3.51 - 5.00 (80% or More Satisfaction = Recognition of Very High Performance) Indicative of Good Practice. Action plan for disseminating the Good Practice to other areas to be developed (as appropriate).

10.8.19 The Quality Team produces summary reports of student evaluation questionnaire results which they administer identifying levels of student satisfaction in line with Table 10.2. These are forwarded to relevant staff and Course Teams and considered by relevant committees for action planning and monitoring.

10.8.20 UCO student evaluation questionnaires results are normally summarised and collated into a Student Survey Annual Report by the Quality Team to review practice and results across the UCO and to compare results with those of previous years where these are available.

10.8.21 Action plans made in response to student evaluation questionnaires are considered, agreed and monitored by the Student-Staff Liaison Consultation Groups, Course Teams the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee, Academic Council and the Senior Management Team as appropriate Action plans normally undergo a mid-point review midway through the year to review progress.

AQF10: Appendices

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
AQF10-01	Student Representatives' Handbook
AQF10-02	Student Pulse Surveys
AQF10-03	Subject Survey Guidance & Example Survey



Academic Quality Framework

Section 11: External Examining

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 11: External Examining

This Section should be of particular interest to Course Leaders and External Examiners, and all those involved in the assessment and examination of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality Academic Registrar	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Head of Quality Academic Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Deputy Vice-Chancellor) Head of Quality Academic Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update staff role titles and weblinks.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update staff role titles, weblinks and footnotes.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect new committee structure.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update staff roles and responsibilities, correct committee titles, remove duplicated information, reflect current practice regarding EE training and update Appendices.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

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V8.0	<p>June 2022 PRAG Chair TQSC</p> <p>Jul 2022 Academic Council (of AQF11-03)</p>	<p>Administrative amendments to update staff role titles and responsibilities, and to reflect current practice regarding training of External Examiners, and reporting requirements and timelines.</p> <p>Major Amendment to AQF11-03 EE Annual Report Form to remove duplication, clarify terminology and addition of learning resource section.</p>	Head of Quality & Partnerships	<p>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</p>	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
<p>If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk</p>					

Academic Quality Framework

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11.1 INTRODUCTION

- 11.1.1 External examining and moderation play a fundamental role in assuring academic standards by providing an external perspective on student performance and on the conduct of the assessment process at the University College of Osteopathy (UCO).
- 11.1.2 The UCO appoints External Examiners for all taught courses through which credit is achieved and qualifications that lead to an award of the UCO.
- 11.1.3 External Examiners provide one of the principal means by which the UCO ensures it maintains nationally comparable standards regarding assessment processes and practices within autonomous higher education institutions.
- 11.1.4 External Examiners may be appointed to report on assessment processes, academic standards and quality at course or unit level, or both.
- 11.1.5 The main purposes of external examining are:
- a) To verify that academic standards are appropriate for the award and its component parts by reference to published national subject benchmarks, the QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ)¹, institutional programme specifications and other relevant information.
 - b) To help institutions to assure and maintain academic standards.
 - c) To help institutions to ensure that the assessment process measures student achievement appropriately against the intended learning outcomes of the course.
 - d) To verify that institutions' assessment processes are sound, fairly operated and in line with their policies and regulations.
- 11.1.6 The following procedures have been developed to align with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Expectations and Practices regarding Assessment² and External Expertise³.

11.2 PRINCIPLES OF EXTERNAL EXAMINING

- 11.2.1 The principles of External Examining of the UCO's awards include that:
- a) No taught degree or other academic distinction of the UCO shall be awarded without the participation in the examining process of at least one External Examiner who shall be a full member of the relevant Board of Examiners.
 - b) External Examiners are responsible to the UCO's Vice- Chancellor.
 - c) The correspondent between the UCO and an External Examiner on contractual matters will be the UCO's Head of Quality & Partnerships.
 - d) The correspondence between the UCO and an External Examiner on operational matters will be the UCO's Registrar.
 - e) The number of External Examiners for any particular course shall be appropriate to cover the full range of studies / units.
 - f) Normally a maximum of 12 units of thirty credits each or equivalent may be examined throughout the External Examiners' term of office.

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>

² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment>

³ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/external-expertise>

11.3 THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 11.3.1 External Examiners are members of, and attend, Boards of Examiners and are expected to:
- a) Ensure that the standards of the UCO's awards are consistent with those elsewhere in the sector, and that the UCO is examining the qualities typically found in students across the sector at any specific stage of their course.
 - b) Moderate the standard of work carried out by students to consistent standards to ensure that grades awarded are similar to those that would apply in other comparable higher education institutions and are in line with current best practice in the discipline concerned.
 - c) Witness (by attendance at Boards of Examiners) the fair and consistent application of the UCO's regulations for dealing with students' assessments, progression from one stage to another and the determination of students' awards.
 - d) Endorse the outcomes of the assessments they have been appointed to scrutinise.
 - e) Comment and give advice on course design, pedagogy, and assessment processes.
 - f) Produce a written report which will include a commentary and judgements on the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment process and the standards of student attainment.
- 11.3.2 Depending on the requirements of a particular subject or course, External Examiners may be called upon to undertake the observation of clinical practice, practical examinations, or viva voce examinations.
- 11.3.3 External Examiners have the right to comment on any matter at the Board of Examiners, although the ultimate responsibility for making recommendations as to the award of degrees rests with the relevant Board of Examiners as a whole.
- 11.3.4 The Board of Examiners is not ultimately required to defer to the judgement of External Examiners in taking decisions but, where the Board of Examiners chooses to disregard the views of an External Examiner, the reasons for the Board's decision shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and reported to the Vice-Chancellor.

11.4 SELECTION & APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

a) CRITERIA FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINER APPOINTMENT – PERSON SPECIFICATION

- 11.4.1 External Examiners from outside the higher education system, for example from industry or other professions, may be appointed where appropriate; however, each course should normally have at least one External Examiner with experience in a higher education institution that is familiar with the standards required for comparable courses.
- 11.4.2 External Examiners shall be appointed according to the following criteria:
- a) Their knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality, including their range and scope of experience and understanding of quality and standards in other higher education institutions.
 - b) Their competence and experience in the fields covered by the course of study, or parts thereof, including their experience of teaching and examining students following courses which lead to the level of award for which they are being considered as External Examiners.
 - c) Their relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience as

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appropriate; experience and qualifications which should be at least at the same level as the course they are examining, and preferably above that level.

- d) Their competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures.
- e) Their sufficient standing, credibility, and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers, i.e., their recognition within the relevant discipline and / or profession as appropriate.
- f) Their familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed.
- g) Their fluency in English, and where courses are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that External Examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements).
- h) Their meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory, or regulatory bodies.
- i) Their awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula.
- j) Their competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.
- k) Their present post and their expertise in the relevant subject area, including current evidence of scholarship / research / consultancy related to the awards to be externally examined.
- l) Their independence from the UCO and relevant Course Teams.

b) CRITERIA FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINER APPOINTMENT – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

11.4.3 External Examiners **shall not** be appointed as an External Examiner if they:

- a) Are or have been within the last five years a member of staff, a governor, an External Examiner or a student of the UCO or one of its partners, delivery organisations or support providers.
- b) Are or have been within the last five years been closely associated with any member of the Course Team.
- c) Have a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the course of study.
- d) Are required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the course of study.
- e) Are, or knows they will be, in a position to significantly influence the future of students on the course of study, i.e., knows of a conflict of interest.
- f) Are significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the course(s) or units in question.
- g) Are a former staff member or a student of the UCO unless a period of five years has elapsed, and all students taught by or with the proposed External Examiner have completed their course(s).
- h) Are involved in a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate courses at another higher education provider.
- i) Are from the same department and institution as the retiring External Examiner.

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- j) Are from the same department or higher education provider as an existing External Examiner.
- k) Are from a department in an institution where a member of the UCO is serving as an External Examiner.
- l) Are from an institution which has been the source of External Examiners for the same or a closely related programme in the recent past (normally five years).
- m) Are from the same place of employment as an existing External Examiner who is already on the relevant Board of Examiners.

11.4.4 In addition, an External Examiner **should not** normally be appointed if they:

- a) Already hold two other external examiner appointments for taught courses / units at any point in time.
- b) Concurrently act as a consultant to the relevant Course Team on course design, or act as members of a panel established to review the course they examine.
- c) Are personally associated with the sponsorship of students on the course.
- d) Are in a position to influence significantly the future employment of students on the course.
- e) Are likely to be involved with placements of students on the course or with their training in the External Examiner's organisation.

c) PROCESS FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINER APPOINTMENT

11.4.5 External Examiner appointments are approved under arrangements determined by the Academic Council.

11.4.6 The Academic Council is responsible for ensuring that:

- a) Criteria for the identification, nomination and appointment of candidates are understood and accessible to all staff initiating appointments.
- b) Nominations are assessed effectively and rigorously.
- c) Any potential intellectual property difficulties, such as might arise from the need for commercial confidentiality, are resolved prior to appointment.

11.4.7 The Course Leader in consultation with Unit Leaders (or their equivalents) identifies and contacts a suitable candidate to be appointed as an External Examiner who, after agreeing to the nomination, provides the Course Leader with their curriculum vitae (CV).

11.4.8 The Course Leader in consultation with Unit Leaders (or their equivalents) as appropriate completes an External Examiner Nomination Form (AQF11-01) supplying the prospective External Examiner's details of teaching, research and examination experience, present and former appointments, and associations (if any) with the UCO or its staff and details of the course and / or units for which the nominated External Examiner will be responsible.

11.4.9 In cases where it is proposed that the appointment of an existing External Examiner be extended or their duties reallocated, the Course Leader in consultation with Unit Leaders as appropriate completes an External Examiner Extension of Duties Form (AQF11-02).

11.4.10 External Examiner Nomination Forms and CVs are considered by the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC) in line with the criteria for External Examiner Appointment listed above and then recommends the nominations to the Academic Council for final approval.

11.4.11 It is the responsibility of the TQSC and Academic Council to ensure that in cases where proposed External Examiners do not fully meet the Criteria for External Examiner Appointment outlined above:

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- a) That these cases are carefully considered and approved and that arrangements for providing oversight of the provision are robust.
 - b) That where there is a legitimate case for making an appointment that does not fulfil all the criteria, appropriate training is provided and / or that they are not the sole examiner for the award and are part of an External Examiner Team where their expertise is complemented by that of others who do satisfy the criteria.
- 11.4.12 Exceptions to appointing an External Examiner who does not fulfil all the appointment criteria may include:
- a) Nominations drawn from business, industry or the professions who may possess considerable professional experience but not the formal qualifications anticipated, the academic background, or sufficient experience of assessment.
 - b) Nominations required for disciplines which are very small and specialist where the pool of potential external examiners is therefore restricted.
- 11.4.13 Once approved by the Academic Council the External Examiner candidate shall be contacted by the Quality Team to confirm the appointment and, in liaison with the HR Department, arrange for a formal contract of services to be signed stating the agreed fee which will be paid on completion of the necessary duties, including timely submission to the UCO's Vice-Chancellor of a detailed External Examiner Annual Report (AQF11-03).
- 11.4.14 A response to each External Examiner Annual Report will be provided to the External Examiner acknowledging their recommendations and comments. Responses are produced by the relevant Course Leader and provided using the External Examiner Annual Report Response Form (AQF11-04).
- 11.4.15 A record of all External Examiner appointments is held by the UCO's Quality Team.
- 11.4.16 The UCO's Human Resources Department also retains a record of all UCO academic staff that hold External Examiner appointments at other institutions.
- 11.4.17 Newly appointed External Examiners will receive relevant briefing material and be invited to participate in an External Examiner's Induction / Training Session to support them in their role by the Head of Quality & Partnerships and the relevant Course Leader.

11.5 TERM OF OFFICE / TENURE OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 11.5.1 External Examiner appointments are normally of four years' duration but may exceptionally be extended subject to formal approval for a further period of one year to ensure continuity if there is a strong rationale for extension.
- 11.5.2 Normally, External Examiner appointments will run from the beginning of an academic session of the course to which they are contracted to examine, and the normal term of office will be one which allows the External Examiner to be involved in the assessment of four successive cohorts of students (i.e., 4 years).
- 11.5.3 New External Examiners should take up their appointments on or before the retirement of their predecessors.
- 11.5.4 External Examiners should remain available after the last assessments with which they are to be associated in case of any subsequent reviews of decisions.
- 11.5.5 An external examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.

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- 11.5.6 External examiners normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught courses / units at any point in time.
- 11.5.7 External Examiner contracts will normally be renewed on an annual basis.

11.6 TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

- 11.6.1 An External Examiner's appointment may be terminated by either party (the External Examiner or the UCO), normally subject to 3 months' notice, at any time.
- 11.6.2 An External Examiner whose performance or conduct is not satisfactory may be warned or advised (in the first instance) of remedial action that should be taken, or have their contract terminated prematurely.
- 11.6.3 The decision to terminate the contract may be based on one or more of several factors, including:
- a) Changes to the curriculum/deletion of courses.
 - b) Failure to carry out duties in accordance with the contract and annual agreement, including failure to attend Boards of Examiner meetings where attendance is required, failure to submit reports, provision of incomplete reports, and failure to communicate effectively with the UCO.
 - c) Conflict of interest through changed circumstances.
 - d) Evidence that the information contained in the External Examiner's nomination form was inaccurate.
 - e) Evidence that the External Examiners' judgement / reporting is insufficiently thorough, critical, or objective.
- 11.6.4 Should a conflict of interest arise during an External Examiner's term of office, External Examiners should notify the UCO immediately and resign from the role by writing to the Vice-Chancellor.
- 11.6.5 Should the grounds for premature termination of the contract be due to the alleged non-fulfilment of duties on the part of the External Examiner, the UCO's Head of Quality & Partnerships (or other appropriate senior manager) shall carry out an investigation to ensure that any decision to terminate the contract is based on sound evidence.
- 11.6.6 The outcome of the investigation shall be considered by the Vice-Chancellor who will make the final decision regarding the termination of the contract.
- 11.6.7 Should either party wish to terminate an External Examiners contract, they shall do so in writing, normally giving three months' notice. External Examiners should address their letter informing the UCO of their intent to terminate their contract to the Vice-Chancellor of the UCO, outlining the reason/s why.

11.7 BRIEFING & TRAINING OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 11.7.1 The UCO's Head of Quality & Partnerships will ensure that once appointed, each External Examiner is provided with the following relevant to the course and / or units for which the External Examiner is contracted to examine.
- a) A copy of / link to the UCO's Academic Quality Framework (which includes the UCO's Academic Regulations).
 - b) Previous External Examiner reports (normally for the last 3 years) including a copy of the report made by the retiring External Examiner at the end of their term of office.

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- c) The External Examiner's Handbook (AQF11-05).
 - d) Relevant Course and Unit Information Forms.
 - e) Relevant Course Handbooks.
 - f) Documentation relating to specific professional issues (such as fitness to practise) or subject disciplines, including reference to any guidance or advice produced by sector bodies or subject communities.
 - g) Board of Examiners Terms of Reference.
 - h) The assessment schedule for the course (including dates when scripts will be available for moderation), related grading schemes, model answers etc. as appropriate.
 - i) Dates of meetings of the Board(s) of Examiners.
 - j) The last Course Annual Monitoring Report and Course Periodic Review Report as appropriate.
 - k) Professional body requirements as appropriate.
 - l) External Examiner Induction and Training Materials.
 - m) Assessment tasks.
- 11.7.2 All new External Examiners are invited to an induction / training session which is normally provided by the Head of Quality & Partnerships and the relevant Course and / or Unit Leader as soon as possible after appointment to introduce them to the UCO (and partner institution), the External Examiner role and the course they are contracted to examine. The training session may be held virtually or in person.
- 11.7.3 Where a new External Examiner has no previous experience of the role, they will, where practicable, be assigned to an External Examiner Team and allocated a mentor. The mentor will typically be an experienced External Examiner from the same team to provide support and guidance. Where it is not practicable to assign the new External Examiner to an External Examiner Team, for example due to the size or nature of the provision, they will normally be allocated a mentor from another field of study.
- 11.7.4 The Head of Quality & Partnerships shall act as a point of contact for all External Examiners during their term of office to answer questions and provide appropriate documentation.

11.8 PARTICIPATION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS IN ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

- 11.8.1 External Examiners are normally expected to undertake the following duties:
- a) To attend an External Examiner's Induction / Training Session.
 - b) To participate in the UCO's Scrutiny Process.
 - c) To confirm the academic standards of a final award, i.e., at final award level (normally Level 6 and Level 7), and in so doing endorse the level and standards of its component parts as appropriate to the structure of that award.
 - d) To be given the opportunity to comment on the approved assessment methods, procedures and regulations which directly affect students on the course / unit.
 - e) To consider a sample of graded scripts from each unit for which the External Examiner is contracted to examine to confirm that the scripts have been graded in accordance with the criteria stated, to the proper standard, fairly and accurately. The sample will not normally include work at Level 4 and Level 5 but may be included for the purposes of good practice or where this is the awarding level. Samples will normally comprise scripts based on borderlines,

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fails and a selection of grades comprising an A, B, C and D (or the % equivalents of these grades).

- f) To moderate the grades awarded by internal examiners and to adjust the overall range of grades, if warranted, but not to alter individual grades.
- g) Exceptionally, to conduct a viva voce examination of any student, where this is judged necessary.
- h) To ensure that the assessments are conducted in accordance with UCO and course regulations.
- i) To attend all final meeting(s) of the Board of Examiners at which decisions on progression and awards are made and to ensure that the decisions accord with the UCO's regulations and normal practice in higher education.
- j) To ensure that decisions regarding the award of grades / marks / awards are collectively made by relevant Boards of Examiners only.
- k) To participate in reviews of decisions about individual students' awards taken during their period of office.
- l) To report to the UCO on the effectiveness of the assessments and any lessons to be drawn from them.
- m) To report in writing immediately to the Vice-Chancellor of the UCO on any matters of serious concern arising from the assessments which put at risk the standard of the award.
- n) To submit an annual report, normally by the 31st July each year for undergraduate courses and by the 30th September for postgraduate courses (for courses that do not operate on an annual basis or on a normal academic year these dates may be modified to accommodate the nature of the provision).
- o) To submit a written confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, separate from the annual report, where it is necessary, for example to name a member of staff.
- p) Where an external examiner has a serious concern relating to systemic failings with the academic standards of a programme or programmes and has exhausted all published applicable internal procedures, including the submission of a confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor,⁴ and/or inform the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

11.9 RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS REGARDING MARKS AWARDED

- 11.9.1 If an External Examiner disagrees with the marks awarded by internal markers within a mark sample, they may request that the UCO undertakes an additional level of moderation or re-marking. However, this must apply to all students who have completed the assessment in question, not just those within the work sample.
- 11.9.2 The UCO does not allow External Examiners to change the mark of an individual student's work from the sample.
- 11.9.3 Disagreements between internal markers are expected to have been resolved before the marked work is provided to and scrutinised by an External Examiner (e.g., using additional internal markers). However, in exceptional circumstances where a mark has not been agreed internally the views of the external examiner can be considered when agreeing the final mark.
- 11.9.4 Should the UCO decide not to take any action recommended by the External Examiner, the UCO shall inform the External Examiner accordingly.

⁴ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/how-to-make-a-complaint>

11.10 EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTING PROCESS

a) EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORTS

- 11.10.1 External Examiners are required to provide an annual report to the UCO using the UCO's External Examiner Annual Report Form (AQF11-03) which specifies the areas on which the UCO welcomes comments and includes a checklist that External Examiners are required to complete to enable the UCO to determine that they have based their report on sufficient evidence.
- 11.10.2 External Examiners' Annual Reports provide important evidence about the standards prevailing in the UCO and are used by Course Teams as part of the basis for their annual monitoring.
- 11.10.3 At the end of their appointment External Examiners will be required to provide a summative report of the period of the appointment.
- 11.10.4 External Examiner Annual Reports should be submitted to the Quality Team on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor electronically from the preferred email identified in External Examiners' contracts after which payment of the External Examiner's fee will be made.
- 11.10.5 External Examiner Annual Reports will then normally be disseminated by the UCO's Quality Team to the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Head of Quality & Partnerships, and Course and Unit.
- 11.10.6 Course Leaders are required to provide a written response to External Examiners' Annual Reports using the External Examiner Annual Report Response Form (AQF11-04).
- 11.10.7 The deadline for providing External Examiners with a written response to their report is normally the 30th November.
- 11.10.8 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) should review and approve External Examiner responses before they are sent to External Examiners.
- 11.10.9 The Quality Team is responsible for sending approved External Examiner responses to External Examiners.
- 11.10.10 External Examiners' reports and responses are considered at relevant Course Team meetings in the presence of Student Representatives. They are also considered at relevant UCO committees where Student Representatives are present, including the Academic Council. They are also shared with Student Representative to share with their year groups for comment.
- 11.10.11 External Examiners' Annual Reports are also read centrally at the UCO by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) who, in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships, prepares a summary report for the UCO's Academic Council. Any issues requiring attention are identified and appropriate action proposed. Good practice identified by External Examiners is highlighted and disseminated for wider consideration and adoption as appropriate.
- 11.10.12 External Examiner reports and responses to those reports are made available in full to students through the UCO's Virtual Learning Environment (or partner equivalent).
- 11.10.13 External Examiner reports may be amended in consultation with the External Examiner where individuals are identified or in very exceptional cases where the content may cause harm to the UCO or bring it into disrepute.

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- 11.10.14 Should External Examiner's need to report any confidential matter / concern to the UCO, they should do so by providing a separate report / writing directly to the Vice-Chancellor.

b) RESPONDING TO EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS

- 11.10.15 The role of External Examiners is fundamental in assuring academic standards by providing an external perspective on student performance and on the conduct of the assessment process at the UCO in addition to providing comments on and recommendations for developing and enhancing assessment processes.
- 11.10.16 It is the responsibility of the Course Leader in consultation with Unit Leaders to carefully consider reports of External Examiners, to review their comments and recommendations and to formulate appropriate action plans in response.
- 11.10.17 Responses to External Examiner reports are written using the External Examiner Response Form (AQF11-04). These forms record actions to be taken as recommended by the External Examiner and the action planned / taken in response to the recommendations in addition to recording the External Examiners' comments identifying areas of good practice.
- 11.10.18 It is the responsibility of the Course Leader and Unit Leaders to complete the External Examiner Report Response Form, to ensure that responsibility is allocated to each action and to disseminate the areas of good practice for wider consideration and adoption as appropriate.
- 11.10.19 The completed External Examiner Annual Response Form template and formal letter are considered by relevant UCO committees for comment and agreement. These include Course Teams and the Teaching Quality and Standards Committee.
- 11.10.20 The UCO's Academic Council considers a summary report of External Examiners' annual reports and UCO responses.
- 11.10.21 It is the responsibility of Course and Unit Leaders to consider and review relevant External Examiner reports and responses and to incorporate these into Course and Unit Annual Monitoring reports (see AQF Section 5: Annual Monitoring & Reporting) as appropriate, recording areas of good practice and producing an action plan for the next academic year specific to their unit in response to recommendations identified by the External Examiner.
- 11.10.22 Course and Unit Annual Monitoring reports are reviewed by Course Teams in the presence of Student Representatives as part of the UCO's Annual Monitoring and Reporting requirements and processes (see AQF Section 5: Annual Monitoring & Reporting).

c) MONITORING ACTION PLANS GENERATED IN RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORTS

- 11.10.23 It is important to regularly monitor action plans generated by Course Teams in response to External Examiner reports to verify that appropriate action is being taken in a timely manner to assure the enhancement of quality and academic standards relating to assessment processes at the UCO.
- 11.10.24 Course Teams hold mid-point review meetings part way through the academic year to review each unit's and course's Annual Monitoring Report action plan and to ensure that the resources required and deadlines for actions are on track to be reasonably achieved, and also end-point review meetings to review end of year progress. Annual Monitoring

Report action plan are also considered by the Teaching Quality and Standards Committee to oversee progress.

d) PUBLICATION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS & RESPONSES TO STUDENTS

- 11.10.25 External Examiner annual reports and Course Teams' responses to these are normally published in full to students through the UCO's Virtual Learning Environment (or partner equivalent) for their information in addition to a brief overview of External Examining and reference to this section of the Academic Quality Framework.

11.11 THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER TEAM

- 11.11.1 The External Examiner team should complement each other in terms of expertise and experience appropriate to the course assessed.

- 11.11.2 There should also be an appropriate balance between academic and professional practitioners within the External Examining team, which should reflect the range of academic / vocational perspectives required for the course.

- 11.11.3 The phasing of appointments to the team should be structured to ensure continuity.

11.12 SUPPORT FOR NEW EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 11.12.1 In circumstances where an appointee is new to the role of external examining, they must be supported in their role by an experienced External Examiner within the team covering the same broad curriculum or, where this is not practicable, by an experienced External Examiner in another field of study.

- 11.12.2 An induction / training session for all newly appointed External Examiners is arranged by the UCO providing an opportunity to brief new examiners about their role.

- 11.12.3 All External Examiners have access to the UCO's Virtual Learning Environment where they can find resources to assist with their role.

- 11.12.4 External Examiners receive information and any support required from the UCO's Head of Quality & Partnerships and Registrar through the induction process and thereafter for the duration of their tenure.

11.13 PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 11.13.1 If an External Examiner has cause to complain about any matter relating to the contract, payment, or the conduct of UCO employees, the complaint should be addressed to the UCO's Vice-Chancellor in a letter separate from the External Examiner's report.

- 11.13.2 As a general principle, an attempt should be made to resolve the complaint through dialogue before entering a formal phase.

- 11.13.3 The UCO's Head of Quality & Partnerships will normally investigate any formal complaint raised by an External Examiner and report the outcome of the investigation to the Vice-Chancellor.

- 11.13.4 If the Head of Quality & Partnerships cannot resolve the complaint to the External Examiner's satisfaction, then case notes will be sent to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) who will act to resolve the complaint.

11.13.5 If the complaint involves the Head of Quality & Partnerships, it will be investigated by the Registrar and the resolution will be reported to the Vice-Chancellor.

11.14 EXTERNAL EXAMINING RESPONSIBILITIES

a) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER

- 11.14.1 To exercise the right to see all examination scripts and samples of coursework, theses, projects etc.
- 11.14.2 To attend all final Boards of Examiner meetings except in exceptional circumstances.
- 11.14.3 To endorse the outcome of the assessment process by signing the final results lists.
- 11.14.4 To offer comments and advice as appropriate.
- 11.14.5 To submit a written report annually to the Vice-Chancellor using the External Examiner Annual Report Form (AQF11-03).
- 11.14.6 To exercise the right to submit a written confidential report to the Vice-Chancellor, separate from the annual report, where it is necessary, for example to name a member of staff.
- 11.14.7 To refer any direct contact from students to the UCO immediately by contacting the Registrar.

b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UCO'S DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (EDUCATION)

- 11.14.8 To ensure that External Examiner nominations are considered by the Teaching Quality and Standards Committee and approved by the Academic Council.
- 11.14.9 To ensure that the annual External Examiners' induction / training session is provided.
- 11.14.10 To ensure that the decisions of the Academic Council are executed, and the External Examiners are provided with the detail of their duties.
- 11.14.11 To ensure appropriate action is taken in response to comments of the External Examiner(s).
- 11.14.12 To ensure that synoptic summaries of External Examiners' comments is prepared for consideration by the Academic Council (in the presence of student representatives).

c) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COURSE LEADERS

- 11.14.13 To complete and provide the required nomination form for the appointment of a prospective External Examiner for the UCO's Teaching Quality & Standards Committee and Academic Council to consider and approve.
- 11.14.14 To contribute to the organisation of the UCO's External Examiner induction / training session together with the Head of Quality & Partnerships.
- 11.14.15 To provide a written response to the External Examiner's Annual Report using the External Examiner Report Response Form (AQF11-04) in consultation with Unit Leaders.
- 11.14.16 To ensure that External Examiners' Annual Reports are considered by Course Teams (in the presence of Student Representatives).
- 11.14.17 To forward the response to the External Examiner's Annual Report to the Head of Quality & Partnerships.

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- 11.14.18 To review and consider External Examiner Annual Reports with Unit Leaders when completing Unit and Course Annual Monitoring Reports and to ensure that these are considered by all stakeholders prior to their submission.
- 11.14.19 To ensure that Unit and Course Annual Monitoring Reports are considered as part of a mid-point and end-point review by Course Teams to monitor and update progress on action plans resulting from External Examiner recommendations.
- 11.14.20 To ensure that a meeting between students and External Examiners takes place as appropriate and as requested.

e) RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNIT LEADERS

- 11.14.21 To contribute to the response to External Examiner's Annual Reports.
- 11.14.22 To review and consider the External Examiner Annual Reports and responses when completing Unit Annual Monitoring Reports as part of the UCO's Annual Reporting and Monitoring processes and to formulate action plans in response to External Examiner recommendations as appropriate.
- 11.14.23 To provide an update on Unit Annual Monitoring Report action plans at mid-point review Course Team meetings to monitor their progress.

f) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UCO'S REGISTRAR

- 11.14.24 To be the primary contact for External Examiners to enable them to fulfil their duties.
- 11.14.25 To provide the External Examiner with up-to-date information about the course and associated course regulations, together with a schedule of assessments and of the main dates when examiners are expected to consider students' work, draft assessment tasks and copies of all examination papers together with details of assessment criteria.
- 11.14.26 To manage the Scrutiny Process.
- 11.14.27 To send to the External Examiner samples of students' work, graded and annotated by internal examiners as appropriate, together with full results sheets which demonstrate how the sample of scripts relates to the population from which they have been selected.
- 11.14.28 To provide for the Board of Examiners statistical material on the performance of the students under consideration in consultation with Unit Leaders.
- 11.14.29 To provide the External Examiner the internal examiners' agreed results for each student in every unit and the profile of results for each student under consideration.
- 11.14.30 To support the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Head of Quality & Partnerships in discharging their responsibilities.

g) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UCO'S HEAD OF QUALITY & PARTNERSHIPS

- 11.14.31 To produce and maintain External Examiner contracts of appointment.
- 11.14.32 To maintain a register of External Examiners and regularly review this to ensure that External Examiner details and tenures are kept up to date.
- 11.14.33 To be the correspondent between the UCO and an External Examiner on contractual matters.
- 11.14.34 To organise the UCO's External Examiner induction / training session with Course Leaders.

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- 11.14.35 To produce and keep up to date the online External Examiner resources area on the UCO's VLE and to provide access to this to all External Examiners annually.
- 11.14.36 To send a new External Examiner a copy of the report of the retiring External Examiner.
- 11.14.37 To arrange for payment of External Examiner expenses and examining fees.
- 11.14.38 To receive External Examiner Annual Reports on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and forward these to relevant staff for responses.
- 11.14.39 To prepare a synoptic summary of External Examiner Annual Reports for consideration by the Academic Council (in the presence of student representatives).
- 11.14.40 To investigate any formal complaint raised by an External Examiner and report the outcome of the investigation to the Vice-Chancellor.

h) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UCO'S VICE-CHANCELLOR

- 11.14.41 To oversee receipt of External Examiners' Annual Reports.
- 11.14.42 To receive and act upon matters of serious concern raised by External Examiners.

AQF11 APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
AQF11-01	External Examiner Nomination Form
AQF11-02	External Examiner Reallocation & Extension of Duties Form
AQF11-03	External Examiner Annual Report Form
AQF11-04	External Examiner Annual Report Response Form
AQF11-05	External Examiners' Handbook



Academic Quality Framework

Section 12: Boards of Examiners

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 12: Boards of Examiners

This Section should be of particular interest to Course Leaders and External Examiners, and all those involved in the assessment and examination of foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Registrar	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update staff role titles and weblinks.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality Registrar	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update weblinks and footnotes, correct typographical errors and to include reference to the new QAA UK Quality Code for HE to clarify how UCO Exam	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality & Partnerships	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version:	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

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		<i>Board processes align to this. Added "Associated UCO Documents" section for ease of reference.</i>	<i>Registrar</i>	<i>Website</i>	
V6.0	<i>Aug 2020 PRAG Chair</i>	<i>Annual Review Administrative amendment to reflect the UCO's revised committee structure.</i>	<i>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality Registrar</i>	<i>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i>	<i>Annually and on an "as required" basis.</i>
V7.0	<i>Aug 2021 PRAG Chair</i>	<i>Administrative Amendments to correct committee titles and update staff roles.</i>	<i>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality Registrar</i>	<i>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i>	<i>Annually and on an "as required" basis.</i>
V8.0	<i>Jun 2022 PRAG Chair TQSC</i>	<i>Administrative Amendments to reflect partner equivalences relating to Exam Boards and policies.</i>	<i>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Head of Quality Registrar</i>	<i>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i>	<i>Annually and on an "as required" basis.</i>
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
<p>If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk</p>					

Academic Quality Framework**Section 12: Boards of Examiners****Contents**

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12.1 INTRODUCTION TO BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 12.1.1 For every course leading to an award of the University College of Osteopathy (UCO), the Academic Council will appoint a Board of Examiners to make final judgements and decisions on the awarding of academic credit and qualifications awarded by the UCO in line with the Expectations and Practices of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, specifically those regarding assessment¹.
- 12.1.2 Boards of Examiners operate within the Board of Examiners Terms of Reference (or approved partner equivalent) which clearly specify the powers, authority and accountability within its remit.
- 12.1.3 The Board of Examiners is accountable to the UCO's Academic Council; no recommendation for the progression of a student, award of academic credit or conferment of an award of the UCO may be made by anybody other than the appropriate Board of Examiners.

12.2 TYPES OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 12.2.1 The UCO has three types of Boards of Examiners that contribute to decision-making on student progression and awards:
- a) **Course Teams** that review interim (provisional) examination and course work results and approve them for publication.
 - b) **Pre-Boards of Examiners**, a non-decision-making Board that take place in advance of Boards of Examiners meetings and consider Course Team approved student award, progression, and assessment profiles and then make proposals for consideration by the Boards of Examiners in accordance with the UCO's regulations.
 - c) **Boards of Examiners**, the ultimate decision-making Boards that consider the results of assessments at all stages of a course, determine progression and recommend awards, including the classification of awards where appropriate.
- 12.2.2 All three types of Boards of Examiners operate within defined Terms of Reference to ensure that academic decisions are considered and ratified appropriately.

A) COURSE TEAMS

- 12.2.3 Course Teams review interim (provisional) examination and coursework results and approve them for publication.
- 12.2.4 If a particular assessment within any unit shows an anomalous range of grades (which may further lead to irregularity or aberration within the unit grades), the appropriate Course Leader and Unit Leader should consider the reason for the apparent anomaly and what adjustment to those grades might be recommended to the Board of Examiners.
- 12.2.5 Any proposed adjustments should then be discussed with the appropriate External Examiner and confirmed at the next Board of Examiners meeting.
- 12.2.6 Course Teams consider:
- a) Unit statistics which normally include the mean and standard deviation of the marks in each assessment.
 - b) The impact of any complaint that may impact negatively on a student's performance; where a complaint procedure is completed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) prior to a Board

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment>

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of Examiners, and is claimed to have impacted negatively on a student's performance, it is legitimate, where that complaint has been upheld through the UCO's complaints process, for the Board of Examiners to consider any impact of that complaint on the performance of the student (it is only after Board of Examiners confirmation that such consideration is confined to the academic appeal process). Complaints that have not been upheld (i.e. both those specifically not upheld, and those not yet decided) cannot be considered by Boards of Examiners.

- c) The impact of any action taken by the UCO that may impact negatively on a students' performance; where a member of academic staff believes that one or more students have been impacted by the UCO's action or by circumstances arising within the teaching and learning process (but excluding the conduct of examinations) other than personal circumstances processed by the Student Support Department (an example being unexpected disturbance of an examination, or an assessment profile that does not appear to have operated effectively etc.), this must be raised at the appropriate Pre-Board of Examiners, by the relevant Course Leader (or equivalent).
- d) Whether the performance profile of a unit is at variance with the general performance of the cohort or reflects a continuing problem in the operation of the unit, such that the grades may reasonably be held not to reflect satisfactory assessment of a unit, as identified by the relevant Unit Leader to the relevant Course Team for consultation in advance of the Board of Examiners.

12.2.7 Course Teams will ensure that Boards of Examiners are made aware of any complaints or action that may have impacted on students' performance and of any variance in the general performance of a cohort. In all of the above cases:

- a) Boards of Examiners must consider the circumstances and their impact to determine whether there was material impact on a student's performance (e.g. in respect of their performance in other similar assessments and units).
- b) External Examiners must be part of the process of consideration of any alteration to be made to the expected outcome (e.g. an additional attempt allowed).
- c) The decision and the reasons must be recorded in detail to ensure that the basis for any changes made is clear.

B) PRE-BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

12.2.8 Pre-Boards of Examiners are held prior to each Board of Examiners' sitting, for both postgraduate and undergraduate courses, in order to prepare proposed decisions on the awards and course progression based on the student profiles and unit results which will be recommended to the Board of Examiners.

12.2.9 Pre-Board of Examiners also considers any legitimate Special Circumstances submitted to the Registrar and makes recommendations to the Board of Examiners in light of those circumstances. This is to ensure that students' circumstances are appropriately weighted and also to protect students' right to privacy by not discussing the case at the full Board of Examiners meeting.

12.2.10 Pre-Boards of Examiners are attended by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), the Registrar, the Course Leader of the relevant course and a Student Support Representative.

12.2.11 Pre-Board of Examiners also considers the unit statistics which are to be presented to the Board of Examiners.

C) BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

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- 12.2.12 Boards of Examiners consider the results of assessments at all stages of a course and determine the progression of students and recommend awards to the Academic Council, including awards of distinctions or similar where appropriate.
- 12.2.13 The membership of Boards of Examiners should consist of one or more External Examiners and all members of academic teaching staff as appropriate.
- 12.2.14 The business of the Board of Examiners will be noted by the Registrar who will also advise on matters of regulation.
- 12.2.15 The responsibilities of Boards of Examiners are:
- a) To ensure the assessment programmes enable students to demonstrate that the course learning outcomes have been met, and to make observations as appropriate to the Course Leader or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
 - b) To determine action to be taken where a student fails to complete all or part of the assessment for a unit and agree arrangements for the consideration of the performance of those students who have been reassessed, ensuring that External Examiners are appropriately involved.
 - c) To make recommendations on final awards for students within their remit; Boards of Examiners will report to the Academic Council on any matters of policy which may arise for the assessments and their conduct.
 - d) To formally record the reasons should Boards of Examiners recommend a different award from that estimated.
 - e) To consider issues raised at Course Teams and Pre-Boards of Examiners such as complaints, circumstances arising within the teaching and learning process and performance on profiles which are at variance with the general performance of the cohort.
- 12.2.16 In all the above cases Boards of Examiners must consider the circumstances and their impact and keep a full and definitive record of discussions.
- 12.2.17 All External Examiners present shall confirm their endorsement of decisions of final Boards of Examiners by signing final results lists.

12.3 MEMBERSHIP & TERMS OF REFERENCE OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 12.3.1 The Membership and Terms of Reference of Boards of Examiners stipulate the frequency and quorum of Board of Examiner meetings.
- 12.3.2 The Chair will normally be an External Senior Academic.
- 12.3.3 The Chair has overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are made with External Examiners, for chairing the meetings of Boards of Examiners and for monitoring all aspects of the examination process. They also ensure that appropriate weight is given to the comments of the External Examiners and confirm the final list of examination results.
- 12.3.4 The Secretary to the Board of Examiners is the Registrar who is responsible for:
- a) Making appropriate arrangements for liaison with the External Examiners.
 - b) Prompt notification of the dates and times of Board of Examiner meetings to those required to attend.
 - c) The circulation of course assessment regulations, marking schemes used by internal examiners, the full draft mark sheet including a profile of the marks awarded to each student in

each piece of assessed work and an analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the marks in each assessment and recommendations on decisions.

- d) Taking accurate and comprehensive minutes of Board of Examiner meetings and recording decisions taken and any comments made.

12.4 BOARD OF EXAMINERS CHAIR'S ACTION

12.4.1 Chair's Action **may** be used for:

- a) The input of grades not available to a prior formal Board of Examiners at which the student and/or the unit were considered.
- b) Administrative correction of input and recording errors.
- c) Decisions regarding special circumstances recorded as identified by the Student Support Department as in process at the time of the Board of Examiners.
- d) Implementing academic appeal decisions reached through the UCO's academic appeals process.
- e) When a student completes their course of study (i.e. submits assessment) after the standard Board of Examiners schedule, although Chair's Action may only be used where the work involved is subject to moderation and / or external examination, to ensure that cohort standards are maintained.

12.4.2 In all cases, Chairs' Actions must be recorded (i.e. reasons for changes) and be noted at the next meeting of the Board of Examiners at which the decision should have been recorded (i.e. the Chair's Action has to be recorded at the next Board of Examiners meeting).

12.4.3 Every Chair's Action must also be recorded in the appropriate Course Team's records to identify the cause of any administrative delay and to provide a clear record demonstrating that any grade change is made on the basis of one or more of the above grounds and, where a student completes assessment outside standard schedules, to confirm that moderation and / or external examination has been conducted.

12.4.4 Chair's Action **may not** be used to:

- a) Decide the results of students or cohorts meeting outside the standard schedule.
- b) Change the results of any student on the basis of appeal or complaint.

12.4.5 Once Chairs' Actions have been agreed and recorded in detail by the Board of Examiners, they should be submitted to the Chair of the Academic Council via the minutes of the appropriate Board of Examiners meeting, for ratification.

12.5 PRESENTATION OF DATA TO THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS

12.5.1 The Board of Examiners records its decisions on a series of summary reports and through minutes.

12.5.2 On each report the students are listed in rank order by name with the estimated outcome.

12.5.3 The Board of Examiners will focus on borderline students.

12.5.4 A complete assessment profile is provided for each student.

12.5.5 Where amendments are necessary, these are recorded by altering the decision by marking the appropriate result. These amendments must be made immediately after the meeting by

the Secretary to the Board of Examiners and a report of amendments will be produced to be checked by the Chair and appended to the minutes of the meeting.

12.5.6 There are broadly six possible decisions that may be made by the Board of Examiners regarding a student's performance as follows:

- P = Pass and free to progress on a course of study
- DEF = Defer assessment(s)
- REF = Refer assessment(s)
- F = Fail (indicating that student either left the UCO or is required to do so)
- CP = Condoned Pass
- NS = Non-Submission
- LS = Late Submission
- NA = Not Answered
- ABS = Absent

12.6 UNSCHEDULED BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

12.6.1 Unscheduled Boards of Examiners (in addition to those scheduled) must be conducted where a cohort completes its study at a time outside the standard Boards of Examiners schedule. They must be formed and operated in accordance with the UCO's Academic Regulations (AQF Section 7).

12.6.2 Unscheduled Boards of Examiners must be quorate and be preceded by standard arrangements for moderation and external examination.

12.7 CONFIDENTIALITY OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

12.7.1 All discussions of final judgements and decisions on the awarding of academic credit and qualifications awarded by the UCO at meetings of Course Teams, Pre-Boards of Examiners and Boards of Examiners shall be regarded as confidential, as will the minutes of Boards of Examiners meetings.

12.7.2 Details of the discussion and deliberation at Boards of Examiners meetings will not be disclosed to students, except in very exceptional circumstances and then only with the agreement of the Registrar.

12.8 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

12.8.1 Any examiner who has family or other personal connection to or relationship with any student other than the normal professional relationship required by his or her role as an academic shall declare that relationship and shall take no part in any discussion relating to that student's performance.

12.9 DISCLOSURE OF EXAMINATION GRADES TO STUDENTS

12.9.1 It must be made clear to students that where grades have not yet been considered by External Examiners or a formal Board of Examiners that these grades are provisional, pending endorsement by the appropriate Board of Examiners.

12.10 APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS OF BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

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- 12.10.1 Academic appeals are the route by which students may seek reconsideration of the decision of a Board of Examiners. They are the only basis on which changes, other than the correction of administrative errors, may be made.
- 12.10.2 The criteria for appealing against a decision of the Board of Examiners are detailed in the UCO's Academic Appeals Policy² (or approved partner equivalent).
- 12.10.3 The UCO will not consider appeals based solely on a student's disagreement with the examiners' academic judgement.
- 12.10.4 Complaints upheld in respect of Board of Examiners' decisions already made are transferred to the UCO's Academic Appeals process for action.
- 12.10.5 Where a student lodges a complaint that is upheld after the relevant Board of Examiners and is found, after submission, to be a valid academic appeal, notification of the outcome of the complaint should be sent to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), who will initiate the Board of Examiners review as an outcome of an appeal.

AQF12: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
N/A	N/A

² <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>



Academic Quality Framework

**Section 13: Staff Recruitment &
Development**

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 13: Staff Recruitment & Development

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to all staff.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Corporate Services Director HR Manager	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Corporate Services Director HR Manager	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 PRAG Chair	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy.	HR Manager	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update committee role titles and weblinks.	HR Manager	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update weblinks and footnotes, titles of external bodies, to correct typographical errors and to reflect teaching staff from other health care professions. Added “Associated UCO Documents” section for ease of reference.	Head of HR Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Aug 2020	Annual Review:	Head of HR	Master Version:	Annually and on an “as

	<i>PRAG Chair</i>	<i>Administrative Amendments to correct weblinks and update external agency titles.</i>	<i>Head of Quality</i>	<i>J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i>	<i>required” basis.</i>
V7.0	<i>Aug 2021 PRAG Chair</i>	<i>Administrative amendments to update policy title.</i>	<i>Head of HR Head of Quality</i>	<i>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i>	<i>Annually and on an “as required” basis.</i>
V8.0	<i>Jun 2022 PRACG</i>	<i>Administrative amendments to update staff role titles.</i>	<i>DVC (Education) Head of Quality & Partnerships</i>	<i>Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website</i>	<i>Annually and on an “as required” basis.</i>
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

Academic Quality Framework

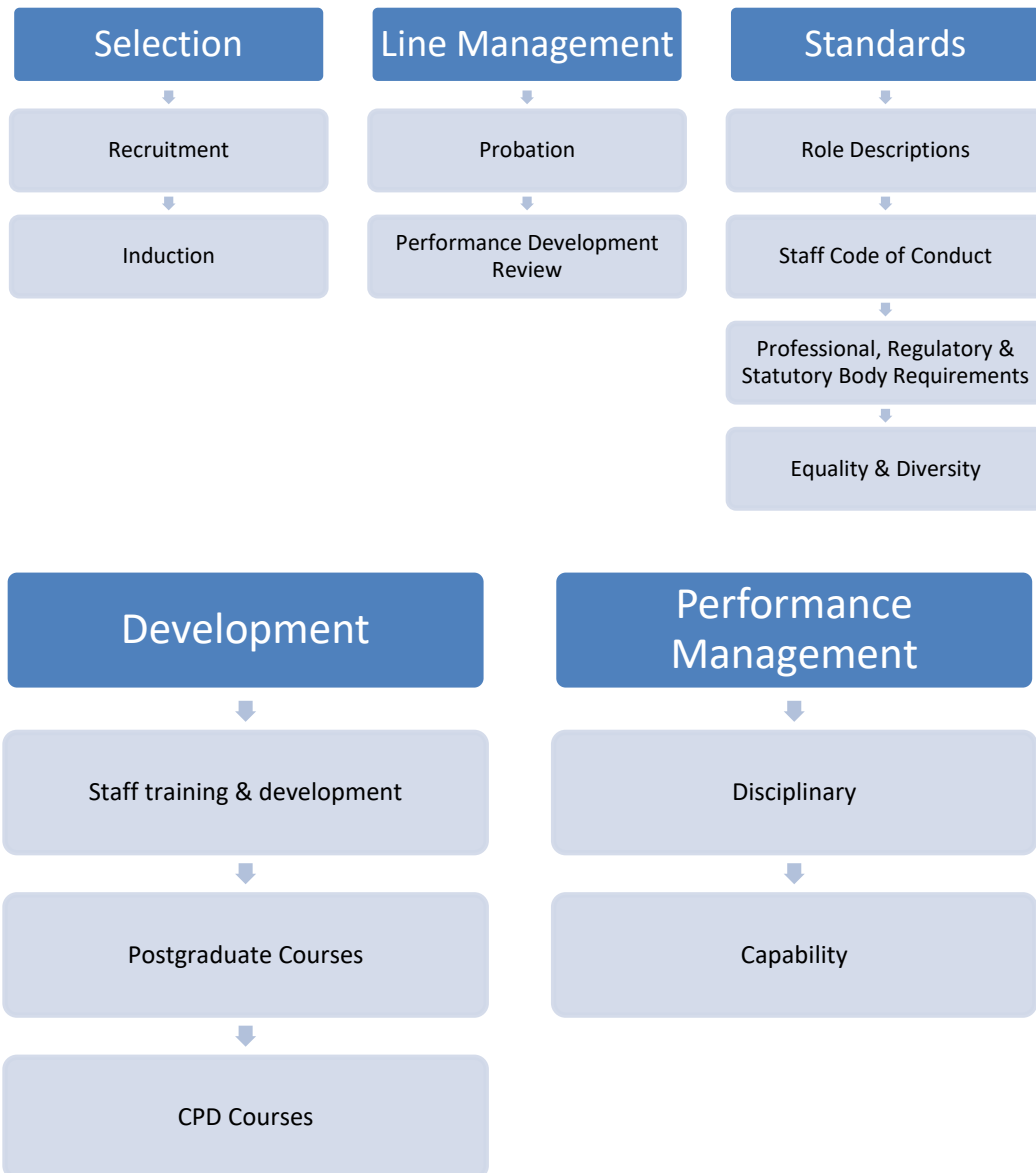
Section 13: Staff Recruitment & Development

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13.1 INTRODUCTION

13.1.1 The mechanisms by which the University College of Osteopathy (UCO) assures itself that all teaching faculty have the necessary skills, commitment and knowledge to teach effectively are signposted below.



13.1.2 Individual teaching staff and their line managers have the key responsibilities for ensuring that they carry out their roles to a sufficient standard but are also supported and advised by the Human Resources team.

13.1.3 Information about current vacancies may be found on the UCO website¹.

¹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/vacancies/current-vacancies>

13.2 STAFF RECRUITMENT

13.2.1 The key mechanisms for the assurance of quality and standards regarding academic staff recruitment include:

- a) A comprehensive Staff Recruitment Policy and Procedure² ensuring that all staff involved in the recruitment process are aware of their responsibilities for ensuring equality in recruitment practices and ensures that fair and responsible decisions are made regarding which applicant best matches the requirements within the agreed specifications.
- b) Successful implementation of the Staff Recruitment Policy and Procedure is monitored through statistical monitoring, probationary reviews and exit interviews. Upon appointment, teaching staff are welcomed to the UCO and during their general induction to the UCO are shown where they may access information about the UCO and relevant staff policies, procedures and guidelines.

13.2.2 All new staff are provided with an induction programme suitable to their role at the UCO that is undertaken by their Line Manager in line with the UCO's Staff Induction Procedure³. The Induction is designed to provide an initial orientation and will assist in supporting the UCO's mission, aims and values and to enable the understanding and application of UCO policies, procedures, culture and expectations.

13.3 LINE MANAGEMENT

13.3.1 Direct line managers play a key role in assuring quality and standards within the teaching faculty. From the point of selection onwards, the new member of staff's contribution is supported and assessed during the probationary period. The Staff Induction Procedure identifies training and development (see below) which is needed during the probationary period to support the new employee.

13.3.2 Post-probation, each member of teaching faculty is moved onto the Professional Development Review (PDR) system, or appraisal. Mapped against the UK Professional Standards Framework⁴, the PDR system identifies specific actions to support the development of faculty. In advance of the meeting with their Line Manager, each member of faculty identifies the key areas within the framework they wish to focus on in their professional development. The PDR meeting is then structured around identifying suitable targets and training to support this goal and agreeing a reasonable timescale for completion. The PDR process is designed in line with the UCO's Strategic Plan to promote continuous enhancement of quality through the development of a culture of critical reflection on learning and teaching, informed by best practice and also to ensure that excellence in teaching is promoted, recognised and rewarded. While training and development identified through the process could relate to teaching or to the subject specialism, the nature of the dual professional status of most members of faculty focuses attention on pedagogy and academic development. All staff are encouraged to use or request feedback to inform the PDR processes - including peer review of practical sessions, student surveys, 360-degree feedback and formal observation. The PDR process is carried out in line with the UCO's Appraisal & Professional Development Review Policy⁵.

13.3.3 Line Managers receive support and guidance in their management roles from the HR team. They also have access to a range of Managers' Briefings including Recruitment and Selection,

² <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

³ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

⁴ <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/teaching-and-learning/ukpsf>

⁵ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

Professional Development Review and Managing Induction. Specific training courses in related areas are run when the need arises.

13.4 STANDARDS & QUALITY OF STAFF

- 13.4.1 All roles within the UCO have agreed role descriptions, which are updated periodically within the PDR meetings held. While these documents necessarily evolve to meet the changing requirements of the institution, the broad responsibilities are defined and shared.
- 13.4.2 The UCO sets clear standards of behaviour and quality for its faculty. As well as the information issued to faculty relating to assessment and feedback, the UCO's website contains policies that relate to assuring academic quality within the teaching faculty – including the Staff Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Policy, Data Protection Policy, Dignity at the UCO Policy, Equality & Diversity Policy, Health & Safety Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy⁶.
- 13.4.3 With more than 90% of faculty also qualified and in practice as Registered Osteopaths, the requirements of the regulatory body (the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC)) are relevant to the quality standards set for faculty. The GOsC's Osteopathic Practice Standards⁷ combine the standards of practice and code of conduct for osteopaths. As professionals, our faculty must abide by these standards. The Osteopathic Practice Standards also require a requisite amount of continuous professional development (CPD) to be completed each year, relevant to the Standards.
- 13.4.4 Similarly, faculty recruited to teach into courses who are health care practitioners and registered with another relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) are also required to abide by the standards expected of that PSRB.
- 13.4.5 The UCO has a strong commitment to Equal Opportunities within its Equality & Diversity Policy. Guidance about respecting students in a healthcare environment gives clear examples from medical education about appropriate ways to support and challenge students.

13.5 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- 13.5.1 The UCO is committed to providing necessary and appropriate training to all staff members to ensure that roles can be fulfilled to a high standard and in line with current government policy.
- 13.5.2 The UCO is committed to encouraging each member of staff and faculty to achieve their potential within their careers. In this way, the standards of learning and clinical care provided to students and customers can continue to be improved each year. All members of staff, whether providing a direct service to students or an indirect service to the building or the UCO's resources, are valued and will be encouraged to develop appropriately. Responsibility for learning and improvement is shared between the individual and the UCO.
- 13.5.3 Staff training and development opportunities are identified in a number of different ways, as set out below. Teaching faculty are for the most part dual professionals – with careers in osteopathy and in education – and their development and scholarship needs must cover both of these areas.
- 13.5.4 The UCO provides staff development and scholarship through a range of means, including guest speakers at staff conferences, free access to the broad portfolio of CPD courses run at

⁶ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

⁷ <https://standards.osteopathy.org.uk/>

- the UCO, clinic tutorials, journal clubs, research presentations and e-fora to discuss relevant issues.
- 13.5.5 Osteopathic faculty must also maintain registration with the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) where it is a requirement of the role (e.g. clinical staff) – as such they must annually demonstrate that they have undertaken requisite CPD to support the Osteopathic Practice Standards.
- 13.5.6 Faculty from other health care professions must also maintain registration with their relevant PSRB where it is a requirement of their role and similarly undertake any requisite CPD requirements.
- 13.5.6 The UCO provides pedagogic development and scholarship which aligns closely with the AdvanceHE Professional Standards Framework. Faculty can develop within the framework either by completing a postgraduate teaching qualification, for example the UCO's Postgraduate Certificate in Academic and Clinical Education (see below) or by accrediting their skills and experience by mapping these against the framework and seeking membership of AdvanceHE directly. In addition, ongoing development opportunities are provided at the UCO's staff conferences and within team meetings and workshops.
- 13.5.7 The UCO, in line with its Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy employs a VLE Manager to provide training and support to teaching staff in the use of the UCO's virtual learning environment. The IT Department also provides support in the use of multimedia technology, including video and audio in teaching.
- 13.5.8 All staff are provided with the opportunity to attend an institution-wide annual Staff Conference. All staff contracts stipulate that staff must attend the annual conference at least every 2 years. The conference involves external speakers presenting on a variety of subject matters, staff consultation over strategic planning, development workshops that are tailored to specific groups of staff and staff presentations disseminating information on current research projects. The Staff Conference is also where good practice in teaching and learning is disseminated and the work of UCO staff is celebrated.
- 13.5.9 Non-teaching staff are provided with appropriate training and support to ensure that administrative roles at the UCO are fulfilled to a high standard. These include bespoke minute taking courses and the provision of a Committee Handbook to committee secretaries to ensure that committee servicing is carried out efficiently and accurately, student and clinic database training to ensure that all relevant staff are familiar with its use, inputting and amending of student details and activities and attendance at seminars to ensure that current government legislation is complied with.
- 13.5.10 The UCO has a number of staff who act as external examiners, assessors and advisors at other institutions and organisations. The UCO actively encourages staff to undertake these roles in recognition of the value this external engagement brings to the member of staff's work at the UCO.
- 13.5.11 Development opportunities are also made available for all faculty through the postgraduate courses run at the UCO. New teaching staff without a postgraduate teaching qualification are encouraged to complete the UCO's Postgraduate Certificate in Academic and Clinical Education (PgCertACE)⁸ within their first two years of teaching. The PgCertACE is a credit bearing programme designed to develop the skills of health professionals in the field of manual medicine as educators. Fee-waiver places are granted on the PgCertACE to all members of

⁸ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/pgcert-academic-and-clinical-education>

faculty, and a number of free places on the rest of the range of UCO postgraduate courses are reserved for faculty.

13.5.12 All faculty are expected to work towards the strategic target of completing the PgCertACE qualification (or equivalent) or becoming members of AdvanceHE.⁹

13.6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

13.6.1 Where a staff member does not meet the standards required of the role (established through the role description and / or other standards / policies as set out above), the UCO's Disciplinary and Capability Procedure¹⁰ is instigated to manage performance and disciplinary related issues.

13.6.2 This procedure sets out the way that the UCO will investigate and respond to performance issues in order to support and resolve any problems that arise.

13.6.3 Disciplinary cases are considered by a Staff Disciplinary Panel, which reports to the Vice-Chancellor's Group. Such panels are constituted as and when required.

AQF13: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
N/A	N/A

⁹ <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/about-us>

¹⁰ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>



Academic Quality Framework

Section 14: Access to Higher Education & Pre-Entry Courses

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 15: Access to Higher Education & Pre-Entry Courses

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to prospective students, existing Access to Higher Education students and faculty delivering pre-entry courses at the UCO.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Head of Foundation Studies Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Head of Foundation Studies Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Head of Foundation Studies Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update weblinks.	Head of Foundation Studies Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update weblinks, footnotes and to reflect current practice.	Head of Foundation Courses Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	Annual Review: Administrative Amendments to reflect the change in delivery mode of the IOS Course.	Head of Foundation Courses Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect IOS course title change to HIS.	Head of Foundation Courses Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V8.0	Jun 2022 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect new academic year dates.	Head of Foundation Courses Head of Quality & Partnerships	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

Academic Quality Framework

Section 15: Access to Higher Education & Pre-Entry Courses

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15.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE UCO'S ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION AND PRE-ENTRY COURSES

- 15.1.1 The UCO is committed by its mission and values to providing access to higher education for learners from backgrounds that are under-represented in higher education. It very much endorses the view that higher education should be made accessible to all, regardless of background or financial status, to promote social justice and economic competitiveness.
- 15.1.2 In recognition of the need to widen participation, the UCO also designed, and had accredited by Laser Learning Awards (LASER)¹, an Access to Higher Education Diploma course specifically designed for students who wish to study osteopathy but are new or returning to higher education. This course provides them with the foundation of knowledge required of them to prepare and succeed on our Master of Osteopathy (M.Ost) courses. Successful completion of this Access to Higher Education course guarantees students a place on the full-time or part-time M.Ost course at the UCO.
- 15.1.3 The UCO also recognises that an increasing number of applicants for our M.Ost courses have proven academic achievement but lack a solid grounding in the sciences required to study Osteopathy. In response to this the UCO runs a short non-accredited pre-entry course (the Introduction to Healthcare Sciences (IHS) course) enabling students to gain the required background knowledge in the basic sciences to prepare them adequately for M.Ost study or study on another appropriate healthcare course offered by the UCO.

15.2 THE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION DIPLOMA (OSTEOPATHIC SCIENCES & HEALTHCARE) COURSE

- 15.2.1 The UCO works with Laser Learning Awards (LASER), a leading Access Validating Authority, to approve its Access to Higher Education Diploma in Osteopathic Sciences and Healthcare course. LASER is licensed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to award the Access to Higher Education Diploma.
- 15.2.2 Access provision in the UK is specifically intended to prepare students from under-represented groups for study within the higher education sector. Subsequently LASER has responsibility for approving and monitoring the quality of the UCO's Access provision.
- 15.2.3 The Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) course is aimed at mature students new or returning to education so is delivered in a manner that allows learners to work alongside their studies.
- 15.2.4 The course consists of twelve units, each of which is worth a specified number of credits.
- 15.2.5 Access Course units are delivered at both Level 2 and Level 3 over one academic year.
- 15.2.6 Classes are delivered through three- or four-hour sessions on Friday evenings from 6:00pm and all day on Saturdays during the UCO's term time structure. Within every three- or four-hour session there is a mix of discussion and didactic teaching with students often given time to work in groups and individually. Learner's ideas and points of learning are fed back to the whole class allowing consolidation of key facts and skills as well as conversation about misconceptions and misunderstandings. There are also many formal formative learning opportunities within sessions.

¹ <https://www.laser-awards.org.uk/>

a) THE REVIEW OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 15.2.7 The UCO works with LASER to ensure that Academic Standards are reviewed regularly and appropriately. Access courses are regularly re-validated periodically every five years to ensure that courses continue to meet the QAA Specification for Access to Higher Education (HE) Diplomas².
- 15.2.8 Similarly, amendments to course titles and units are made through LASER's quality processes which include the completion of appropriate amendment forms and confirmation by both an External and Internal Reviewer.
- 15.2.9 Guidance regarding revalidations of and amendments to Access to HE courses is provided by LASER.

b) EXTERNAL MODERATION

- 15.2.10 The Access to HE Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) course adheres to the External Moderation processes stipulated by LASER.
- 15.2.11 LASER appoints an Access Diploma External Moderator to the UCO who act in accordance with their quality and moderation processes.
- 15.2.12 The External Moderator conducts visits to and is in continuous contact with the UCO to check for and produces moderation reports about:
- a) Robust quality systems and processes.
 - b) Consistent appropriate documentation and record keeping.
 - c) Consistent and high-quality assessment practice.
 - d) Student satisfaction with the course experience.
- 15.2.13 Laser Awards is licensed as an Access Validating Agency (AVA) by the QAA. The External Moderator also acts as the AVA's representative at Access Awards Boards and acts on behalf of the AVA to confirm the award of Access to HE Diploma to students at Final Awards Boards.
- 15.2.14 The UCO responds to External Moderator reports in accordance with LASER's processes.

c) ACCESS TO HE DIPLOMA AWARDS BOARD

- 15.2.15 Access to HE Diploma Awards Boards are conducted in accordance with the QAA Recognition Scheme for Access to Higher Education Grading Scheme Handbook Section E: Student Results and Awards Boards.
- 15.2.16 Awards Boards for the Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) are normally held at the UCO.

d) CAREERS ADVICE

- 15.2.17 The majority of students undertaking the UCO's Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) course do so in order to gain entry onto an osteopathic degree course.
- 15.2.18 As well as developing students' underpinning academic skills this course also helps students to develop efficient study techniques, improve their communication and critical thinking skills and give an insight into what it is like to study and practise osteopathy.

² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/access-to-he>

15.2.19 As a nationally recognised Diploma it can be used to gain access to other relevant undergraduate courses.

15.2.20 Students who do not complete the full programme may be awarded partial credits and may be able to use these to pursue other studies in Higher Education.

15.3 OTHER PRE-ENTRY COURSES

15.3.1 The UCO recognises that it receives a large number of applications from students who have proven academic achievement but who lack a solid grounding in the sciences required to study osteopathy. In response to this issue, the UCO has, for many years, been running short pre-entry courses to enable students to gain this background in the basic sciences.

15.3.2 Currently the UCO offers one pre-entry course, the Introduction to Healthcare Sciences course.

a) THE INTRODUCTION TO HEALTHCARE SCIENCES (IHS) COURSE

15.3.3 The IHS course is aimed at applicants who already hold a non-science degree or equivalent but lack a solid grounding in the sciences required to study Osteopathy or other healthcare discipline.

15.3.4 This course is a non-credit bearing short course that has been developed by the UCO to specifically support and prepare these students for studying the UCO's healthcare courses and is therefore not transferable to another Higher Education Institution.

15.3.5 The IHS course is a period of intensive science study delivered online. Students study in their own time and have the opportunity to participate in online tutorials to meet other students and discuss course content, in addition to individual tutor support by appointment. IHS course materials are made available through the UCO's Virtual Learning Environment allowing for flexible home study.

15.3.6 Formative assessments are held within the units, providing students with feedback on their progression. The summative (final) assessment consists of quizzes and written examinations both of which are completed online under timed conditions.

15.3.7 Students are required to pass the IHS course summative assessments in order to secure their place on either of the UCO's M.Ost or relevant healthcare courses.

i. EXTERNAL MODERATION

15.3.8 The IHS course is a non-credit bearing course, is not accredited by an external body and does not result in a recognised qualification. Subsequently official external moderation of this course is not normally undertaken. There are, however, internal moderation mechanisms in place to ensure that IHS course assessments are fairly and rigorously considered including:

- a) The second/double marking of all borderline pass/fail grades by course tutors.
- b) In the event of a students' academic appeal against an assessment grade a tutor external to the course may be asked to re-mark the assessment.

ii. BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

15.3.9 Similarly, due to the IHS course not being credit bearing, accredited by an external body or leading to a recognised qualification, full Board of Examiner meetings for this course are not normally scheduled. Final assessment grades are instead reviewed and confirmed by the IHS Course Leader, Head of Foundation Studies and the Registrar.

AQF15: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
N/A	N/A



Academic Quality Framework

**Section 15: Academic Policies &
Procedures**

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 15: Academic Policies & Procedures

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest of all members of the UCO.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	June 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update weblinks.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Annual Review: Administrative Amendments to update weblinks & footnotes.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Sept 2020 PRAG Chair	Annual Review: Administrative Amendments to reflect the UCO's new committee structure.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to: - Renumber AQF Section from 17 to 15. - Reflected the UCO's Cored Documentation Register as an Appendix.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

Academic Quality Framework 2022-2023 / Section 15: Academic Policies & Procedures

V8.0	Jun 2022 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect updated policy and committee titles.	Head of Quality & Partnerships	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

Academic Quality Framework

Section 15: Academic Policies & Procedures

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15.1 INTRODUCTION TO ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- 15.1.1 A wide range of academic policies and procedures are in operation at the UCO. These have been developed to promote and support student achievement and to enhance and promote operational efficiencies.
- 15.1.2 The following terminology is used at the UCO regarding policies and procedures:
- a) Policy: A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual¹.
 - b) Procedure: An established or official way of doing something².
- 15.1.3 Ensuring that appropriate academic policies and procedures are in place directly impacts on maintaining academic standards and quality assurance and enhancement at the UCO. They provide students, faculty and staff with clear processes to follow and ensure that actions and decisions are considered by appropriate individuals in a consistent and responsible way.

15.2 ALIGNMENT OF ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES WITH EXTERNAL REFERENCE POINTS

- 15.2.1 The UCO's academic policies and procedures are developed and reviewed in line with the UCO's Core Documentation Management, Development and Review Policy and Procedure³. This procedure provides assurance that appropriate consultation is included as part of a review or development of a policy or procedure and that external reference points are considered as appropriate. This includes ensuring that policies and procedures align with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education⁴ and other external reference points, including relevant legislation and Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies, including the Office for Students and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (the OIA).

15.3 REVIEWING & EVALUATING ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- 15.3.1 The UCO's Policy and Regulations Group (PRG) working on behalf of the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC) is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of and overseeing the review and development of UCO academic policies and procedures as well as this Academic Quality Framework, the academic governance committee structure, institutional policies and procedures and management of the UCO's Core Documentation. The PRG normally meets four times a year and provides regular reports in the form of meeting minutes and summaries to the TQSC, which then reports to the UCO's Academic Council.
- 15.3.2 Faculty and staff should follow the Core Documentation Management, Development and Review Policy and Procedure if they wish to develop a new or review and amend an existing academic or institutional policy or procedure.
- 15.3.3 The Core Documentation Management, Development and Review Policy and Procedure stipulates that student consultation for the development of new and the review of existing policies and procedures through electronic consultation, focus groups and discussion at relevant committees with student members is a requirement.

¹ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/policy?q=policy>

² <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/procedure?q=procedure>

³ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

⁴ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

15.4 PUBLICATION OF ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- 15.4.1 All UCO policies and procedures, including academic policies and procedures, are published and made available to all faculty, staff and students through the UCO's website⁵, which is accessible from both within and outside of UCO premises. Faculty are encouraged to link to this area of the website when referring to academic policies and procedures to ensure that the correct and most current version of a policy or procedure is utilized and referenced.

15.5 ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES AS CORE DOCUMENTS

- 15.5.1 Academic policies and procedures are classed as UCO Core Documentation and are subsequently considered in line with the UCO's Core Documentation Management, Development and Review Policy and Procedure⁶. This ensures that academic policies and procedures are developed, reviewed, and maintained using a document control system to provide assurance that current versions only are published, are easily identified and located and are registered with the UCO's Core Documentation Holder.
- 15.5.2 As Core Documents, academic policies and procedures are listed on the UCO's Core Documentation Register in line with the UCO's Core Documentation Management, Development and Review Policy and Procedure. In addition to keeping a record of all UCO Core Documentation, the Core Documentation Register also includes information about the document owner, the date for review and documentation history of documents. This ensures that academic policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated as appropriate.
- 15.5.3 The Core Documentation Register is managed by the PRG on behalf of the TQSC. All academic policies and procedures should be registered with the Core Documentation Holder.
- 15.5.4 For further information about the Core Documentation Register, please contact the PRG Chair by emailing quality@uco.ac.uk

AQF15: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
N/A	N/A

⁵ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

⁶ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>



Academic Quality Framework

Section 16: Collaborative Activity

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 16: Collaborative Activity

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to current and prospective Collaborative Partner institutions and all UCO staff.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	June 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	To streamline procedures and make them operationally consistent with UCO structures.	Dean of Academic Development	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British UCO of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Dean of Academic Development	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Jun 2018 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to approval process timelines, the External Panel member nominations process and to update staff role titles and weblinks.	Dean of Academic Development	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.1	Jul 2019 Academic Council	Approved Part 10: Practice-Based Education	Dean of Academic Development Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to update staff role titles, weblinks & footnotes and to reflect current practice.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

V6.0	Sept 2020 PRAG Chair	Annual Review Administrative amendments to: - Reflect new UCO committee structure. - Incorporate the Admissions and Learning Resources Summary forms into the Collaborative Proposal form.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to: - Correct typographical errors. - Update role responsibilities. - Update Section Forms (Appendices) - Incorporate Practice- Based Education (AQF Section 16 Part 10).	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V8.0	Jul 2022 Academic Council	Major Amendment to the Partner Periodic Institutional Review process (Section 16.47) to introduce a risk-based approach to this process. Administrative Amendments to reflect role title changes.	Head of Quality & Partnerships	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

Academic Quality Framework

Section 16: Collaborative Activity

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

16.1 INTRODUCTION TO COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY

- 16.1.1 This section of the Academic Quality Framework focuses on the collaborative activity of the UCO. This includes the principles, processes for approving and management of collaborative provision with others. It has been developed to align to the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education regarding Partnerships¹.
- 16.1.2 “Collaborative provision”, which encompasses a number of different arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others both nationally and internationally, is defined by the Council for Validating Universities (CVU) as:
- “...the process whereby a degree-awarding body judges one or more programmes of study, courses, or modules offered by another body to be appropriate to lead to a qualification and/or credit of that degree awarding body. The programmes of study may be designed and developed by either the degree-awarding body or the other body or a partnership of the two.”²*
- 16.1.3 The UCO welcomes opportunities to work with others in collaborative arrangements and views these as valued additions to its portfolio of educational and corporate activities.
- 16.1.4 The UCO recognises that collaborative arrangement opportunities serve to broaden and enrich staff and student experiences through educational and scholarly activity. Some arrangements may involve the exchange or transfer of staff and students, giving both a new perspective regarding the business, social and educational practices in other institutions and cultures. Others may provide students access to higher education that may otherwise have been denied the opportunity to learn at that level. In addition, collaborative arrangements enrich the intellectual life of the UCO, promote international co-operation and enhance cross-institutional sharing of good practice.
- 16.1.5 When considering a collaborative arrangement to offer provision in either the UK or overseas, the UCO must satisfy itself that the arrangement has a potential long-term benefit and will enrich the experiences of both staff and students. The UCO's Academic Council is responsible for making this decision and may delegate authority of approval to a named sub-committee. This responsibility will be set out in the following sections of this part of the Academic Quality Framework, which also describes the approval and review processes for collaborative partners, provision, and modes of operation.
- 16.1.6 Collaboration proposals that are based solely on the prospect of income generation are not acceptable, and awareness of the academic and financial risk(s) involved in the management of the relationship should be paramount.
- 16.1.7 The UCO is committed to ensuring the success of all collaborative arrangements and works hard to achieve this. This involves ensuring that the considerable benefits to the students and staff of both the UCO and partner are sustained appropriately. The UCO takes ultimate responsibility for:
- a) The academic standards and the quality of any awards granted in its name.
 - b) The academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities provided regardless of where these opportunities are delivered and who provides them.

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/partnerships>

² <http://www.cvu.ac.uk/about/>

- c) The accuracy of any formal transcript or record of achievement confirming any awards granted in its name.

16.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY

16.2.1 In approving any collaboration, the UCO must be certain that students are receiving an appropriately high quality of educational experience, that intended learning outcomes are being achieved, and that the standard of awards conferred in the UCO's name are being upheld. The UCO achieves this by taking into account guidance issued by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), through the UK Quality Code and of the good practice described by other appropriate external reference points and guidance.

16.2.2 The guiding principles for the establishment and maintenance of collaborative activity are that:

- a) The decision to enter into a collaborative partnership is the UCO's and that agreements between a department, individual faculty member or other and a potential collaborative partner are not permitted.
- b) A judgement will be made by the Senior Management Team about the nature of the institution with which the collaboration is proposed, and its strategic fit with the UCO, at an early stage in any development. A process of risk assessment shall be undertaken to supplement this, to acknowledge potential hazards and ensure that any necessary mitigation is put in place.
- c) An investigation into the good standing of a prospective collaborative partner shall be undertaken to establish its legal status and capacity in law to contract with the UCO. Partnerships should not endanger the reputation of the UCO.
- d) It shall be established whether the delivery of provision through a partnership is financially viable for the UCO, by employing a suitable costing mechanism, and whether it will strategically enhance the educational / research ability of the UCO.
- e) All collaborative activity must be initiated and managed within the UCO's framework of academic quality assurance policy and practice, as set out in the Academic Quality Framework, and should be articulated through an appropriate legal agreement.
- f) The UCO maintains responsibility for setting and maintaining academic standards and managing the quality of student learning opportunities when working with collaborative partners. The UCO will therefore apply its quality assurance processes to the provision, including annual monitoring and periodic subject and course reviews.
- g) All dealings with collaborative partners shall be carried out in line with the UCO's 'Code of Conduct for Staff'³ to safeguard against any financial temptations and preserve the integrity of the process. It is incumbent on staff not to accept hospitality of a degree greater than that which could be reciprocated at the UCO's expense, and gifts other than those with limited monetary value should be refused.
- h) In accordance with the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education regarding Partnerships, the UCO retains responsibility for the academic standards of awards delivered in its name, and for the quality of the learning experience delivered by collaborative partners. All other obligations under the UK Quality Code for Higher Education⁴ must be demonstrably fulfilled.
- i) The UCO must be able to assure itself of the accuracy and completeness both of information provided to students and of information that is publicly available (whether in hard copy or on the UCO's or partner's website).

³ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

⁴ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

16.3 COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY REGISTER

- 16.3.1 In line with the requirements of the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education regarding Partnerships (Principle 6), the Quality Team maintains the UCO's Collaborative Activity Register (AQF16-01).
- 16.3.2 Only once a collaborative partnership and the associated provision have been formally approved by the UCO will the details be entered onto the Collaborative Activity Register.
- 16.3.3 The information held on the Register includes:
- The name and location of the collaborative partner.
 - The award level and course title.
 - The nature of the provision (validated, franchised etc.).
 - The UCO staff member responsible for the collaborative partnership.
 - The name of the Link Tutor for the provision.
 - The name of the External Examiner attached to the provision.
 - The date for the Periodic Course Review and Institutional Review.
- 16.3.4 The Collaborative Activity Register will be held by the Quality Team and can be made available on request.

16.4 TAXONOMY OF COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY

- 16.4.1 The UCO may enter into a number of different types of relationship with collaborative partners both in the UK and overseas which are reflective of the accountability, oversight, management and approval requirements and related terms that the partnership may entail.
- 16.4.2 A taxonomy (shown in [Table 16.1](#)) has been ascribed to each type of relationship and should be described as such when referring to a specific collaborative partnership.

TABLE 16.1: TAXONOMY OF COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY

Type of Collaborative Partner	Definition of Collaborative Partner	Type of Collaborative Provision	Definition of Collaborative Provision
Associate Partner	A partner institution that has been approved by the UCO to deliver courses which lead to awards in the UCO's name. Associate Partnerships are approved via Collaborative Activity Initial Approval (Part 2), Collaborative Partner Approval (Part 3), and the relevant Collaborative Provision Approval (Part 4)	Dual Award	Where the UCO and the partner institution, which has its own degree awarding powers, collaborate to provide a course at the partner institution, which leads to successful students achieving an award from both.
		Franchised	Where the UCO authorizes the delivery of its own approved course/s wholly by a partner institution retaining oversight of for the course's content, delivery method and pattern, assessment, and quality assurance arrangements.
		Validated	Where the UCO has judged that a course developed and delivered by another institution without degree awarding powers is of an appropriate quality and standard to lead to a UCO award.

Link Partner	A partner institution that has a formal relationship with the UCO that does not involve the partner delivering a course leading to an award in the UCO's name. Link Partnerships are approved via Collaborative Activity Initial Approval (Part 2), and the relevant Collaborative Provision Approval (Part 4)	Study Centre Arrangement	Where an approved partner's premises are used to deliver a UCO-approved course using a 'flying faculty' arrangement.
		Articulation Arrangement	Where a course provided by an approved partner institution is formally recognized by the UCO and grants guaranteed admission with advanced standing to a UCO award (subject to the availability of places).
		Progression Arrangement	Where the successful completion of a course provided by an approved partner institution is formally recognized as an entry qualification for a specified UCO course.
		Memorandum of Understanding	Where the UCO has a non-binding written agreement with the partner institution to promote cooperation, detailed discussions and collaborative activities.

16.5 SELECTING COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

- 16.5.1 The UCO aims to establish good working relationships with its collaborative partners, which will normally be institutions that share the UCO's values and support its vision and mission.
- 16.5.2 When seeking and entering into a collaborative partnership with an external organisation, the UCO considers the advantages and benefits that the relationship will bring to both itself and the partner.
- 16.5.3 Advantages may enhance the student experience; deliver benefits and opportunities for learners, staff and employers; or may bring financial benefits.
- 16.5.4 In addition to the advantages a partnership brings, the risks of the relationship are equally considered. These are formally assessed, quantified and mitigated as far as possible.

16.6 COLLABORATIVE PARTNER SELECTION CRITERIA

- 16.6.1 The UCO considers several criteria for selection of a partner including:
- Alignment with the UCO's mission, vision and aims.
 - Alignment with the UCO's strategic plan.
 - Shared understanding of the proposed collaborative arrangements.
 - Financial viability, including new avenues of income generation.
 - Potential collaborative research and scholarship activities.
 - Potential participation in student exchange activities.
 - Other benefits, such as reputational advantage to the UCO, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and engagement with employers.
- 16.6.2 Regardless of where delivery takes place, the UCO is responsible for any awards delivered in its name and therefore must have confidence that:
- There is an institutional commitment by senior management and teaching staff to the academic success of the collaboration.

- b) The partner institution is able to provide and sustain an ethos and learning environment appropriate to UK higher education in the subject(s) concerned.
 - c) The learning opportunities provided by the partner are appropriate for the delivery and support of HE provision, and the partner is capable of providing a suitable learning experience.
- 16.6.3 The UCO's Academic Regulations (see AQF Section 7: Academic Regulations) do not permit students registered on courses leading to the UCO's awards to be taught and assessed in a language other than English, other than in exceptional circumstances approved on a case-by-case basis by the Academic Council.
- 16.6.4 Sponsors of proposed collaborative arrangements should initially consult with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) before any collaborative partner and provision approval process is initiated.
- 16.6.5 A visit to the proposed partner institution by a senior representative of the UCO to explore and assess the viability of the proposed collaboration and explore the expectations of each party may also be undertaken prior to progression of the proposal.
- 16.6.6 Initial discussions between and visits to prospective partners only constitutes sharing of information; collaborative partnerships are subject to approval in line with the UCO's policies and procedures outlined below.

16.7 APPROVAL OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS & PROVISION

- 16.7.1 The UCO uses specific processes to approve collaborative partner institutions and their provision appropriate to the type of collaborative activity proposed. These processes may involve approval of the partner institution (Collaborative Partner Approval) or approval of a specific course (Collaborative Provision Approval) or may entail both.
- 16.7.2 The first phase in all circumstances is Collaborative Activity Initial Proposal Approval (Part 2).
- 16.7.3 The second phase entails Collaborative Partner Approval (Part 3) and/or Collaborative Provision Approval (Part 4) as necessary, depending upon the type of partnership proposed.
- 16.7.4 Normally, Collaborative Partner Approval (Part 3) and Collaborative Provision Approval (Part 4) for a given institution will run in parallel, culminating in a single on-site event and decision timeline.
- 16.7.5 Where collaborative partners will be involved in the delivery of UCO awards an appropriate level of externality is incorporated into the approval process.

16.8 COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS: LEGAL & CONTRACTUAL MATTERS

- 16.8.1 All collaborative partnerships require an appropriately written agreement (a formal contract), setting out the key details of the relationship including details concerning courses leading to an award of the UCO, where the partner has been approved to deliver. Draft contracts will only be signed and come into force following the appropriate approval event.
- 16.8.2 The purposes of the contract are to:
- a) Define the high-level arrangements for managing the partnership.
 - b) Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of both parties concerning the security of the academic standards of the provision are clearly set out, and that signposts are given to appropriate attendant documents describing these in greater detail.
 - c) Identify clear channels of authority, accountability, and executive action.
 - d) Specify the financial arrangements for the proposed collaboration.

- e) Stipulate all legal details, including the resolution of disputes and termination of the contract.
- 16.8.3 It is the responsibility of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) to draft a Collaborative Agreement for any new / changes to approved collaborative activity.
- 16.8.4 Drafts of the agreement should not include terms which are in direct contradiction to the Academic Regulations or quality assurance processes of the UCO. The contract must cover any provisos in place as a result of any approval/review event.
- 16.8.5 Each agreement is tailored to the individual requirements of the partnership.
- 16.8.6 All agreements must be signed by the Chair of the Academic Council to be enforceable. Notwithstanding this, there are a number of aspects which will be common to all agreements, unless otherwise explicitly stated:
 - a) Disputes will be resolved within the jurisdiction of English law.
 - b) Courses will be managed, and assessments conducted in accordance with the UCO's regulations and all assessment and examination arrangements must be approved by the UCO.
 - c) The UCO will specify the quality assurance arrangements for the provision concerned.
 - d) The partner's procedures for student discipline, complaints and grievances shall normally apply as approved at Partner Approval and shall contain a final stage of appeal to the UCO.
 - e) The UCO is responsible for the appointment of External Examiners.
 - f) The UCO reserves the right to arrange for an independent audit of the academic integrity of the examinations process.
 - g) Where Boards of Examiners are held at the partner, at least one member of staff of the UCO will be present, and a member of UCO staff will chair the Board.
 - h) The partner will provide the UCO with full, accurate personal details of students enrolled on courses leading to the UCO's awards, so that they may be registered with the UCO and entered on the UCO's student record system (failure to do so may result in students not having access to online resources and, ultimately, in not receiving an award from the UCO).
 - i) The UCO will be responsible for issuing award certificates to students who successfully complete the courses on which they are registered.
 - j) All publicity and promotional material is to be approved by the UCO, according to procedures as specified in each contract.
 - k) That each party must retain and, if requested, produce documentation and full records in relation to courses.
 - l) That serial franchising of any UCO provision is expressly prohibited.
- 16.8.7 The agreement should also be appropriate to the relationship with the partner and specify:
 - a) The names of the parties to the agreed contract, in addition to the UCO.
 - b) The provision associated with the partnership and the mode of its operation.
 - c) Contextual matters of a legal nature, for example intellectual property rights.
 - d) Procedures for resolving any differences that might arise in respect of the provision or the partnership.
 - e) The action to be taken if either partner is shown to be in serious breach of the contract, and the procedures to be followed in the event of a dispute between partner institutions.

- f) Financial arrangements governing the provision of resources, both physical and human, actual fees, costs, and charges.
 - g) Procedures and responsibilities in respect of the academic management of the course, particularly noting where these differ from those expressed in the UCO's Regulations or Academic Quality Framework, including academic appeals and student complaints.
 - h) The period of notice required for its termination and how the 'run out' of the course(s) associated with the contract will be handled, focusing on the rights of the students.
- 16.8.8 The agreement must include its period of validity, which would normally not exceed five years.
- 16.8.9 Following approval of the final version of the agreement by all parties, it must be signed by the appropriate members of UCO staff. It is then sent to the partner for their signature and on its return a copy is lodged with the Quality Team.
- 16.8.10 Collaborative agreements must not come into force until after the approval or review event is concluded to allow for any additional clauses emerging as a result to be incorporated.
- 16.8.11 Collaborative agreements must only be signed by the Vice-Chancellor or their nominated representative on behalf of the Academic Council in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the UCO.
- 16.8.12 In some circumstances it may be appropriate for senior staff to cement a prospective collaborative relationship with an overseas institution by signing a non-legally binding Memorandum of Understanding. The Memorandum of Understanding template (AQF16-02) should be used for this purpose.
- 16.8.13 Although not falling into the category of collaborative partnerships there may be a need to contract with agents for the recruitment of students. In these circumstances the collaborative agreement contents should comply with the guidance contained in the British Council document 'Recruitment Agents: A Legal & Regulatory Overview'⁵.

⁵ <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/recruitment-agents-a-legal-and-regulatory-overview.pdf>

PART 2: COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY INITIAL PROPOSAL APPROVAL

16.9 INITIAL PROPOSAL APPROVAL PROCESS: ASSOCIATE PARTNERS

- 16.9.1 The Collaborative Activity Initial Proposal Approval Process ensures that all proposed collaborations are in line with the Collaborative Partner Selection Criteria (see [Section 16.6](#)), are risk assessed and meet due diligence and site delivery requirements.
- 16.9.2 The Collaborative Activity Initial Proposal Approval Process is outlined in [Diagram 16.2a](#) and is explained in detail below. A recommended timeline for the Collaborative Activity approval process is provided in [Diagram 16.2b](#).

A) CONFIRMATION OF THE PROPOSAL

- 16.9.3 Sponsors of proposed collaborative activity should first consider the selection criteria for collaborative partners listed in [Section 16.6](#) and discuss and agree this with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 16.9.4 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will then inform the Head of Quality & Partnerships and Partnerships Quality Manager of the proposal, confirming the type of collaborative activity being proposed and advising the sponsor of the approval processes and timelines required.
- 16.9.5 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will confirm that the proposal may be taken forward formally.

B) PROPOSAL DOCUMENTATION

- 16.9.6 Following confirmation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) that the proposal may be taken forward, the sponsor will liaise with the Partnerships Quality Manager and the Head of Quality & Partnerships to complete the following proposal documentation. In all cases this will normally consist of the following:
- a) **Collaborative Activity Proposal Form (AQF16-03):** a formal rationale for the proposal which includes preliminary costings (to provide a projection of income and expenditure based upon an initial description of the activity, and to estimate the fee level that may be required to generate sustainable income to support the activity), any other non-financial benefits or detriments that may arise from partnership, identification of proposed arrangements for student recruitment, selection, admission and induction, availability and equivalency of partner learning resources and academic staffing of the proposed partner provision.
 - b) **Collaborative Activity Due Diligence & Risk Assessment Form (AQF16-04):** to categorise the proposal as low, medium, or high risk and enable key risk indicators to be identified and addressed during the development process. This form should consider the partner's status and capacity, its quality assurance arrangements, the country in which it is located, its collaborative experience, and its financial stability. Appendix 1 of this form will examine whether the prospective partner is an organisation with which the UCO would wish to work and be associated with, including financial, academic quality, and reputational perspectives. The partner must have the legal, financial and resource capacity to enter into a productive and sustainable relationship. Due diligence should be undertaken in liaison with the Finance Director.
 - c) **Collaborative Activity Delivery Site Visit Report (AQF16-05):** to verify reported information and provide assurance that the proposed partner is of good standing, will provide an educational experience of the quality and to the standard required and that the premises where provision is to be delivered is suitable and appropriate in liaison with the Partnerships Quality Manager. The process for undertaking Delivery Site Visits is provided below.

16.9.7 The sponsor of the proposal is responsible for submitting the proposal documentation to the Partnerships Quality Manager and Head of Quality & Partnerships within an agreed timeline.

C) DELIVERY SITE VISIT

16.9.8 Where courses leading to a UCO award are delivered at sites other than those at UCO premises, a delivery site visit is required to ensure that the facilities are appropriate for the provision.

16.9.9 Site visits are normally undertaken by delegated senior staff, who will liaise with the partner to confirm logistical arrangements and a partner representative to host the visit. A virtual tour of the partner's delivery site(s) may be undertaken where an in-person visit is not possible, however an in-person visit will normally be arranged as soon as it is possible to do so.

16.9.10 If a partner has multiple sites of delivery that they wish to include in the approval process an independent site visit will be required for each centre.

16.9.11 The delivery site visit will result in the production of a delivery site visit report (AQF16-05).

16.9.12 It is the responsibility of the allocated visitors to produce the report and should include confirmation about the site's suitability as a delivery location.

16.9.13 It is expected that the proposed partner institution will cover costs associated with the site visit, and these costs will be agreed in advance of the visit.

D) APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSAL

16.9.14 The Head of Quality & Partnerships will be responsible for presenting the proposed collaborative activity accompanied by the proposal documentation to the Senior Management Team for consideration and approval (specifically regarding the nature of the institution with which the collaboration is proposed, its strategic fit with the UCO and the completed due diligence and risk assessment to acknowledge potential hazards and ensure that any necessary mitigation may be put in place) and the Academic Council for consideration from an academic perspective.

16.9.15 Following approval of the proposed collaborative arrangement by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and Academic Council (AC):

- a) The Partnerships Quality Manager in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships initiates the appropriate approval process for the type of collaboration being proposed.
- b) The Head of Quality & Partnerships in liaison with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) begins drafting a Collaborative Agreement for the collaborative activity (seeking legal advice where necessary) in liaison with members of the Vice-Chancellor's Group and SMT as appropriate.

16.9.16 [Table 16.2](#) identifies the tasks and individual / committee responsibilities for the Collaborative Activity Initial Approval Process. Tasks should be undertaken in numerical order. Those listed under the same Stage Number take place concurrently.

TABLE 16.2: INITIAL COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY PROPOSAL APPROVAL PROCESS TASKS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Stage No.	Stage One Task	Responsibility
1	New collaborative activity is proposed and discussed with the Head of Quality & Partnerships and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).	Proposed Partner

2	Proposal approval process, documentation requirements (in line with the partner / provision proposed) and timelines for their completion are confirmed with the Proposed Partner.	Head of Quality & Partnerships Partnerships Quality Manager
3	Proposal approval documentation is completed in liaison with appropriate staff. Delivery Site Visit (if necessary) is arranged and completed.	Proposed Partner Site Visit Team
4	a) Consideration of the completed proposal approval documentation to confirm that the proposal fits with the UCO's academic and research strategy and conforms to the overarching principles of Collaborative Activity with the following possible outcomes: i. Approval to progress the proposal. ii. Approval to progress the proposal subject to recommended changes / further actions. iii. Approval of the proposal is not granted.	Academic Council (AC)
	b) a) Consideration of the completed proposal approval documentation to confirm that the proposal fits with the UCO's strategic objectives, human and physical resource availability and meets market demand as appropriate with the following possible outcomes: i. Approval to progress the proposal. ii. Approval to progress the proposal subject to recommended changes / further actions. iii. Approval of the proposal is not granted.	Senior Management Team (SMT)
5	a) Further to AC and SMT approval of the proposal approval documentation and a timeline and requirements of subsequent stages of the approval process are confirmed with the Proposed Partner.	Head of Quality & Partnerships Partnerships Quality Manager
	b) The Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC) is informed of the proposal approval outcome and undertakes subsequent monitoring of the progress of subsequent approval process stages.	Head of Quality & Partnerships
	c) If the proposed provision relates to Recognised Qualification provision the appropriate Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) is notified.	Proposed Partner

16.10 INITIAL PROPOSAL APPROVAL PROCESS: LINK PARTNERS

16.10.1 The Collaborative Activity Initial Proposal Approval Process ensures that all proposed collaborations are in line with the Collaborative Partner Selection Criteria (see [Section 16.6](#)), are risk assessed and meet due diligence and site delivery requirements.

16.10.2 The Collaborative Activity Initial Proposal Approval Process is outlined in [Diagram 16.2](#) and is explained in detail below.

A) CONFIRMATION OF THE PROPOSAL

- 16.10.3 Proposed partners or sponsors of proposed collaborative activity should first consider the selection criteria for collaborative partners listed in [Section 16.6](#) and discuss and agree this with the Head of Quality & Partnerships and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 16.10.4 The Head of Quality & Partnerships will confirm the type of collaborative activity being proposed and advises the partner / sponsor of the approval processes required.
- 16.10.5 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will confirm that the proposal may be taken forward formally.

B) PROPOSAL DOCUMENTATION

- 16.10.6 Following confirmation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) that the proposal may be taken forward, the partner / sponsor will liaise with the Partnerships Quality Manager and Head of Quality & Partnerships to confirm the proposal documentation to be completed. In all cases for both proposed collaborative partnerships and provision this will normally consist of the following:
- a) **Collaborative Activity Proposal Form (AQF16-03):** a formal rationale for the proposal which includes preliminary costings (to provide a projection of income and expenditure based upon an initial description of the activity, and to estimate the fee level that may be required to generate sustainable income to support the activity) and any other non-financial benefits or detriments that may arise from partnership, identification of proposed arrangements for student recruitment, selection, admission and induction, availability and equivalency of partner learning resources and academic staffing of the proposed partner provision.
 - b) **Collaborative Activity Due Diligence and Risk Assessment Form (AQF16-04):** to to enable key risk indicators to be identified and addressed during the development process. This form should consider the partner's status and capacity, its quality assurance arrangements, the country in which it is located, its collaborative experience, and its financial stability, in addition to undertaking due diligence.

C) DELIVERY SITE VISIT

- 16.10.7 For proposed Link Partners, a site visit is only required where the proposed outcome is a Study Centre Arrangement, in which case the process is as [detailed above](#) and in [Table 16.2](#).
- 16.10.8 Where a site visit is required a team of delegated senior staff will be appointed to undertake the visit, who will liaise with the partner to confirm logistical arrangements and a partner representative to host the visit. A virtual tour of the partner's delivery site(s) may be undertaken where an in-person visit is not possible, however an in-person visit will normally be arranged as soon as it is possible to do so.

d) APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSAL

- 16.10.9 The Head of Quality & Partnerships will be responsible for presenting the proposed collaborative activity accompanied by the proposal documentation to the Senior Management Team for consideration and approval (specifically regarding the nature of the institution with which the collaboration is proposed, its strategic fit with the UCO and the completed risk assessment to acknowledge potential hazards and ensure that any necessary mitigation may be put in place) and the Academic Council for consideration from an academic perspective.
- 16.10.10 Following approval of the proposed collaborative arrangement by the Senior Management Team and Academic Council:

- a) The Partnerships Quality Manager and Head of Quality & Partnerships initiates the appropriate approval process for the type of collaboration being proposed.
- b) The Head of Quality & Partnerships in liaison with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) begins drafting a Collaborative Agreement for the collaborative activity (seeking legal advice where necessary) in liaison with members of the Vice-Chancellor's Group and Senior Management Team as appropriate.

16.10.11 [Table 16.2](#) identifies the tasks and individual / committee responsibilities for the Collaborative Partner & Provision Proposal Approval Process which applies also to Link Partners. Tasks should be undertaken in numerical order. Those listed under the same Stage Number take place concurrently.

PART 3: COLLABORATIVE PARTNER APPROVAL

16.11 ASSOCIATE PARTNER APPROVAL PROCESS

16.11.1 The Associate Partner Approval Process is undertaken at an institutional level; this process is not normally applicable for Link Partners as these are institutions that the UCO has a formal relationship with, but which do not involve the partner delivering a course leading to an award of the UCO. Link Partners are therefore not normally approved at an institutional level but are approved according to the type of collaborative provision that will be undertaken with them (see [Section 16.19](#)).

16.11.2 An Associate Partner is a partner institution that has been approved by the UCO to deliver courses which lead to an award in its name.

16.11.3 All Associate Partner relationships must adhere to the requirements of the QAA's Quality Code for Higher Education regarding Partnerships⁶.

16.11.4 Following approval of the proposal to approve a new Associate Partner as outlined in Part 2, an institutional approval process is initiated to assure the UCO that the proposed partner institution fulfils the criteria detailed in [Section 16.6](#), and additionally establishing and confirming whether:

- a) The partner's mission, strategy and aims are compatible with those of the UCO.
- b) The partner's approach to teaching, learning and assessment are consonant with those of the UCO.
- c) Research carried out by staff at the partner underpins the curriculum.
- d) Suitable learning resources and a learning environment appropriate to higher education are available at the partner.
- e) The student experience at the partner will be equivalent to that at the UCO.
- f) There is an institutional commitment by senior management and teaching staff to the academic success of the collaboration.
- g) The partner institution is able to provide and sustain an ethos and learning environment appropriate to UK higher education in the subject(s) concerned.
- h) The learning opportunities provided by the partner are appropriate for the delivery and support of HE provision, and the partner is capable of providing a suitable learning experience.
- i) The partner possesses the financial collateral to guarantee the sustainability of the proposed collaborative agreement, at least for an appropriate period into the foreseeable future.

16.11.5 If a prospective partner has multiple sites of delivery that they wish to include in the approval process, independent approval for each site will be required to ensure that they fulfil the UCO's criteria detailed in section [16.6: Collaborative Partner Selection Criteria](#).

16.11.6 Approval of a proposed Associate Partner of the UCO includes the following stages:

- a) **Contact & Communication:** The identification of one of the partner's staff to act as the point of contact with the UCO throughout the institutional approval process to enable efficient communication regarding the submission documentation and event organization.

⁶ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/partnerships>

- b) **Approval Documentation:** The production and submission of a standard set of documentation by the partner together with the sponsor of the proposed collaborative arrangement.
- c) **Approval Panel Appointment:** Appointment of an approval panel of appropriately qualified members to consider the approval of the proposed collaborative partnership.
- d) **Approval Event:** An approval event where the approval panel review the documentation submission and meet with partner staff and students to fully review and evaluate the proposed collaboration enabling them to make an informed judgement to approve the partner at an institutional level in line with the approval criteria.
- e) **Approval Event Outcome:** The production of an approval event outcome report to formally communicate these to the partner and relevant UCO staff.
- f) **Reporting & Responding to Event Outcomes:** The production of a formal response to the outcome report by the partner and arrangements for monitoring the completion of approval conditions.
- g) **Formal Approval:** Confirmation of approval of the partner by the Academic Council and agreement and signing of the Collaborative Agreement cementing the partnership between the UCO and the partner.

A) ASSOCIATE PARTNER APPROVAL CONTACT & COMMUNICATION

16.11.7 The UCO's Quality Team will ask the partner to nominate an individual to act as the primary point of contact for the duration of the partner institutional approval process. This individual will normally be responsible for:

- a) Liaising with the UCO's nominated point of contact as appropriate.
- b) Submitting the required documentation to the UCO.
- c) Communicating approval event details and requirements to partner staff as appropriate.

16.11.8 Similarly, the UCO will nominate an individual, normally the Partnerships Quality Manager or a member of the Quality Team (or nominated individual), as the partner's primary point of contact for the duration of the partner institutional approval process. This individual will be responsible for:

- a) Liaising with the partner's nominated point of contact as appropriate.
- b) Confirming, requesting and receiving submission documentation from the proposed partner.
- c) Drafting the approval event agenda in liaison in consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- d) Confirming the membership of the approval panel in consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- e) Circulating submission documentation to the approval panel in good time.
- f) Taking minutes at the approval event.

B) ASSOCIATE PARTNER APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

16.11.9 The partner together with the UCO's sponsor proposing the collaborative partner will be required to produce a standard set of documentation that will be considered at the partner institutional approval event. At a minimum this will normally consist of a Self-Evaluation Document (SED) and prescriptive supporting documentation. However, if the nature of the partner requires it additional documents may be requested.

16.11.10 Documentation requirements will be confirmed by the Partnerships Quality Manager to the partner at the beginning of the partner institutional approval process in addition to an agreed submission deadline, which will normally be at least four weeks prior to the event.

16.11.11 Documentation should be submitted to the Quality Team in electronic format.

I) THE SELF-EVALUATION DOCUMENT (SED)

16.11.12 The Self-Evaluation Document (SED) should be produced by the partner using the UCO's Associate Partner SED template (AQF16-06).

16.11.13 The SED should describe what the partner's current status and processes are.

16.11.14 The SED provides the following information:

- 1) SED Section 1 (Rationale): A rationale for the proposed partnership from the partner's point of view.
- 2) SED Section 2 (The Partner Institution): Details about the nature of the partner institution, its background and context within Higher Education. Its current HE provision, the aims and objectives of this provision and how this provision is managed, including any collaborative relationships and provision and their context. Information about the partner institution's strategic direction and ethos and details about staff and student numbers.
- 3) SED Section 3 (Governance & Management): The partner institution's governance, management (both academic and administrative) and committee structures.
- 4) SED Section 4 (Student & External Feedback Arrangements): Details regarding the arrangements for seeking student and external (including employer) feedback, what course committee / staff-student committee system is in place, how these mechanisms are used to enhance the students' learning experience and how this is used to enhance the curriculum.
- 5) SED Section 5 (Quality Assurance Arrangements): Details regarding the arrangements for quality assurance (including course approval, annual monitoring, managing changes to courses and units, external examining, academic policies and procedure, the approval of marketing and publicity information as appropriate) and who holds responsibility for these arrangements.
- 6) SED Section 6 (Critical Commentary): a critical commentary on the following:
 - a) The quality of the students' educational experience provided by the partner, considering student admission, progression, and completion data over the past three years, with a particular focus on Higher Education.
 - b) The academic standards of courses currently delivered with reference to External Examiner reports and any reports from professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies as appropriate.
 - c) How teaching, learning and assessment strategies (including any concerning technology enhanced learning) align with those of the UCO.
 - d) Procedures for student complaints, academic appeals, and discipline.
 - e) The arrangements for student academic support and pastoral guidance including feedback to students on their assessment, careers advice and welfare services and how these align with those of the UCO.
 - f) Staffing resources including staff development and scholarship, research and professional activities that underpin the subjects delivered by the partner at Higher Education level.

g) The provision of learning resources including information technology, library, teaching and private study facilities.

7) SED Section 7 (Conclusion): Conclusions, including identification of areas of strength and weakness.

II) SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

16.11.15 The partner is also required to submit documentation in support of the SED as outlined in [Table 16.3](#). Where the partner intends to utilize UCO procedures, this should be clearly stated within the SED.

TABLE 16.3: SED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

SED Section	Supporting Documentation to be Submitted in Support
Section 1: Rationale	N/A
Section 2: The Partner Institution	Strategic Plan (or equivalent). Mission Statement (or equivalent). Staff data (number of part-time and full-time staff, academic and administrative). Student admission, progression and completion data for the past three years.
Section 3: Governance & Management	Governance / Management / Committee Structure Diagrams. Committee Terms of Reference.
Section 4: Student & External Feedback Arrangements	Course Team Committee Terms of Reference. Student-Staff Committee Terms of Reference. Student Voice Mechanism Diagrams. Examples of questionnaires used to gather student feedback.
Section 5: Quality Assurance Arrangements	Quality Handbook or equivalent, including course approval, annual monitoring, managing changes to courses and units, external examining, academic policies and procedure as appropriate. Mechanisms for approving marketing and publicity information with clear lines of responsibility. External Quality Assurance Reports (e.g. from the QAA, IQER or overseas report, in-county professional quality assurance bodies and professional bodies).
Section 6: Critical Commentary	Student admission, progression and completion data for the past three years. Most recent External Examiner reports and responses. Recent reports from professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. Teaching, learning and assessment strategies (including any concerning technology enhanced learning). Student Complaint Procedure with clear lines of responsibility. Academic Appeal Procedure with clear lines of responsibility.

	<p>Academic Discipline Procedure with clear lines of responsibility.</p> <p>Samples of assessment feedback provided to students.</p> <p>Student academic support and welfare arrangements and procedures.</p> <p>Careers advice arrangements and procedures.</p> <p>Staffing list and CVs.</p>
Section 7: Conclusion	N/A

C) ASSOCIATE PARTNER APPROVAL PANEL APPOINTMENT

- 16.11.16 The membership of the approval panel for the Associate Partner institution approval event is shown in [Table 16.4](#) and is constructed to allow for each member to focus on a specific set of areas; panel members may, however, pursue any relevant line of questioning outside of their area of focus.
- 16.11.17 Any change in the composition of the panel must be agreed in advance by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) who will ensure that the membership is appropriate for the context of the event.
- 16.11.18 Approval panel members are provided with guidance (AQF16-07) about their role by the Quality Team upon appointment, including information about the location and time of the event and payment of fees and expenses where applicable.
- 16.11.19 Approval panel members will normally receive Approval Documentation electronically four weeks in advance of the approval event; they may request a hard copy of the documentation from the Partnerships Quality Manager.
- 16.11.20 The Associate Partner Approval Panel is responsible for and is required to:
- Review the Approval Documentation and identify lines of enquiry that they wish to pursue at the approval event prior to the event using the Partner Approval Panel Feedback Form (AQF16-08).
 - Attend the approval event in its entirety and to contribute to discussions and decision-making as required of their role.
 - Consider the partner proposal in accordance with the Partner Institution Approval Criteria (see [Section 16.9E](#)).
 - Produce an Associate Partner Approval Outcome Report structured on the [Associate Partner Approval Criteria](#).

A) ASSOCIATE PARTNER EXTERNAL PANEL MEMBER NOMINATION PROCESS

- 16.11.35 The partner will liaise with the Partnerships Quality Manager to nominate an external panel member for the review panel to act on behalf of the UCO normally at least two months before the date of the event or within the agreed timeline.
- 16.11.36 The External Panel Member should be appropriate for the scope of the event. It is not necessary for the External Panel Member to be an academic; a senior member of professional services staff may be appointed if they have relevant experience of collaborative partnerships.
- 16.11.37 External panel members should not normally have had a link with either the UCO or the partner during the previous five-year period.
- 16.11.38 Nominations should be submitted to the Quality Team using the appropriate nomination form (Form AQF16-09) and be accompanied by the nominee's CV.

- 16.11.21 The Quality Team will seek approval of the nomination by the TQSC at its next available meeting (or by TQSC Chair's Action where review timelines require this).
- 16.11.22 The Quality Team will liaise with the external panel members as to their remit. This will normally include providing guidance to the external and other panel members regarding their expectations, their expected time commitment, fees and expenses and opportunity for a pre-panel meeting to ensure that they are clear about their role.

TABLE 16.4: NORMAL MEMBERSHIP OF ASSOCIATE PARTNER APPROVAL AND REVIEW EVENTS

Panelist	Criteria for Appointment	Panel Role
A Chair	A member of the Senior Management Team (normally also a member of the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC)) or senior academic outside of that proposing the collaboration.	To lead discussions and to look at the congruence of the partner's mission and strategy with that of the UCO's.
A Senior Member of UCO Staff	A senior staff member un-related to provision in the institution.	To give an internal but independent view on issues relating to compliance with UCO processes, general teaching and learning issues, the learning experience and environment and general resource issues.
An External Member	An external member who has experience of working in a collaborative partnership, nominated by the partner but approved by the UCO. The external member should be appropriate for the scope of the event and, if possible, the nature of the course/s proposed to be delivered at the partner institution and should not have had a link with either the UCO or the partner during the previous five-year period.	To look at general teaching and learning issues, the learning experience and environment, general resource issues and comparisons with the sector.
A Quality Assurance Representative	Appointed by the Head of Quality & Partnerships.	To look at issues relating to compliance with UCO processes and with QAA requirements and other external reference points.
A Secretary	Appointed by the Head of Quality & Partnerships.	To liaise with Panel members regarding logistical arrangements and to minute the approval event.
A Student Member	A current student or recent alumnus.	To take a lead on issues about the student experience.

B) ASSOCIATE PARTNER APPROVAL EVENT

- 16.11.23 The date and agenda for the partner approval event will be confirmed by the Partnerships Quality Manager in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), the partner and relevant UCO staff members.

- 16.11.24 The approval event is normally held at the partner institution to enable the approval panel to tour and assure the quality and standard of the partner's facilities.
- 16.11.25 The approval event will normally follow the standard agenda ([Table 16.5](#)) and include the following:
- a) A meeting with senior staff of the partner institution and senior staff from the UCO faculty to which they will be linked through the provision it is proposed they deliver, to discuss strategic and management issues.
 - b) A meeting with 6-10 students representing those studying on each of the UCO's courses at the partner institution, normally from different stages of the course(s) and including student representatives.
 - c) A tour of the partner institution's facilities to include any specialist facilities.
- 16.11.26 The standard approval event agenda may be tailored to suit the requirements of the event.
- 16.11.27 It is expected that the proposed partner institution will cover costs associated with the approval event, and these costs will be agreed in advance of the visit.

TABLE 16.5: STANDARD ASSOCIATE PARTNER APPROVAL EVENT AGENDA

Time	Meeting	Required Attendance
10:00	Private meeting of the panel to set the agenda for the first meeting and agree lines of enquiry.	The Approval Panel.
10:30	Panel meeting with the Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent) of the partner institution.	The Approval Panel. The Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent) of the partner institution.
11:00	Tour of the partner institution's facilities.	The Approval Panel. The Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent) of the partner institution.
11:30	Short presentation from the partner institution's Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent) to provide an overview of current activities at the institution and their strategic direction, followed by a meeting with partner management team to discuss issues surrounding the institutional partnership (and how the proposed partnership would fit in with the UCO's strategic aims) staffing, resourcing and staff development.	The Approval Panel. The Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent) of the partner institution. The partner institution's senior management team.
12:30	Meeting with course management and student support leads from relevant departments to discuss the setting and maintenance of academic standards and support for the quality of provision and the student experience.	The Approval Panel. Course Management Team. Student Support Leads.
13:30	Lunch including meeting with a representative sample of students, including student	The Approval Panel. Representative Sample of Students.

	representatives, to discuss the student experience.	Student Representatives.
14:30	Private meeting of the panel to confirm whether an additional meeting is required or, if not, to confirm outcomes of the approval event.	The Approval Panel
15:30	Feedback of approval event outcomes to the partner and close of meeting (preceded by an additional meeting if required).	The Approval Panel. The partner institution's senior management team.

C) ASSOCIATE PARTNER APPROVAL CRITERIA

16.11.28 The panel is required to consider the following criteria when reviewing and approving an Associate Partner proposal. They will typically structure the event outcome report on these criteria, noting practice that is innovative and/or likely to be of interest to others.

16.11.29 These criteria form the basis of the SED and partners are therefore recommended to consider and structure the SED on these criteria:

a) *Rationale*

- i. The rationale for the proposed partnership is clearly articulated and aligns with the UCO's selection criteria for collaborative partners.

b) *Nature of the Partner*

- i. The nature of the partner institution is clearly articulated.
- ii. The aims, objectives and management of the partner's higher education provision are clearly articulated and align with the UCO's.
- iii. The partner's strategic direction and ethos is clearly articulated and is in line with that of the UCO's.
- iv. Other collaborative relationships which the partner has are clearly articulated.
- v. The staffing profiles (e.g., numbers, range of qualifications of staff, diversity, etc.) of the partner are clearly articulated and healthy.
- vi. The student profiles (e.g., student numbers per cohort, admission and progression data, diversity of student body, immigration compliance and reporting, etc.) are clearly articulated and healthy.

c) *Governance & Management*

- i. The academic and administrative governance and management structures of the partner are clearly articulated.
- ii. Committee membership and terms of reference are appropriate.

d) *Quality Assurance Arrangements*

- i. The partner institution's arrangements for quality assurance and management (including course approval, annual monitoring, managing changes to courses and units, external examining, academic policies and procedure, the approval of marketing and publicity information as appropriate) are clearly articulated and appropriate.
- ii. Responsibilities for quality assurance arrangements and management are clearly articulated and appropriate.

e) Feedback Arrangements

- i. The partner institution's arrangements for seeking student and employer feedback are clearly articulated and appropriate.
- ii. There are appropriate mechanisms in place for obtaining and responding to student feedback on the student experience.
- iii. Appropriate student feedback and consultation mechanisms are in place at the partner institution and enhance the students' learning experience.
- iv. There is evidence that student and employer feedback is used to enhance the curriculum.

f) The Student Experience

- i. There is evidence that the students' educational experience is of a high standard.
- ii. Study materials and assessment are equivalent in quality and the learning experience they support to those provided by the UCO in other learning contexts.

g) Academic Standards

- i. The partner has clear and appropriate processes in place to verify and benchmark academic standards.

h) Teaching, Learning & Assessment

- i. Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategies are clearly articulated and align with those of the UCO.

i) Student Appeals, Complaints & Discipline

- i. There are policies and procedures in place at the partner institution regarding student appeals, complaints and discipline and align with those of the UCO.
- ii. Confirmation is made whether the partner's or the UCO's policies and procedures will be used should the partner be approved.

j) Academic & Pastoral Support

- i. There are appropriate opportunities for, and sound arrangements in place for academic and pastoral support at the partner institution.
- ii. The partner makes available support to students in respect of any critical course-related choices or decisions (e.g., electives, placements).
- iii. Arrangements are in place for any language or other support required by particular groups of students (disability, overseas, etc.).

k) Staffing Resources

- i. The human resources available (or the plans that are in place to provide them) and the environment within which provision will be offered, are satisfactory.
- ii. There is confidence in the partner to develop and deliver provision.
- iii. Staff are externally engaged with relevant subject and professional communities, such as the AdvanceHE⁷ and through external examining and other networking roles.
- iv. The quality of provision and its further enhancement are fully supported by research, scholarship, and academic enterprise within the academic staff.

- v. There is a staff development policy in place that values and encourages academic and professional development activity by staff.
- vi. The research and scholarly activity of delivery teams are sufficient to maintain the standards of provision and enrich the curriculum with contemporary developments in subject areas, particularly to underpin work at QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level 6 and FHEQ Level 7.

l) Physical Resources

- i. Library, learning resources, IT and teaching resources and facilities are available and adequate.
- ii. Processes are in place to manage ongoing improvements / replacements to resources.

m) Financial Resources

- i. Institutional financial statements demonstrate an appropriate level of financial stability.
- ii. The institution has a viable strategy for its financial stability in future years.

D) ASSOCIATE PARTNER APPROVAL EVENT OUTCOMES

- 16.11.30 At the conclusion of an approval event a series of provisional outcomes will be determined by the approval panel and communicated verbally by the Panel Chair to the partner at the end of the event.
- 16.11.31 Possible outcomes of Associate Partner Approval Events are:
- a) Approval with no conditions.
 - b) Approval with conditions which may include either or both of the following:
 - i. Approval Conditions - where the additional work is substantial and required to satisfy the panel that the partnership meets UCO requirements in respect of standards and / or quality.
 - ii. Delivery Conditions - where updates to paperwork and course documentation are required.
 - c) Non-approval (either with a recommendation to reconsider partner approval at a later date or to withdraw the proposal)
- 16.11.32 The outcome may also include any recommendations that the panel feel will enhance the partner or partnership; by their very nature recommendations do not have to be addressed, but it is expected that actions taken to progress them or reasons for not doing so should be included in the partner's response to the approval event outcomes.
- 16.11.39 The dates by which conditions should be fulfilled should be appropriate and manageable and included within the outcome and may be negotiated with the partner.
- 16.11.40 The name of the person responsible for managing the response to conditions and for providing the final formal response should also be clearly articulated.
- 16.11.41 Both conditions and recommendations can be directed towards the partner and/or the UCO.
- 16.11.42 The partner will be formally notified of the confirmed approval event outcomes in writing through an event outcome report (see below).

E) REPORTING & RESPONDING TO ASSOCIATE PARTNER APPROVAL EVENT OUTCOMES

- 16.11.43 Following the approval event, an approval event outcome report to formally communicate the event outcomes to the partner in writing will be prepared by the Panel Secretary. The

report will contain a full record of the event including discussions held, the agreed approval conditions and recommendations and reasons for the panel's conclusions.

- 16.11.44 The Secretary to the panel circulates the report to the members of the approval panel for confirmation and final approval and sign off by the Panel Chair.
- 16.11.45 The Panel Secretary then circulates the approved report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Head of Quality & Partnerships, Partnerships Quality Manager, the partner, and appropriate UCO colleagues. The Panel Secretary will also provide the partner with the Partner Approval Conditions Response Form (AQF16-10) and a deadline for its completion.
- 16.11.46 The partner will be responsible for completing and returning the Partner Approval Conditions Response Form (AQF16-10) within the requisite timeframe to the Quality Team which will be forwarded to the Panel Chair for approval and sign off.
- 16.11.47 The approval event outcomes report and the response form will then be reviewed by the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC). Following its endorsement, the TQSC, will recommend approval of the partnership to the Academic Council.
- 16.11.48 Should the TQSC require amendments to be made to either report for accuracy or completeness the Quality Team will distribute an updated version to all parties.
- 16.11.49 Similarly, the initial risk assessment may be re-visited and mitigation factors amended as appropriate. The Quality Team will distribute the updated version to all parties.

F) ASSOCIATE PARTNER FORMAL APPROVAL

- 16.11.50 The Academic Council is responsible for considering and formally approving the proposed partnership.
- 16.11.51 Following approval of the new partnership by the Academic Council:
 - i. The Chair of the Academic Council will sign off the Response Form which serves as confirmation of approval.
 - ii. The Partnerships Quality Manager shall confirm the approval of the new partnership with the partner institution and relevant internal colleagues by circulating the signed Response Form.
 - iii. The new partner will be entered into the Collaborative Activity Register by the Quality Team.
 - iv. The draft Collaborative Agreement is agreed and signed between the partner and the UCO.

16.12 LINK PARTNERS & PART 3

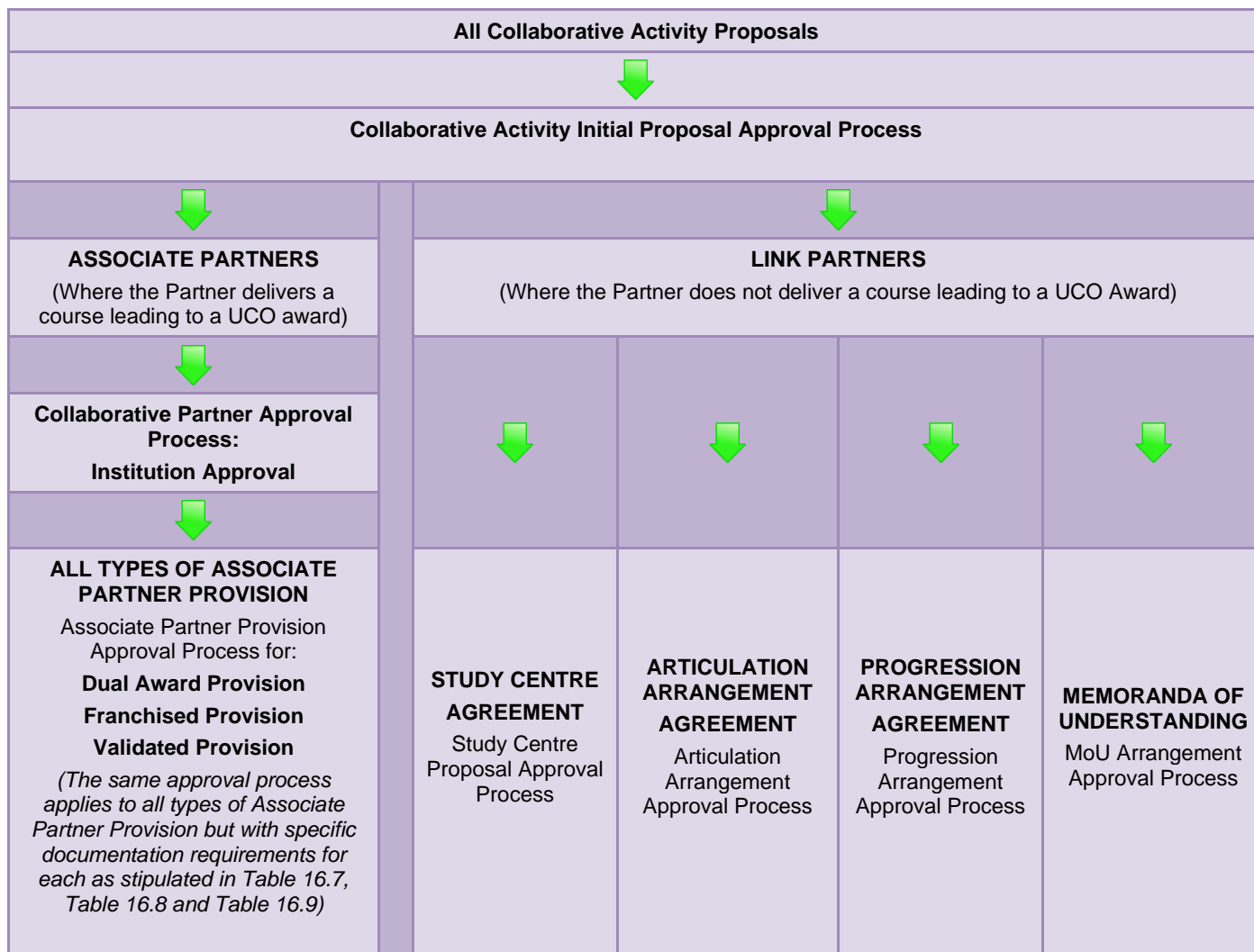
- 16.12.35 Link Partners are institutions that the UCO has a formal relationship with, but which do not involve the partner delivering a course leading to an award of the UCO. Subsequently they are not normally approved at an institutional level but are approved according to the type of collaborative provision that will be undertaken with them (see [Section 16.17](#)). Therefore, potential Link Partners do not engage in Part 3, instead moving directly to the relevant section of Part 4, depending on whether the provision sought is an articulation arrangement, progression arrangement, memorandum of understanding, or study centre arrangement.
- 16.12.36 If a Link Partner wishes to progress to a relationship where they deliver a course leading to an award of the UCO, they will be required to follow the Associate Partner Approval process detailed in Part 3 and the Associate Partner Provision process detailed in Part 4.

PART 4: COLLABORATIVE PROVISION APPROVAL

16.13 OVERVIEW OF COLLABORATIVE PROVISION APPROVAL PROCESSES

16.13.35 For clarity there is an approval process for each type of collaborative provision that is proportionate to the provision being approved as outlined in [Diagram 16.1](#).

DIAGRAM 16.1A: COLLABORATIVE PROVISION APPROVAL PROCESS OVERVIEW



16.14 QUALITY ASSURANCE & MANAGEMENT OF COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

16.14.35 Whilst different types of collaborative provision will involve differences in the ongoing quality assurance and management of the collaboration, there are certain elements which are relevant to all circumstances which include:

- a) **Assurance of Quality and Standards:** In accordance with the QAA's Quality Code for Higher Education regarding Partnerships⁸, the UCO is responsible for securing and maintaining the academic standards of all credit and qualifications granted in its name; these responsibilities are never delegated to the partner institution.
- b) **Confirmation of Academic Regulations:** Unless variations are expressly confirmed through collaborative provision and course approval, the UCO's Academic Regulations will apply in all circumstances (see AQF Section 7: Academic Regulations). A rationale will be required for any variance, e.g., the need to adhere to requirements of a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB).
- c) **Appointment of External Examiners:** The UCO retains full responsibility for the selection and appointment of External Examiners for all collaborative provision as documented in AQF Section 11: External Examining. For all collaborative arrangements it additionally requires that:
 - i. Prospective External Examiners must have had no connection in the previous five years with the UCO or partner institution.
 - ii. Where the Academic Council has exceptionally approved that the language of instruction and/or assessment is not English, that External Examiners have the necessary language skills.
 - iii. Where the provision is franchised, it will normally be the case that the current External Examiner is also asked to cover the collaborative iteration of the course.
 - iv. Where the provision is validated, the UCO may agree a procedure with the partner whereby they are able to nominate External Examiners for approval by the UCO. In such cases this will be recorded in the Collaborative Agreement for the partnership. However, in all cases it will be the UCO's responsibility to issue contracts to External Examiners and to pay their fees and expenses.
 - v. The UCO will prepare the External Examiner to undertake their role. Where the provision contains a specialist form of assessment, supplementary preparation may be provided by the partner, in conjunction with the UCO. The UCO will also hold an annual training day for new and continuing External Examiners.
 - vi. On appointment, the External Examiner will receive a contract, a letter detailing requirements and expectations and a copy of the UCO's Academic Quality Framework and other necessary regulations.
 - vii. Any request to extend an External Examiner's duties beyond the normal requirements must be expressly approved by the Academic Council.
 - viii. The arrangements for responding to External Examiners' reports regarding collaborative provision are described at [Section 16.37](#).

⁸ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/partnerships>

- d) **Student Conduct & Discipline:** In all matters of conduct and discipline (other than matters included within the UCO's policy on academic conduct) students are subject to the relevant rules and procedures of the partner institution. Where a disciplinary matter has implications for quality and standards (in the case of assessment irregularities, for example) the matter will normally be referred to the UCO for consideration under its Academic Discipline Policy & Procedures⁹.
- e) **Student Complaints:** All complaints should be addressed through the student complaints procedure of the partner in the first instance. If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the partner's complaints procedure, they may bring the complaint to the attention of the UCO. The UCO will only consider complaints in relation to issues concerning the delivery or assessment of the course of study or the resources provided directly to support study on the course. Other issues, including non-academic matters, may not normally be referred to the UCO.
- f) **Academic Offences:** Cases of academic offences (collusion, fabrication, cheating, impersonation, and plagiarism) will normally be dealt with under the UCO's Academic Discipline Policy & Procedures. Academic offences will normally be investigated jointly by the UCO and the partner and considered by the UCO's Academic Conduct Panel unless exceptionally agreed at collaborative partner and / or provision approval. Where appropriate, responsibility for investigating and managing academic offences may be delegated to the partner. Irrespective of this, students will still be able to request a review of the judgement of the academic offence which shall be included within the partner's academic offence procedure.
- g) **Academic Appeals:** Academic appeals against a Board of Examiners' decision submitted by students at a partner institution will be processed according to the UCO's Academic Appeals Policy¹⁰, unless exceptionally agreed at collaborative partner and / or provision approval. Where appropriate, responsibility for undertaking Stage One investigations under the policy and responding to the appellant may be delegated to the partner, and this will be confirmed at partner / provision approval. Irrespective of this, students will still be able to request a review of the initial judgement via the UCO's Appeal Review Board, as described in Stage Two of the policy.
- h) **Approval of Partner Staff:** At events to approve and review delivery of collaborative provision the approval of partner staff will be required as follows:
 - i. Partners will be required to submit CVs of all staff teaching on the course(s) along with confirmation from the appropriate senior UCO faculty that they have all been approved as appropriate to deliver the approved course(s) of study.
 - ii. It is recognized that between approval and review events staff at the partner may change and that the UCO must continue to assure itself that new members of staff are suitability qualified.
 - iii. In these circumstances the partner will submit a copy of the new member of staff's CV plus information regarding which units they will teach on to the Quality Team using the Collaborative Partner Staff CV Coversheet (AQF-16-11).
 - iv. The Partnerships Quality Manager will then confirm with the CPSC the suitability of the new partner staff member and the partner will be informed of this decision.
 - v. Partner staff who have not been approved will not be eligible to teach on the course of study leading to an award of the UCO.

⁹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

¹⁰ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- i) **Collaborative Partner Staff Development:** The UCO aims to ensure that, wherever practicable, staff teaching on courses leading to an award of the UCO at partner institutions are invited to participate in its subject-based and pedagogical staff development courses, and that they are engaged in the business of the relevant department. Partner staff are therefore provided with the following development opportunities:
- i. Staff at Collaborative Partner institutions have open access to relevant procedural documents, useful web links and guidance produced by the UCO. They may also be provided with relationship-specific information, including the Collaborative Provision Operations Manual (CPOM).
 - ii. Transnational education (TNE) partners (i.e., those based overseas) will be provided with an intensive set of development and assimilation sessions at the beginning of the collaboration. Members of partner staff will meet with the Quality Team, Academic Registry, and relevant faculty to familiarise them with key UCO processes.
 - iii. Depending on the precise nature of the collaborative relationship, Link Tutors (or their equivalent) are charged with continuing to provide appropriate staff development and with facilitating the attendance of staff at collaborating institutions at departmental and Faculty events. This may include providing staff development and instruction with regard to academic policy and procedures, moderation and assessment etc. Reporting structures are in place which, where appropriate, feed into the UCO's Annual Monitoring Reporting cycle (see AQF Section 5: Annual Monitoring & Reporting).
 - iv. The UCO also provides opportunities for professional and personal development during the course of the relationship. Fee waivers are available in most cases to promote and encourage engagement. These opportunities include:
 - a) Relevant activity-specific training sessions for staff in associate partner institutions, such as training on the use of relevant electronic platforms.
 - b) Professional development courses such as the Post Graduate Certificate in Academic and Clinical Education and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses.
 - c) Support for developing the curriculum through the CPSC and TQSC.
 - d) Support through Course Teams, the CPSC and the Quality Team, where needed, typically covering subjects such as assessment, moderation, and changes to quality assurance processes.
 - e) Partner representation on UCO committees, participating and contributing to enhancement and development.
 - f) Access to other academic courses run by the UCO not linked to their role.
 - v. In addition, staff development is provided where needed to align partner institutions with the implementation of strategic initiatives, such as the use of learning technologies.
 - vi. Other, specific, staff development requirements may need to be addressed as a result of approval / review events, feedback from students and through the outcomes of annual reporting processes (see AQF Section 5: Annual Reporting and Monitoring).
- j) **Certificates and Transcripts:** As the awarding body, the UCO retains sole responsibility for issuing award certificates. The responsibility for providing students with transcripts may be devolved to the partner. In the case of dual awards, the UCO will retain responsibility for the production of certificates. If it is agreed that the UCO will not produce both, this will be explicitly agreed and incorporated into the Collaborative Provision Operations Manual. In all circumstances it is the UCO's responsibility to ensure that certificates and transcripts are

only issued to students who have satisfied the assessment and examination requirements for the award. The following will also apply:

- i. Student information which appears on the certificate and transcript will only be taken from that formally recorded on the UCO's student record system. Partners must ensure that the information they provide to the UCO regarding students is accurate and must inform the UCO immediately if any details change, for example if a student changes their name upon marriage.
 - ii. The wording on the certificate or transcript will be consistent with the UCO's general words and terms for these documents. For transcripts issued to students studying with collaborative partners this will also record the name of the partner institution.
 - iii. Where an exceptional variation has been approved to the language of instruction and/or assessment from English, this will also be stated.
- k) The location of the awards ceremony for graduands from partners will be a matter for negotiation between the partner and the UCO in the light of preferences expressed by the graduands and financial considerations.

16.15 ASSOCIATE PARTNER PROVISION: TYPES OF PROVISION

16.15.35 The types of collaborative provision that may be undertaken by Associate Partners are:

- a) Dual Award Provision – where the UCO and the partner institution, which has its own degree awarding powers, collaborate to provide a course at the partner institution, which leads to successful students achieving an award from both.
- b) Franchised Provision – where the UCO authorizes the delivery of its own approved course/s wholly by a partner institution, while retaining oversight of the course's content, delivery method and pattern, assessment, and quality assurance arrangements
- c) Validated Provision – where the UCO has judged that a course developed and delivered by another institution without degree awarding powers is of an appropriate quality and standard to lead to a UCO award.

16.16 ASSOCIATE PARTNER PROVISION: MODES OF DELIVERY

16.16.35 Different modes of delivery may be considered when proposing associate partner provision as shown in [Table 16.5](#). The modes of delivery and requirements for the approval of each and are described in detail below.

16.16.36 The approval of modes of delivery is undertaken as part of the provision approval process described below.

TABLE 16.5: ASSOCIATE PARTNER PROVISION: MODES OF DELIVERY

Mode of Delivery	Definition & Requirements
a) Partner Delivery	Where partner staff deliver the provision at the partner institution (on their premises).
b) Flying Faculty	Where UCO staff deliver the provision at the partner institution (on their premises) as a "flying faculty", with an element of support (i.e. resources, pastoral and academic support) provided by partner staff.

A) PARTNER DELIVERY

- 16.16.37 Partner Delivery – whether dual award, franchise, or validation provision – is the most common form of delivery mode.
- 16.16.38 Approval will be considered under the standard provision approval processes.
- 16.16.39 For UK-based collaborations what must also be considered is how any funding through the Office for Students associated with the provision is attributed, i.e., whether the partner has their own number of students which are directly funded by the Office for Students or whether the funding (and therefore the student numbers) belongs to the UCO.
- 16.16.40 Although the UCO's responsibilities in relation to quality assurance will remain the same, partners will normally be responsible for the following:
- a) The recruitment and selection of students.
 - b) The admission, guidance, and induction of students.
 - c) The provision of all necessary learning resources.
- 16.16.41 As the awarding body the UCO must assure itself that the partner has the necessary staff resources and processes in place to administer (a) and (b), and that these processes are aligned with the QAA's Quality Code for Higher Education regarding Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Participation¹¹.
- 16.16.42 Regarding (c) the UCO must assess and confirm whether the learning resources available at the partner are sufficient to replace any formerly offered by the UCO, or whether the partner will 'buy in' to use the UCO's resources. 'Buying in' to use the UCO's resources should be negotiated and confirmed between the UCO and the partner during the Proposal and Development Stage (Stage One) of the provision approval process.
- 16.16.43 It is advised that if a partner wishes to pursue the Partner Delivery mode using their own student numbers, the provision approval process is initiated as early as possible in the academic year, as the results of core / margin funding bids are usually not known until late in the session; the UCO reserves the right to decline to undertake an associate partner provision approval event where there are concerns as to whether due process can be followed in the timeframe available.

B) FLYING FACULTY

- 16.16.44 Where a partner wishes UCO staff to deliver the provision at the partner institution (on their premises) as a "flying faculty" with an element of support (i.e., resources, pastoral, and academic support) provided by partner staff, a standard Associate Partner provision approval event should be convened, following the same stages with the same documentation requirements.
- 16.16.45 Given the students' geographical separation from the teaching staff and the mode of delivery (which may often be block teaching), the panel's questions at the approval event should focus on:
- a) The suitability and availability of the learning materials.
 - b) The provision of student support.
 - c) The efforts taken by the course team to safeguard the student experience.
 - d) The way in which the course will be delivered.

¹¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access>

16.17 ASSOCIATE PARTNER PROVISION APPROVAL PROCESS

16.17.35 The approval of Dual Award, Franchised and Validated Provision is undertaken using the same three-stage process:

- a) Stage One: Proposal Approval (completed during Part 2)
- b) Stage Two: Approval Documentation Development & Submission
- c) Stage Three: Formal Approval

A) STAGE ONE: PROPOSAL APPROVAL (COMPLETED DURING PART 2)

16.17.36 All new Associate Partner provision proposals must be approved in line with the Collaborative Activity Proposal Approval Process outlined in Part 2. A summary of the documents submitted during the Initial Proposal Approval is shown in Table 16.7.

TABLE 16.6: ASSOCIATE PARTNER PROVISION PROPOSAL APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

Type of Associate Partner Provision Proposed	Stage One Documentation Required
Dual Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New Course Proposal Form (see AQF04-01) b) Course Modification Form (see AQF04-17)
Franchised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New Course Proposal Form (see AQF04-01) b) Course Modification Form (see AQF04-17)
Validated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New Course Proposal Form (see AQF04-01)

16.17.37 Once the proposal has been approved the Partnerships Quality Manager will confirm approval documentation and submission requirements and convene the required approval events in consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Head of Quality & Partnerships and Partner.

B) STAGE TWO: APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION DEVELOPMENT & SUBMISSION

16.17.38 Following the successful completion of Stage One, the Partnerships Quality Manager in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships will confirm documentation requirements and timelines for their production and submission with the Partner.

16.17.39 At a minimum, the standard set of documentation shown in [Table 16.7](#) should be produced for the different types of Associate Partner Provision (i.e., Dual Award, Franchised and Validated provision).

16.17.40 Dual Award Provision requires additional documentation to be submitted as shown in [Table 16.8](#).

16.17.41 In all cases the required documentation will be produced by the Partner.

16.17.42 If the nature of the partner requires it, additional documentation may be requested, for example where student numbers are directly funded to the partner by the Office for Students. This will be confirmed with the UCO at the earliest opportunity.

TABLE 16.7: REQUIRED ASSOCIATE PARTNER PROVISION APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

Required Course Approval Document	Document Description Also refer to AQF Section 4: course Approval & Modification for descriptions of documentation requirements.
An Academic Rationale (AQF04-07)	<p>The Academic Rationale should provide evidence about the following regarding the proposed course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic strength and significance. Strategic fit and viability. Quality of the learning experience. Quality and standards of the course. Course structure. Assessment. Regulatory and technical compliance. Staffing and resources. Student support and guidance. Course management. Quality of flexible delivery arrangements. <p>The Academic Rationale should be written with the New Course Approval Panel as the intended audience.</p> <p>Guidance for writing the Academic Rationale is provided in the Academic Rationale Template.</p>
The signed New Course Approval Form / Course and Unit Modification Form. (AQF04-01 / AQF04-18)	The completed and signed New Course Approval Form / Course and Unit Modification Form approved at Stage One to enable the approval panel to consider the rationale and market demand of the proposal.
Course Information Form (CIF) (AQF04-04a)	The CIF relevant to the provision proposed.
Unit Information Forms (UIFs) (AQF04-05a)	The UIFs relevant to the provision proposed.
Course Handbook (AQF04-06)	The Course Handbook based on the UCO's Course Handbook template and tailored for the partner.
Staff CVs (AQF04-09)	<p>The CVs of all staff delivering the provision.</p> <p>CVs of partner staff should be accompanied by confirmation of their suitability by the Partner.</p> <p>These should be provided in PDF format.</p>
External Benchmark Mapping (AQF04-08)	<p>The External Benchmark Mapping document should demonstrate how the course maps onto appropriate external benchmarks.</p> <p>It is expected that courses will be mapped to the following external benchmarks as a minimum:</p>

	<p>QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education¹², including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications Frameworks • Characteristics Statements (if applicable) • Credit Frameworks • Subject Benchmark Statements <p>SEEC Level Descriptors¹³</p> <p>Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) standards of practice (if applicable).</p>
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16.17.43 Additional paperwork is required for proposed Dual Award provision which will allow students to gain an award from the UCO and the partner on the basis of the same assessed work. Despite this duality, the UCO must ensure that the academic standards of the award given in its name are safeguarded. This additional paperwork ensures the panel has the opportunity to consider whether these safeguards are in place and is shown in [Table 16.8](#).

TABLE 16.8: REQUIRED ADDITIONAL APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION FOR DUAL AWARD PROVISION

Required Course Approval Document	Document Description
Legal Confirmation	Confirmation by the partner that it has the legal capacity to enter into a dual award partnership.
Dual Award Unit Mapping (AQF16-12)	Mapping at unit level, prepared by the Partner, confirming that the partner's course is equivalent to the UCO's in terms of curriculum, FHEQ level, notional effort, and assessment load. The mapping should clearly identify where there are discrepancies.
Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy.	A copy of the partner's learning, teaching and assessment strategy.
Quality Assurance Handbook & Mapping	A copy of the partner's Quality Assurance Handbook (or equivalent) and a mapping, prepared by the partner, comparing this against the UCO's Academic Quality Framework.
Academic Regulations & Mapping	A copy of the partner's Academic Regulations and a mapping, prepared by the staff team, comparing this against the UCO's Academic Regulations (AQF Section 7).
PSRB Confirmation (if appropriate)	Confirmation of approval from relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies for the dual award of a qualification for successful completion of the programme.

16.17.44 The approval documentation should be submitted to the Quality Team by the Partner electronically at least four weeks prior to each of the formal approval events.

16.17.45 The Quality Team will ensure that the documents are electronically disseminated to approval panel members in a timely manner, normally four weeks prior to the event, to allow enough opportunity for lines of enquiry to be identified. Accompanying this will be a copy of the agenda, a briefing note clarifying the scope of the event and copies of any guidance notes.

¹² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

¹³ <http://seec.org.uk/resources/>

C) STAGE THREE: FORMAL APPROVAL

- 16.17.46 Stage Three of the Associate Partner Provision Approval Process normally involves a formal approval event to approve the new provision proposal and to assure that the new course meets the required quality standards for delivery following the same process as that for internal provision (see AQF Section 4.2: New Course Approval) and culminates in formal approval of the collaborative provision proposed by the Academic Council.
- 16.17.47 The Partner may wish to hold a rehearsal event for partners before the formal approval event, particularly if they are new partners, to focus on the partner's understanding of the delivery requirements of the course.
- 16.17.48 Following formal approval of partner provision by the Academic Council, the legal agreement with the partner will be updated as will the Collaborative Provision Operations Manual to reflect the approved provision. Updates to the Agreement should include details of the financial arrangements agreed with the partner, which must:
- Be compliant with statutory and funding council requirements (including the requirement that Office for Students funded provision should not cross-subsidise non-funded provision).
 - Contain safeguards so that, should the economic climate change, academic quality and standards, and the interests of students are not compromised.
 - Have contingencies in place to deal with currency fluctuations where necessary.
 - Specify which party will be responsible for expenses incurred as a result of undertaking collaborative activity.

D) FINAL APPROVAL EVENT MONITORING OUTCOMES

- 16.17.49 Monitoring of ongoing approval conditions will be overseen by the CPSC on behalf of the TQSC in respect of educational matters and on behalf of the Senior Management Team in respect of institutional matters.
- 16.17.50 Review of Dual Award and Validated provision will be undertaken as outlined in [Table 16.25](#).
- 16.17.51 Review of Franchised Provision will be carried out as part of an internal UCO event in accordance with the process set out in AQF Section 5: Periodic Review in addition to [Section 16.47](#).

16.18 ASSOCIATE PARTNER PROVISION: APPROVAL CRITERIA

- 16.18.35 [Table 16.13](#) shows the criteria that should be met for each type of partner provision that may be proposed.
- 16.18.36 Outcomes of Associate Partner Provision approval events should be based on the full consideration of these criteria.

TABLE 16.9: ASSOCIATE PARTNER PROVISION APPROVAL CRITERIA

Type of Provision	Criteria for Approval
Franchised	a) As detailed in AQF Section 4: Course Approval & Modification (Section 4.14: Criteria for the Approval of New Courses)

Validated	As detailed in AQF Section 4: Course Approval & Modification (Section 4.14: Criteria for the Approval of New Courses)
Dual Award	<p>As for Franchised Provision, plus:</p> <p>Equivalency to UCO Awards</p> <p>a) The partner's course/s is equivalent to that of the UCO's in terms of the level of study (taking into account the FHEQ), the content of the curriculum, the unit assessment load and the notional effort involved in obtaining the awards.</p> <p>Compatibility to the UCO's Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy</p> <p>b) The partner's Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy is comparable to the UCO's.</p> <p>Compatibility with UCO Quality Assurance Processes & Regulations</p> <p>c) Quality assurance handbook and regulations are appropriate and in line and compatible with the UCO's.</p> <p>Mitigation of Differences</p> <p>d) Partner and UCO documents and methods to mitigate differences where appropriate are comparable.</p>
All	<p>Where a "Partner Delivery" Mode of Delivery is proposed and the partner (receiving direct funding from HEFCE) intends to use its own student numbers:</p> <p>a) The partner is able to take on the responsibilities for the recruitment, selection, admission and induction of students in line with the UK Quality Code.</p> <p>b) The partner is able to provide students all necessary learning resources that are equivalent and comparable to those of the UCO (given that automatic access to UCO resources will no longer be available) or that sufficient arrangements have been made for the partner to 'buy in' to necessary resources that will be provided by the UCO.</p> <p>Where a "Flying Faculty" Mode of Delivery is proposed:</p> <p>a) Given the students' geographical separation from the teaching staff and the mode of delivery (which may often be block teaching):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The learning materials provided at and by the partner are suitable and available as appropriate. The student support facilities provided at and by the partner are suitable and available as appropriate. The efforts taken by the course team to safeguard the student experience are clearly articulated and appropriate. The way in which the course will be delivered is appropriate.

16.19 LINK PARTNER PROVISION: TYPES OF PROVISION

16.19.35 Link Partners and their provision is approved according to the type of provision being proposed which may include:

- A Study Centre Agreement – where an approved partner's premises are used to deliver a UCO approved course by UCO staff through a 'flying faculty' arrangement.
- An Articulation Agreement – where a course provided by an approved partner institution is formally recognized by the UCO and grants guaranteed admission with advanced standing to a UCO award (subject to the availability of places).

- c) A Progression Arrangement – where the successful completion of a course provided by an approved partner institution is formally recognized as an entry qualification for a specified UCO course.
- d) A Memorandum of Understanding – where the UCO has a non-binding written agreement with a partner institution to promote cooperation, detailed discussions, and collaborative activities.

16.20 LINK PARTNER PROVISION: STUDY CENTRE APPROVAL PROCESS

- 16.20.35 In certain circumstances the UCO may wish to contract with another institution (within the UK or abroad) to use their premises and, in some cases, their on-site learning resources as a study centre for the delivery of a pre-existing UCO course.
- 16.20.36 It must always be the case that the teaching, academic and pastoral support is carried out by UCO staff.
- 16.20.37 Students will be registered with the UCO and shall therefore have full access to the UCO's online learning resources.
- 16.20.38 As the awarding body the UCO must assure itself through the approval of the study centre that the institution's premises are a suitable learning environment for teaching at HE level.
- 16.20.39 In addition, it must be established that students studying at the external site are not disadvantaged in comparison to those studying at the UCO's site in terms of:
- a) The appropriateness of learning resources available locally (where used), supported by those available through the UCO's online system.
 - b) The suitability of opportunities for students to access support mechanisms (both academic and pastoral) that are in place.
- 16.20.40 Approval of Study Centre provision consists of the following stages:
- Stage One: Proposal Approval
 - Stage Two: Convening Approval Events and Panels
 - Stage Three: Approval Event Documentation
 - Stage Four: The Approval Event & Approval Criteria
 - Stage Five: Approval Event Outcomes
 - Stage Six: After the Approval Event

A) STAGE ONE: PROPOSAL APPROVAL

- 16.20.41 All new Link Partner Study Centre provision proposals must be approved in line with the Collaborative Activity Initial Proposal Approval Process outlined in Part 2 before Stage Two of the Study Centre Approval Process may be initiated.

B) STAGE TWO: CONVENING APPROVAL EVENT AND APPOINTING THE PANEL

- 16.20.42 Following approval of the Study Centre proposal, the Partnerships Quality Manager will convene a Study Centre Approval Event and appoint members to the approval panel in consultation with the Head of Quality & Partnerships and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 16.20.43 The panel for this event is shown in [Table 16.13](#) (as a pre-existing and approved course would be delivered by UCO staff at the Study Centre an external panel member is not normally required).

16.20.44 Any changes to the panel must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).

TABLE 16.10: MEMBERSHIP OF THE STUDY CENTRE APPROVAL PANEL

Panellist	Criteria for Appointment	Panel Role
Chair	A senior member of staff.	To lead discussions.
Two Internal Academic Representatives	Senior Academics from other Course Teams.	To give an internal but independent view about the proposed Study Centre.
A Quality Assurance Representative	Normally the Head of Quality & Partnerships or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	To act in an advisory capacity.
Secretary	A suitable nominee identified by the Head of Quality & Partnerships.	To record the proceedings and produce minutes and outcome reports of the event.

C) STAGE THREE: APPROVAL EVENT DOCUMENTATION

- 16.20.45 The approval event documentation required to be considered by the approval panel is shown in [Table 16.14](#) and will be confirmed with the proposing faculty by the Partnerships Quality Manager in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships.
- 16.20.46 The Course Leader of the course to be delivered at the study centre is responsible for producing and submitting the approval event documentation to the Quality Team in electronic format at least three weeks prior to the event.
- 16.20.47 The Quality Team will be responsible for circulating the approval event documentation to the panel members three weeks prior to the event to provide sufficient time for them to review the documentation and form lines of enquiry.

TABLE 16.11: REQUIRED STUDY CENTRE APPROVAL EVENT DOCUMENTATION

Document No.	Documentation Required
AQF16-13	<p>A Study Centre Statement (AQF16-13) providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background information on the proposed study centre. • Learning Resources & Student Support Statements which should describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The required learning resources for the courses/units, confirming how students are able to access them – whether through the study centre and/or through the UCO's online resources. ○ The access to academic and pastoral support in respect of the geographical separation from the UCO.
AQF04-17 AQF04-18	<p>A Course & Unit Modification Form/s outlining the proposal for delivery at the new study centre.</p> <p>(See AQF Section 4: Course Approval & Modification, Part 3: Course & Unit Modifications)</p>

AQF04-04a AQF04-05a	Amended CIF(s) and/or UIF(s) for the courses/units to be delivered at the study centre that includes Tracked Changed where amendments have been made to reflect the new delivery site, resources and support facilities / arrangements.
AQF04-06	A Course Handbook tailored to the delivery site.

D) STAGE FOUR: THE APPROVAL EVENT & APPROVAL CRITERIA

I. THE APPROVAL EVENT

- 16.20.48 The Study Centre Approval Event should be held at the proposed Study Centre to enable panel members to tour the facilities in person. Where this is not possible a virtual tour of the Study Centre should be provided.
- 16.20.49 A standard agenda for the event is shown in [Table 16.15](#); the start time may be tailored as appropriate.
- 16.20.50 The relevant Course Leader, key members of the teaching team of the course to be delivered at the study centre and relevant staff from the external organization should be present at the approval event to discuss the proposal with the panel.
- 16.20.51 The Partnerships Quality Manager in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will advise and confirm with the Course Leader which key staff will be attending the approval event.
- 16.20.52 The Quality Team will be responsible for confirming the date, time, agenda and location of the approval event with the panel and key staff.
- 16.20.53 Panel members and key staff are expected to attend for the entire event.

TABLE 16.12: STANDARD AGENDA FOR STUDY CENTRE APPROVAL EVENTS

Time	Item
10:00	Private meeting of the panel to allocate lines of questioning.
10:30	Tour of the facilities at the proposed study centre.
11:30	Discussion regarding the facilities and availability of student support between the panel and representatives from both the teaching team and the external organization.
12:00	Private meeting of the panel to discuss and agree outcomes.
12:30	Feedback to the teaching team.

II. THE APPROVAL CRITERIA

- 16.20.54 The panel is responsible for assessing the approval event documentation and for providing assurance to the UCO that the proposal fulfils the following criteria:
- The proposal aligns with the UCO's Strategic Plan, mission and aims.
 - The partner institution is of good standing.
 - Appropriate learning resources at the study centre are in place and comparable with those of the UCO.

- d) Appropriate student support arrangements are in place and comparable with those of the UCO.
- e) Management of the on-going relationship is clearly articulated, with particular reference to periodically assuring that the learning resource and student support arrangements are maintained as comparable with those of the UCO.

16.20.55 In summary, the UCO will seek to assure itself that the students studying at the proposed Study Centre are provided with appropriate learning and student support facilities comparable with those provided by the UCO.

E) STAGE FIVE: APPROVAL EVENT OUTCOMES

16.20.56 The possible outcomes from Study Centre Approval Events are:

- a) Approval with no delivery or approval conditions.
- b) Approval with delivery conditions (where the additional work required is related to documentation).
- c) Approval with approval conditions (where the additional work required is necessary to secure academic standards and/or quality).
- d) Non-approval (either with a recommendation to resubmit at a later date or to withdraw the proposal).

16.20.57 Recommendations for enhancements to the Study Centre may also be made by the panel, and although these are not required to be met it is expected that they will be considered by the Study Centre and that action or comment on them will be given as appropriate in the response.

16.20.58 The Chair of the Study Centre Approval Panel will normally report outline feedback orally to the Course Leader and key staff at the event's final feedback session. However, confirmation of event outcomes is formally provided in the Study Centre approval event outcome report following the event.

F) STAGE SIX: AFTER THE APPROVAL EVENT

16.20.59 Following the approval event, a Study Centre approval event outcome report will be produced by the panel Secretary normally within two weeks after the event. This will contain a brief narrative of the event and detail the event outcomes together with the requisite deadlines and any recommendations for enhancement. Reasons for the panel's decisions should also be included.

16.20.60 The Secretary will circulate the outcome report to the panel for agreement following which the Chair should sign the report to verify approval.

16.20.61 The Secretary will then disseminate the approved report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Partnerships Quality Manager, Head of Quality & Partnerships, Course Leader and key staff who attended the event with a Study Centre Event Conditions and Response Form (AQF16-14) with a deadline for its completion by the Course Leader.

16.20.62 The Course Leader, in consultation with the study centre staff, should complete the response form, and return it to the panel Secretary within the requisite timeline.

16.20.63 The Secretary will circulate the response form to the panel for their consideration and approval. The panel is responsible for ensuring that the responses to the conditions are satisfactory; all approval conditions are required to be addressed before any teaching can take place. The chair of the panel should then sign the response form on behalf of the panel to indicate approval of the response and forward this to the panel Secretary.

- 16.20.64 The panel Secretary will then circulate the approved and signed response form to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) for authorisation prior to being shared with the Course Leader and key staff.
- 16.20.65 The authorized response form, together with the event outcome report, will be submitted to the TQSC for sign-off by this committee's chair and to recommend the outcome to the Academic Council.
- 16.20.66 The Academic Council will then consider the approved Study Centre approval event outcome report and Study Centre Approval Event Conditions and Response Form and will confirm formal approval of the Study Centre; the Chair of the Academic Council shall sign off the Study Centre Approval Event Conditions and Response Form as confirmation of approval.
- 16.20.67 Once approved by the Academic Council:
- a) Confirmation of approval will be communicated to the Course Leader and key staff by the Head of Quality & Partnerships in writing.
 - b) A contract / agreement must be drawn up and signed (or an existing contract added to) describing the nature of the relationship; there should be a requirement in the contract for the external organisation to commit to making all reasonable upgrades to facilities in order to retain its study centre status and this should be for a fixed period of time not normally longer than five years.
 - c) The Study Centre will be entered into the Collaborative Activity Register by the Quality Team.
- 16.20.68 No teaching should commence at the Study Centre until the contract has been signed by the UCO and partner.

16.21 LINK PARTNER PROVISION: ARTICULATION ARRANGEMENT

APPROVAL PROCESS

- 16.21.35 An articulation arrangement recognises the study completed by a student elsewhere (the 'originating course') as equivalent – in terms of level, curriculum and 'effort' – to a specified amount of credit on a named course at the UCO.
- 16.21.36 Entry with advanced standing to a course leading to an award of the UCO (the 'destination course') is guaranteed, subject to the UCO's English language requirements and the issuance of an appropriate visa.
- 16.21.37 The originating course should be taught and assessed in English in line with the UCO's Academic Regulations (see AQF Section 7: Academic Regulations).
- 16.21.38 Articulation arrangements may be agreed from an originating course at a partner institution onto a destination course running at the UCO.
- 16.21.39 It is expected that institutions seeking articulation arrangements have their own quality assurance procedures with many also having their own degree-awarding powers.
- 16.21.40 Initial enquiries about proposing an articulation arrangement should be directed to the relevant Course Leader and / or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) as appropriate for consideration and discussion.
- 16.21.41 Articulation arrangements should only be set up where a reasonable number of students are expected to enter the UCO via that route on a regular basis, and where this entry will be guaranteed. Individual students, or small numbers of students wishing to enter

(with advanced standing), should be dealt with through the UCO's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy¹⁴.

- 16.21.42 Contracts associated with articulation arrangements should last for no more than five years to allow the arrangement to lapse unless a review of the collaboration is undertaken.
- 16.21.43 Wherever possible, the UCO will endeavour to simplify articulation arrangements with partners who do not use a recognised credit transfer system such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)¹⁵ by translating their non-traditional credit system into an ECTS equivalent to the best extent possible.
- 16.21.44 Students on originating courses are not registered with the UCO and have no entitlement to UCO services unless written into the collaborative activity contract by exception. The course offered by the partner as the initial stage in the articulation does not lead to an award of the UCO.
- 16.21.45 The maximum amount of credit a student can bring to the UCO under an articulation arrangement will be in line with that permitted under the UCO's Academic Regulations regarding Recognition of Prior Learning (see AQF Section 7); these credits will not normally be recorded at unit level on transcripts but will document what amount and level of credit has been accepted from the other institution.
- 16.21.46 The approval process for Articulation arrangements consists of the following stages:
- Stage One: Proposal Approval
 - Stage Two: Convening Approval Events and Panels
 - Stage Three: Approval Event Documentation
 - Stage Four: The Approval Event & Approval Criteria
 - Stage Five: Approval Event Outcomes
 - Stage Six: After the Approval Event

A) STAGE ONE: PROPOSAL APPROVAL

- 16.21.47 All new Link Partner Articulation Arrangement proposals must be approved in line with the Collaborative Activity Initial Proposal Approval Process outlined in Part 2 before Stage Two of the Approval Process may be initiated.

B) STAGE TWO: CONVENING APPROVAL EVENTS AND PANELS

- 16.21.48 Following authorization of the articulation arrangement proposal, the Partnerships Quality Manager will convene an Articulation Approval Event and appoint members to the approval panel in consultation with the Head of Quality & Partnerships and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 16.21.49 The panel for this event is shown in [Table 16.16](#).
- 16.21.50 Any changes to the panel must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).

¹⁴ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/how-apply/recognition-prior-learning-rpl>

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system-ects_en

TABLE 16.13: MEMBERSHIP OF THE ARTICULATION APPROVAL PANEL

Panellist	Criteria for Appointment	Panel Role
Chair	A senior academic member of staff.	To lead discussions.
Two Internal Academic Representatives	Two senior academics.	To give an internal academic view about the proposed articulation arrangement for the course being articulated to.
A Quality Assurance Representative	Normally the Head of Quality & Partnerships or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	To act in an advisory capacity.
Secretary	A suitable nominee identified by the Head of Quality & Partnerships.	To record the proceedings and produce minutes and outcome reports of the event.

C) STAGE THREE: APPROVAL EVENT DOCUMENTATION

- 16.21.51 The approval event documentation required to be considered by the approval panel is shown in [Table 16.17](#).
- 16.21.52 Documentation for the event should be prepared by the Partner and submitted to the Quality Team in electronic format at least three weeks prior to the event.
- 16.21.53 The Quality Team will be responsible for circulating the approval event documentation to the panel members three weeks prior to the event to provide sufficient time for them to review the documentation and form lines of enquiry.

TABLE 16.14: REQUIRED ARTICULATION APPROVAL EVENT DOCUMENTATION

Document No.	Documentation Required
AQF16-15	<p>An Articulation Rationale produced using the template provided (AQF16-15) or other agreed format.</p> <p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The rationale for the proposal. b) Information about the articulation model (how much credit is being requested against which course). c) An overview of the originating course. d) Information regarding the partner's teaching, learning and assessment strategy. e) A critical description of the partner's physical and human resources (whether there are sufficient learning resources in place to support the originating course and whether staff are appropriately qualified). f) Confirmation of arrangements for the operational and quality assurance management of the articulation. g) Details of how progression will be managed and how students will be supported on their entry to the course (i.e. through induction and provision of academic and pastoral support, etc.).
AQF16-16	Articulation Mapping using the template provided (AQF-16-16) or other agreed format:

	<p>This should consider the equivalency of the originating course to an amount of credit on the destination course in terms of the level of study expressed through Learning Outcomes (with reference to the FHEQ), the content of the curriculum and the amount of 'effort' required to successfully complete the originating course.</p> <p>This should be carried out at a unit level.</p>
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D) STAGE FOUR: THE APPROVAL EVENT

I. THE APPROVAL EVENT

- 16.21.54 A standard agenda for the event is shown in [Table 16.18](#); the start time may be tailored as appropriate.
- 16.21.55 The Quality Partnerships Manager in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will advise and confirm with the Course Leader / Partner of the destination course which staff will be attending the approval event.
- 16.21.56 The Quality Team will be responsible for confirming the date, time, agenda and location of the approval event with the panel and staff.
- 16.21.57 Panel members and staff are expected to attend for the entire event.

TABLE 16.15: STANDARD AGENDA FOR ARTICULATION ARRANGEMENT APPROVAL EVENTS

Time	Item
10:00	<p>Discussion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The rationale for the proposal. b) The equivalency between the initial years of study at the partner and the levels for which credit is being sought. c) The coherence of the curriculum when viewed as a single entity rather than two separate courses. d) The preparedness of students upon transfer to the final year(s) of the destination course at the UCO. e) Arrangements for liaison between the partner and the UCO going forward, with particular emphasis on curriculum drift, ensuring student preparedness, staff development.
12:00	Agreement of outcomes.

II. THE APPROVAL CRITERIA

- 16.21.58 The panel is responsible for assessing the approval event documentation and for providing assurance to the UCO that the proposal fulfils the following approval criteria:
- a) The proposal aligns with the UCO's Strategic Plan, mission and aims.
 - b) The partner institution is of good standing.
 - c) Management of the on-going relationship is clearly articulated, with particular reference to periodically review the arrangement to ensure that course curricula remain compatible.
 - d) The academic level of the originating course curriculum is aligned with the UCO's level descriptors and the FHEQ.

- e) The subject coverage at the collaborating institution is comparable with that which students would have experienced at the UCO (which is in turn mapped on to Subject Benchmark Statements).
- f) The teaching and learning methods prepare students for a 'student-centred' learning experience characteristic of higher-level academic work.
- g) The quality of learning opportunities and the educational experience students will have on the originating course are satisfactory.
- h) Appropriate learning resources at the partner institution are in place and comparable with those of the UCO.

16.21.59 In summary, the UCO will seek to assure itself that the students it admits through articulation arrangements are likely to succeed if they transfer to the UCO.

E) STAGE FIVE: APPROVAL EVENT OUTCOMES

16.21.60 The possible outcomes from articulation approval events are:

- a) Approval of the proposed articulation arrangement without conditions.
- b) Approval of the proposed articulation arrangement subject to conditions and / or additional information.
- c) Non-approval (either with a recommendation to resubmit at a later date or to withdraw the proposal).

16.21.61 Recommendations for enhancements to the articulation arrangement may also be made by the panel, and although these are not required to be met it is expected that they will be considered by the Course Leader / Partner and that action or comment on them will be given as appropriate in the response.

16.21.62 The Chair of the approval panel will normally report outline feedback orally to the Course Leader and key staff at the event's final feedback session. However, confirmation of event outcomes is formally provided in the Articulation approval event outcome report following the event.

F) STAGE SIX: AFTER THE APPROVAL EVENT

16.21.63 Following the approval event an Articulation approval event outcome report will be produced by the panel Secretary normally within two weeks after the event. This will contain a brief narrative of the event and detail the event outcomes together with the requisite deadlines and any recommendations for enhancement. Reasons for the panel's decisions should also be included.

16.21.64 The Secretary will circulate the outcome report to the panel for agreement following which the Panel Chair should sign the report to verify approval.

16.21.65 The Secretary will then disseminate the approved report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Partnerships Quality Manager, Head of Quality & Partnerships, Course Leader / Partner and key staff who attended the event with an Articulation Approval Event Conditions Response Form (AQF16-17) with a deadline for its completion by the Course Leader.

16.21.66 The Course Leader, in consultation with partner staff, should complete the response form and return it to the panel Secretary within the requisite timeline.

16.21.67 The Secretary will circulate the response form to the panel for their consideration and approval. The panel is responsible for ensuring that the responses to the conditions are

satisfactory. The chair of the panel should then sign the response form on behalf of the panel to indicate approval of the response and forward this to the panel Secretary.

- 16.21.68 All approval conditions are required to be addressed before the articulation arrangement can be implemented.
- 16.21.69 The panel Secretary will then circulate the approved and signed response form to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) for 50authorization and sign-off prior to being shared with the Course Leader / Partner and other key staff.
- 16.21.70 The authorized response form, together with the event outcome report, will be submitted to the TQSC for approval and sign-off by this committee's chair, and then to the Academic Council to note.
- 16.21.71 Once approved by the TQSC:
- a) Confirmation of approval will be communicated to the Course Leader / Partner and key staff by the Head of Quality & Partnerships in writing.
 - b) A contract must be drawn up (or an existing contract added to) describing the nature of the relationship; approval of the level and volume of credit for a fixed period of time not normally longer than five years should be reflected in the validity period of the contract.
 - c) The partner institution will be entered into the Collaborative Activity Register by the Quality Team.
- 16.21.72 The articulation arrangement should not be implemented until the contract has been signed by the UCO and partner.

16.22 LINK PARTNER PROVISION: PROGRESSION ARRANGEMENT

APPROVAL PROCESS

- 16.22.35 A progression arrangement is where the UCO recognizes the award a student receives at another institution having successfully completed a course of study (the 'originating' course) as an entry qualification for specified UCO courses ('destination' courses), thereby creating a formal link between the UCO and the other institution.
- 16.22.36 Progression arrangements:
- a) Guarantee students' admission to the destination course as long as they meet specified conditions listed in the agreement (e.g., minimum grades in the originating course) and meet published UCO admissions requirements.
 - b) Do not recognise and grant specific credit to applicants from the partner institution.
 - c) Normally specify a maximum number of students per year who may progress under the terms of the agreement, with progression agreement candidates nominated by the partner institution.
- 16.22.37 Under progression arrangements, final admissions decisions are made by an appropriate academic staff member on the basis of evidence of the student's achievement in line with the QAA's Quality Code for Higher Education regarding Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access¹⁶ and through the UCO's Recognition of Prior Learning processes, specifically the accreditation of certificated learning.
- 16.22.38 The approval process for Articulation arrangements consists of the following stages:
- Stage One: Outline Approval

¹⁶ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access>

- Stage Two: Convening Approval Events and Panels
- Stage Three: Approval Event Documentation
- Stage Four: The Approval Event & Approval Criteria
- Stage Five: Approval Event Outcomes
- Stage Six: After the Approval Event

A) STAGE ONE: PROPOSAL APPROVAL

16.22.39 All new Link Partner Progression Arrangement proposals must be approved in line with the Collaborative Activity Initial Proposal Approval Process outlined in Part 2 before Stage Two of the Approval Process may be initiated.

B) STAGE TWO: CONVENING APPROVAL EVENTS AND PANELS

16.22.40 Following authorization of the progression arrangement proposal, the Quality Partnerships Manager will convene a Progression Approval Event and appoint members to the approval panel in consultation with the Head of Quality & Partnerships and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).

16.22.41 The panel for this event is shown in [Table 16.19](#).

16.22.42 Any changes to the panel must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).

TABLE 16.16: MEMBERSHIP OF THE PROGRESSION ARRANGEMENT APPROVAL PANEL

Panellist	Criteria for Appointment	Panel Role
Chair	A senior academic member of staff.	To lead discussions.
Two Internal Academic Representatives	Two senior academics from the destination course.	To give an internal academic view about the proposed progression arrangement.
A Quality Assurance Representative	Normally the Head of Quality & Partnerships or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	To act in an advisory capacity.
Secretary	A suitable nominee identified by the Head of Quality & Partnerships.	To record the proceedings and produce minutes and outcome reports of the event.

C) STAGE THREE: APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

16.22.43 The approval event documentation required to be considered by the approval panel is shown in [Table 16.20](#).

16.22.44 Documentation for the approval event should be prepared by the Partner in consultation with relevant staff of the destination course and submitted to the Quality Team in electronic format at least three weeks prior to the event.

16.22.45 The Quality Team will be responsible for circulating the approval event documentation to the panel members three weeks prior to the event to provide sufficient time for them to review the documentation and form lines of enquiry.

TABLE 16.17: REQUIRED PROGRESSION ARRANGEMENT APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

Document No.	Documentation Required
AQF16-18	<p>Progression Arrangement Rationale completed using the template provided (AQF16-18). This should include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A statement outlining the strategic rationale for the proposal with reference to the UCO's Strategic Plan. b) Details of the partner(s) from which progression is sought and the course(s) offered by the partner(s) which are involved. c) For overseas agreements evidence of the general level of the partner(s) course(s) against UK HE qualifications as established by Ecctis¹⁷ or other external benchmarks. d) An indication of any minimum entry requirements (e.g. GPA) consistent with UK expectations and any available pre-entry support and details of entry and exit requirements of such support to allow progression onto the UCO's course. e) A brief record of communication (e.g. visits, physical and electronic meetings) undertaken by key staff with the partner(s) and the purpose of those meetings. f) A description of how the on-going relationship will be managed, with particular reference to periodically assuring that the mapping of the curriculum remains appropriate. g) A statement supporting the proposal from the Course Team of the destination course.

D) STAGE FOUR: THE APPROVAL EVENT & APPROVAL CRITERIA

- 16.22.46 A standard agenda for the event is shown in [Table 16.21](#); the start time may be tailored as appropriate.
- 16.22.47 The Quality Partnerships Manager in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will advise and confirm with the Course Leader / Partner of the destination course which staff will be attending the approval event.
- 16.22.48 The Quality Team will be responsible for confirming the date, time, agenda and location of the approval event with the panel and staff.
- 16.22.49 Panel members and staff are expected to attend for the entire event.

TABLE 16.18: STANDARD AGENDA FOR PROGRESSION ARRANGEMENT APPROVAL EVENTS

Time	Item
10:00	<p>Discussion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The rationale for the proposal. b) The preparedness of students upon admission to the destination course. c) Arrangements for liaison between the partner and the UCO going forward, with particular emphasis on curriculum drift, ensuring student preparedness, staff development.
12:00	Agreement of outcomes.

¹⁷ <https://www.ecctis.com/>

- 16.22.50 The panel is responsible for assessing the approval event documentation and for providing assurance to the UCO that the proposal fulfils the following approval criteria:
- a) The proposal aligns with the UCO's Strategic Plan, mission and aims.
 - b) The partner institution is of good standing.
 - c) The general level of the originating course is benchmarked against UK HE qualifications as established by Ecctis¹⁸ and other appropriate external benchmarks.
 - d) The minimum entry requirements (e.g. GPA) of the originating course are consistent with UK expectations.
 - e) Any available pre-entry support and details of entry and exit requirements of such support allowing progression onto the UCO's course are clearly articulated and appropriate.
 - f) Management of the on-going relationship is clearly articulated, with particular reference to periodically assuring that the mapping of the curriculum remains appropriate.
- 16.22.51 In summary, the UCO will seek to assure itself that the students it admits through progression arrangements are likely to succeed if they are admitted onto a destination course at the UCO.

E) STAGE FIVE: APPROVAL EVENT OUTCOMES

- 16.22.52 The possible outcomes from progression approval events are:
- d) Approval of the proposed progression arrangement without conditions.
 - e) Approval of the proposed progression arrangement with conditions and / or request for additional information.
 - f) Non-approval (either with a recommendation to resubmit at a later date or to withdraw the proposal).
- 16.22.53 The chair of the approval panel will normally report outline feedback informally to the Course Leaders of the destination and originating course and key staff immediately after the event. However, confirmation of event outcomes is formally provided in the Progression approval event outcome report following the event.

F) STAGE SIX: AFTER THE APPROVAL EVENT

- 16.22.54 Following the approval event, a Progression approval event outcome report will be produced by the panel Secretary normally within two weeks after the event. This will contain a brief narrative of the event and detail the event outcomes together with the requisite deadlines and any recommendations for enhancement. Reasons for the panel's decisions should also be included.
- 16.22.55 The panel Secretary will circulate the outcome report to the panel for agreement following which the Chair should sign the report to verify approval.
- 16.22.56 The Secretary will then disseminate the approved report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Quality Partnerships Manager, Head of Quality & Partnerships, Course Leader and key staff who attended the event.
- 16.22.57 The Course Leader is required to complete a Progression Approval Event Conditions Response Form (AQF16-19) to address approval conditions and recommendations. All

¹⁸ <https://www.ecctis.com/>

approval conditions are required to be addressed before the progression arrangement can be implemented. The response form shall be authorized by the Panel Chair.

16.22.58 The authorized response form, together with the event outcome report, will be submitted to the TQSC for approval and sign-off by this committee's chair, and then to the Academic Council to note.

16.22.59 Once approved by the TQSC:

- d) Confirmation of approval will be communicated to the Course Leader and key staff by the Head of Quality & Partnerships in writing.
- e) A contract must be drawn up (or an existing contract added to) describing the nature of the relationship; approval of the fixed period of time not normally longer than three years should be reflected in the validity period of the contract.
- f) The partner institution will be entered into the Collaborative Activity Register by the Quality Team.
- g) Course and publicity documentation should be amended to inform students that a progression agreement exists between the UCO and the partner.

16.22.60 The progression arrangement should not be implemented until the contract has been signed by the UCO and partner institution.

16.23 LINK PARTNER PROVISION: MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

APPROVAL PROCESS

16.23.35 The UCO recognizes that there may be opportunities for collaboration and positive academic engagement with other institutions that benefit both parties without establishing a formal legal relationship between the two institutions. To enable such collaboration, the UCO may enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with another institution.

16.23.36 Memoranda of Understanding are intended to promote cooperation, detailed discussions and collaborative activities between the UCO and other institutions and to establish a commitment to explore the potential for:

- a) Co-operation on new or existing academic courses.
- b) The development of joint research activities, including joint supervision of research students, collaboration on research investigations and doctoral student training and development.
- c) Staff exchange or mutual visits to both institutions.
- d) Student exchange or mutual visits to both institutions.
- e) The exchange of information in the form of publications and journals, reference materials and other results of teaching and research.
- f) Joint organisation of meetings, conferences and seminars.
- g) Any other activities viewed to be potentially beneficial.

16.23.37 In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding may be entered into during the development of a more formal relationship with another institution, for instance with overseas institutions, where a Memorandum of Understanding may be entered into at an initial stage where it sets out a basis for working towards a more formal agreement without committing the UCO to any legal obligations or financial transactions.

- 16.23.38 The UCO acknowledges that entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with another institution can have several potential effects on the UCO, including:
- a) Legal
 - b) Financial
 - c) Reputational
- 16.23.39 Although the UCO should not be exposed to binding legal relations on entry into a Memorandum of Understanding with another party, any individual who is contemplating negotiating or entering the UCO into a Memorandum of Understanding must ensure they have appropriate delegated authority to be able to negotiate and/or enter the UCO into any such proposed arrangement before they commence negotiations and/or reach agreement. Subsequently it is important that Memoranda of Understanding are approved through an appropriately robust process.
- 16.23.40 Memoranda of Understanding require the approval and oversight of the UCO, which is exercised through the Senior Management Team on behalf of the Academic Council, to ensure that partner institutions share the UCO's mission and vision and align with its strategic aims and objectives.
- 16.23.41 Approval of Memoranda of Understanding consist of three Stages:
- a) Stage 1: Proposal Approval
 - b) Stage 2: Formal Approval
 - c) Stage 3: Following Approval

A) STAGE ONE: PROPOSAL APPROVAL

- 16.23.42 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Head of Quality & Partnerships are normally the first points of contact in relation to any new Memoranda of Understanding, who will provide advice on the proposal and approval processes.
- 16.23.43 All new Link Partner provision proposals must be approved in line with the Collaborative Activity Initial Proposal Approval Process outlined in Part 2 before Stage Two of the Approval Process may be initiated.

B) STAGE TWO: FORMAL APPROVAL

- 16.23.44 Following approval of the Memorandum of Understanding proposal, the Partnerships Quality Manager in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships shall confirm the documentation requirements for Formal Approval with the proposing party.
- 16.23.45 A draft Memorandum of Understanding (AQF16-02) should be developed by the Head of Quality & Partnerships in liaison with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and submitted for consideration by the Senior Management Team.
- 16.23.46 The Senior Management Team may make recommendations to enhance or request further information to clarify the proposed Memorandum of Understanding. In these instances, the sponsor of the proposal is responsible for addressing any recommendations and re-submitting the approval form to the Senior Management Team until the proposal is signed off by the chair, indicating approval of the proposal.
- 16.23.47 The Senior Management Team will then recommend the proposed Memorandum of Understanding for formal approval by the Academic Council.

C) STAGE THREE: FOLLOWING APPROVAL

- 16.23.48 Following formal approval by the Academic Council the Memorandum of Understanding is agreed and signed by the appropriate authorised signatories of the UCO. Memoranda of Understanding may only be signed by the Vice-Chancellor or a Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the UCO and should not be implemented until sign-off by both UCO and partner parties have been completed.
- 16.23.49 Two copies of the Memorandum of Understanding should be signed; one will be lodged with the Quality Team, the other with the partner institution.
- 16.23.50 Once the Memorandum of Understanding has been signed, the partner institution will be added to the Collaborative Activity Register by the Quality Team.
- 16.23.51 A Memorandum of Understanding should be signed for a maximum of 5 years.

PART 5: MANAGEMENT OF COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

16.24 INTRODUCTION

- 16.24.35 Where the partner is responsible for the delivery of provision, they will also undertake most of its day-to-day management. To maintain oversight of this, and to act as the liaison point for a particular course or courses, the UCO will normally appoint a Link Tutor.
- 16.24.36 Matters of concern regarding quality, standards or the student experience of collaborative partnerships or provision should be raised with the Link Tutor, Partnerships Quality Manager or the Head of Quality & Partnerships. A review of the risk assessment for the partnership may be recommended, on which basis further action may be required.

16.25 THE LINK TUTOR ROLE

- 16.25.35 All collaborative partnerships will have a Link Tutor appointed to act as the main line of communication between the UCO and partner. Link Tutors are assigned to oversee the relationship at an institutional level and to provide liaison across UCO portfolios; they will act as a single point of contact internally and for the partner.
- 16.25.36 Link Tutors will manage the relationship to help ensure that academic standards, the quality of learning opportunities and the equivalency of the student experience are maintained and enhanced. This involves two-way communication and exchange of good practice. Link Tutors will provide the UCO with the assurance that standards are being maintained.
- 16.25.37 The Link Tutor role is predominantly one of customer relationship management, and it is expected that the Link Tutor will maintain regular contact with the partner electronically and through visits to the partner in person (at least once per academic year).
- 16.25.38 It is expected that Link Tutors have experience of course management, knowledge of the UCO's quality assurance processes and have a high level of inter-personal skills. They will not have any formal affiliations to the partner, such as teaching on or being an External Examiner for the course or have a personal relationship with partner members of staff.
- 16.25.39 The main responsibility of the Link Tutor is to facilitate good working relationships between the UCO and the partner institution, maintaining regular contact with the course coordinator at the partner institution and supporting them in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- 16.25.40 The Link Tutor will normally produce an end-of year report per course and partnership as appropriate that are considered by the CPSC and the TQSC and Academic Council to note. The reports will assist in enabling effective monitoring of the relationship.
- 16.25.41 The specific responsibilities of the Link Tutor will depend on the category of partner and the type of provision involved and may involve:
- To support the partner and ensure that responsibilities assigned to them with regard to the QAA's Quality Code for Higher Education are fulfilled, and that responsibilities allocated through the approval / review process as stated in the Academic Quality Framework are discharged.
 - Maintenance and updating of the risk register associated with the partnership.
 - Undertaking regular reporting on the health of the partnership to the CPSC and creating and monitoring associated action plans.
 - Carrying out reviews of public information presented on the partner's website.
 - Monitoring the implementation of arrangements for admissions and progression.

- f) Coordinating the assessment process – which includes the approval of assessment tasks, marking and moderation of work, and feedback to students – in line with the UCO's Academic Regulations and policies.
- g) Receiving reports on unit feedback from students where partners operate an in-house system and providing these to the Partnerships Quality Manager to allow for central monitoring and action through the CPSC.
- h) Coordinating approval of CVs of new staff teaching on UCO courses at the partner and providing the Partnerships Quality Manager with a copy of approved documentation.
- i) Acting as a critical friend in relation to institutional review.
- j) Supporting the partner and ensuring that responsibilities assigned to them are discharged and that UCO regulations and policies are applied correctly.
- k) Ensuring that existing provision is operating as agreed and delivered according to the Course Information Form.
- l) Liaising with UCO appointed External Examiners and providing the partner with copies of External Examiner Reports.
- m) Coordinating the transfer of data from the Partner to the UCO for the production of award certificates and transcripts, and for the preparation of funding and other statutory returns.
- n) Assisting with the induction of staff at new partners, undertaking ongoing course-specific staff development for partner staff and hosting visits at the UCO whenever required, including inviting staff from partner institutions to relevant staff development events.
- o) Assisting in procedures regarding the proposal and approval of new provision.
- p) Reviewing marketing and publicity materials and information provided to students regularly to ensure that the relationship with the UCO and the information regarding the course(s) and is portrayed accurately and that standards regarding the use of the UCO's name and logos are adhered to, and where this is not the case, reporting issues to the Quality Partnerships Manager or Head of Quality & Partnerships.
- q) Keeping other relevant UCO colleagues informed of activities, successes and problems, as appropriate on a timely basis.

16.25.42 Responsibilities assigned to Link Tutors for franchise and validated provision may also include:

- a) Participating, wherever possible, in student induction procedures at the partner to facilitate new students' understanding of the expectations, values and ethos of the UCO so that new students feel part of the UCO and its student body.
- b) Attending course committee meetings at the partner institution whenever possible and providing guidance on effective methods of eliciting student feedback and closing the feedback loop to ensure that the student voice is heard.
- c) To liaise with UCO-appointed External Examiners.
- d) Ensuring that staff at the partner fully consider issues raised within External Examiner Reports with the input of student representatives.
- e) Attendance at Boards of Examiners as Member/Chair.
- f) Ensuring that students have the opportunity to view External Examiner Reports and approve responses for their course.

- g) Keeping course delivery staff in partner institutions updated with relevant changes within the course and at the UCO.
- h) Where provision is franchised, keeping the partner advised as to changes to the curriculum at the UCO and the transition arrangements. Where the provision is validated, ensuring that changes to the curriculum are processed appropriately (particularly where partners have been granted delegated responsibility for minor modifications).
- i) Providing advice and guidance on course and unit modification and review processes as appropriate for the type of provision and acting as a critical friend when required.

16.25.43 For Link Tutors appointed to articulation agreements the responsibilities may also include:

- a) Ensuring that any adjustments to curricula at both institutions are closely managed and clearly communicated, and that the curricula and assessment regimes continue to be matched. Where adjustments jeopardise the mapping exercise carried out through the approval/review process, alerting the Partnerships Quality Manager or Head of Quality & Partnerships that an additional review of the provision may be required.

16.26 REPORTING ON PARTNERSHIPS

A) PARTNERSHIP VISIT LOGS & REPORTS

- 16.26.35 The Link Tutor is responsible for developing and overseeing an annual schedule of visits to a partner in any given academic year in line with the Link Tutor Handbook and Appendices (AQF16-20a-d). This schedule will be approved by the CPSC on behalf of the TQSC and will ensure that visits are coordinated to confer maximum benefit to the partnership and its students, while minimising the burden placed on them. Deviations from the schedule will be noted and justified through reporting to the CPSC.
- 16.26.36 Following a visit made by a Link Tutor (or other member of academic or administrative staff in connection with a specific course) or any other specific contact with the partner regarding provision, the Link Tutor must update the Partnership Visit Log (AQF16-21). This must be submitted to Partnerships Quality Manager within two weeks of return, to ensure that any issues are picked up and addressed in a timely fashion.
- 16.26.37 The Link Tutor will produce a summary report based on the visit logs and any issues which will be presented to the CPSC for information and / or discussion.
- 16.26.38 A record of visit logs submitted will be maintained by the Quality Team.

B) PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORTS

- 16.26.39 Drawing on visit logs, the Link Tutor, in consultation with relevant UCO and partner staff, produces a Partnership Annual Report (one per collaborative partnership) (AQF16-22). This provides an overview of the year's activity, allows for confirmation that annual duties have been undertaken, and enables the reporting of any issues and good practice and opportunities for enhancements.
- 16.26.40 Partnership annual reports should be considered by the CPSC and TQSC for endorsement and recommendation for approval by the Academic Council.

16.27 COLLABORATIVE PROVISION OPERATIONS MANUAL

- 16.27.35 A Collaborative Provision Operations Manual (CPOM) (AQF16-23) may be produced for some associate partners. The CPOM will clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of both the UCO and partner regarding the management of the partnership and expectations

- regarding quality assurance matters and will generally build on the information contained in the contract as required.
- 16.27.36 The CPOM will also contain information regarding the approved provision that the partner delivers and contact details for both parties.
- 16.27.37 CPOMs will be updated on an annual basis by the relevant Link Tutor, partner, Partnerships Quality Manager and Head of Quality & Partnerships to ensure that the information presented within them remains current.
- 16.27.38 Updates to CPOMs will be considered by the CPSC and endorsed by the TQSC on behalf of the Academic Council.

PART 6: QUALITY ASSURANCE & ENHANCEMENT PROCESSES

16.28 INTRODUCTION

- 16.28.35 Following the approval of a partner, provision, and mode of delivery there are a number of activities undertaken to ensure the smooth management (see Part 3) and the fulfilment of quality assurance and enhancement processes of the partnership.
- 16.28.36 UCO and partner staff should familiarise themselves with these activities. Clarification regarding their applicability should be sought from the Partnerships Quality Manager at the earliest opportunity.
- 16.28.37 To manage the quality assurance, enhancement and management activities on an ongoing basis, there must be appropriate academic and administrative resources in place for the smooth operation of the collaborative provision portfolio. While the UCO maintains ultimate control and oversight through the monitoring and review procedures appropriate to the relationship, certain operational processes may be delegated to the partner.
- 16.28.38 The activities set out in this section may be relevant to all circumstances or may be differentiated as a consequence of the level of relationship with the partner, the provision or mode of delivery.

16.29 CONFIRMATION OF REGULATIONS

- 16.29.35 Unless variations to the UCO's Academic Regulations are expressly confirmed by the Academic Council through the collaborative partner and provision approval processes, the UCO's Academic Regulations will apply in all circumstances.
- 16.29.36 A rationale will be required for any variance, the most common being the need to adhere to requirements of a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB), which should be submitted through the Link Tutor for action through the UCO's Course and Unit Modification Process (see AQF Section 4).

16.30 STUDENT ADMISSIONS

- 16.30.35 Responsibility for the admittance of students may be delegated to the partner, based on the UCO's standard entry criteria (see AQF Section 7: Academic Regulations) and decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the type of partner, provision, and maturity of the relationship with the UCO.
- 16.30.36 Where responsibility is delegated to the partner, the UCO will remain the final arbiter of admissions decisions and there may be additional measures put in place by the UCO to ensure entry criteria are applied consistently, such as the screening of applications by an appropriate member of staff at the UCO.
- 16.30.37 Where delegation has been agreed this will be detailed in the CPOM for the partnership.
- 16.30.38 Candidates may be admitted to courses provided through collaborative partners using either a defined articulation route set up by the UCO or through standard UCO RPL procedures (see AQF Section 7: Academic Regulations) with the UCO determining the point for admission of potential students.

16.31 STUDENT REGISTRATION

- 16.31.35 Any student being taught on a course leading to an award of the UCO must be registered with the UCO at the start of their course. The partner is not permitted to allow students who are not registered with the UCO to attend classes in any capacity.
- 16.31.36 Student registration is managed within the UCO using information provided by the partner, which must be accurate and complete to ensure that students' certificates and transcripts are correct.
- 16.31.37 To ensure ongoing accuracy the partner is required to communicate regularly with the UCO regarding matters affecting students' registration details and status, for example:
- a) Suspension of registration or permanent withdrawal.
 - b) Extensions of registration period or repeat periods of study.
 - c) Change of student's name or title.
- 16.31.38 In registering for a UCO award, students confirm that they undertake to observe the UCO's Academic Regulations as applicable for their course of study and any regulations in force at the partner institution; the collaboration contract and Course Handbook should clearly state under which circumstances each set of regulations take precedence.

16.32 INFORMATION PROVIDED TO STUDENTS

- 16.32.35 The UCO ensures that students are given accurate and comprehensive information about their course, which is comparable to that given to students studying courses at the UCO; this is particularly important for franchised provision where the course will be taught at the UCO as well as through the partner.
- 16.32.36 Course information is confirmed as accurate through approval and review events, and the Link Tutor will also be responsible for making these assurances on an ongoing basis.
- 16.32.37 Procedures relating to publicity, marketing and publicly available information are detailed below.
- 16.32.38 The UCO requires that all students at partners studying for a UCO award have access to a copy of the approved Course Information Form (or equivalent).
- 16.32.39 In addition, it is expected that students on franchised or validated courses have access to:
- a) A student / course handbook which explains the students' relationship with the UCO and provides information about complaints and appeals procedures, how they can contact the UCO and key contacts at the partner.
 - b) Unit Information Forms.
 - c) Information regarding the opportunities for students to use the UCO's learning resources and entitlement to use other resources (as agreed in the contract).
- 16.32.40 A Course Handbook template (AQF04-06) is produced by the UCO to ensure that standard course-specific information is included for all courses and which Course Leaders can populate as necessary. For partnerships there will also need to be some contextualisation of the information to make it relevant for the relationship, particularly around student support. It is expected that, wherever possible, course handbooks for collaborative provision will be produced in this way.
- 16.32.41 In the case of articulation agreements, this information will also include:

- a) Information about the progression to the specified UCO degree, including any relevant terms and conditions.
- b) Information about fees and any other expenses payable to the UCO and when these are to be paid.

16.33 FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

- 16.33.35 The UCO recognises the importance of providing students studying at partners with the opportunity to comment on their experience, but also that there are challenges inherent in making this representation effective.
- 16.33.36 The UCO's standard mechanisms for obtaining student feedback are described in AQF Section 10: The Student Voice, which should be read in conjunction with this section.
- 16.33.37 Partners are expected to implement the UCO's student survey process with the help of their Link Tutor. An exception may be made to the implementation of this where it can be demonstrated that the partner's in-house measures provide the same opportunities for feedback. If this is approved, then the Link Tutor will be responsible for ensuring that feedback is considered centrally by the UCO by providing results to the Partnerships Quality Manager for consideration by the CPSC and TQSC. Any exceptions to the student survey process will be written into the CPOM or noted as a variance to UCO regulations.
- 16.33.38 Link Tutors are required to take the opportunity to meet with students whenever possible to gain their feedback. A report of these discussions is expected to be captured in course visit logs.
- 16.33.39 One of the ways for partners to seek comment from students is to have in place a course committee system which includes representation from the student body. Although this system is recommended by the UCO it recognises that these will not always be the most effective way of hearing the student voice, particularly where the numbers on the provision are small. In these cases, staff-student committees or focus groups may be more appropriate.
- 16.33.40 The system of student representation, and the methods for closing the feedback loop, will be considered as part of the approval / review process and be described in the CPOM.

16.34 ACADEMIC OFFENCES, ACADEMIC APPEALS, CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE AND COMPLAINTS

A) ACADEMIC OFFENCES

- 16.34.35 Academic offences (collusion, fabrication, cheating, impersonation and plagiarism) will normally be dealt with under the UCO's Academic Discipline Policy and Procedures¹⁹, and involve joint investigations by the UCO and the partner unless exceptionally agreed at collaborative partner / provision approval or review and formally approved through the Academic Council via the TQSC.
- 16.34.36 Academic offences will be considered by the UCO's Academic Conduct Panel.
- 16.34.37 Variations to this will be considered at collaborative partner / provision approval or review, and formally approved through the Academic Council via the TQSC. These will be recorded in the CPOM.

¹⁹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

B) ACADEMIC APPEALS

- 16.34.38 Academic appeals submitted by students at associate partners against a decision of a Board of Examiners will be dealt with under the UCO's Academic Appeals Policy²⁰, unless exceptionally agreed at collaborative partner / provision approval or review and formally approved through the Academic Council via the TQSC.
- 16.34.39 Where appropriate, responsibility for undertaking Academic Appeal Policy Stage 1 investigations and responding to the appellant may be delegated to the partner. This will be agreed at collaborative partner / provision approval or review and formally approved through the Academic Council via the TQSC and recorded in the CPOM. Irrespective of this, students will still be able to request a review of the initial judgement via the UCO's Appeals Review Board as described in Stage 2 of the policy.
- 16.34.40 Students studying at a collaborative partner where their course of study does not lead to an award of the UCO will have the ultimate right of appeal to that partner institution.

C) CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE

- 16.34.41 In all matters of conduct and discipline (other than matters included within the UCO's Academic Discipline Policy) students are subject to the relevant rules and procedures of the partner institution.
- 16.34.42 Where a disciplinary matter has implications for quality and standards (in the case of assessment irregularities for example), the matter will normally be referred to the UCO for consideration under its Academic Discipline Policy.

D) COMPLAINTS

- 16.34.43 All complaints raised by students studying at the partner institution should be addressed through the procedure of the partner in the first instance.
- 16.34.44 If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they may bring the complaint to the attention of the UCO.
- 16.34.45 The UCO will only consider complaints in relation to issues concerning the delivery or assessment of the programme or the resources provided directly to support study on the programme.
- 16.34.46 Students studying at a collaborative partner where their course of study does not lead to an award of the UCO will have the ultimate right of complaint to that partner institution.

16.35 ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATIONS

- 16.35.35 Depending on the type of collaborative relationship and provision there may be instances when partners are delegated responsibility for particular aspects of the assessment or examination process.
- 16.35.36 In all cases the lines of responsibility for assessment and examination processes must be made clear through the contract and / or CPOM.
- 16.35.37 The initial stages of a collaborative relationship provide an opportunity for ongoing development of partner staff, including support regarding development of the capacity to undertake marking duties.
- 16.35.38 External Examiners must approve assessment tasks prior to them taking place (see AQF Section 11: External Examining).

²⁰ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- 16.35.39 The UCO's standard assessment and examination procedures are detailed in AQF Section 7: Academic Regulations (Section C: Assessment Regulations), which includes the setting and approval of assessments, marking and moderation protocols and the provision of formative and summative feedback.
- 16.35.40 Any deviation from standard practice must be formally approved and written into the collaboration contract.
- 16.35.41 The responsibility for the setting of assessments, the development of marking schemes and assessment criteria, and the marking and moderation of assessments is dependent on the type of provision as follows:
- a) For franchised provision this responsibility is taken by the UCO's Course Team.
 - b) For validated provision this will normally be devolved to the partner, although it is expected that the Link Tutors provides oversight to ensure that the standard procedures referred to in the AQF are adhered to.
- 16.35.42 Unless these responsibilities are determined otherwise at approval or review (or exceptionally approved outside of these timeframes) and incorporated into the CPOM for the partnership it will always be assumed that responsibility follows this format.
- 16.35.43 Feedback on assessments will be given to students by the party responsible for marking.
- 16.35.44 It is expected that, wherever possible, students will submit their assessments through the UCO's virtual learning environment as appropriate.
- 16.35.45 Written submissions are processed through the UCO's plagiarism detection software. Where the use of the UCO's virtual learning environment is not possible, the partner will be required to demonstrate to the UCO the mechanism it uses to ensure that students' work is their own.
- 16.35.46 In all cases the External Examiner/s assigned to the course will be expected to receive samples of assessed work in line with the requirements described in Section 11: External Examiner of the AQF. Liaison with the External Examiner on this matter will be undertaken by the Link Tutor.
- 16.35.47 Where necessary the Link Tutor must ensure that partners are supported in developing appropriate systems for the collation and storage of any examination papers, scripts, assessment data etc. to ensure the integrity of assessment.
- 16.35.48 Partners should also be advised by the Link Tutor on the legal implications of Data Protection legislation and the Freedom of Information Act.
- 16.35.49 The Link Tutor will also ensure that assessment and examination procedures are monitored on a regular basis, and the UCO reserves the right to attend any examination sessions at their collaborative partners to ensure that procedures are being followed.

16.36 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 16.36.35 As the awarding body, the UCO retains responsibility for the selection and appointment of External Examiners for all collaborative provision in line with the selection criteria and appointment process detailed in AQF Section 11: External Examining).
- 16.36.36 For collaborative arrangements it additionally requires that:
- a) Prospective External Examiners must have had no connection in the previous five years with the UCO or partner institution.

- b) Where the Academic Council has exceptionally approved that the language of instruction and/or assessment is not English, that External Examiners have the necessary language skills.

- 16.36.37 Where provision is franchised, it will normally be the case that the External Examiner(s) currently assigned to the course / course units are also asked to cover the collaborative iteration of the units.
- 16.36.38 For validated courses the UCO may agree a procedure with the partner whereby they are able to propose potential External Examiners to the UCO, such as nomination by partner faculty and approval by the UCO. This will be recorded in the CPOM.
- 16.36.39 In all cases the UCO will be the institution to contract with the External Examiner and prepare the External Examiner to undertake their role.
- 16.36.40 Where the provision contains a specialist form of assessment, supplementary preparation may be provided by the partner, in conjunction with the UCO.
- 16.36.41 Arrangements for responding to External Examiners reports are described below.

16.37 RESPONDING TO EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 16.37.35 External Examiners for collaborative provision will prepare a formal Annual Report (see AQF11) and submit this to the Quality Team of the UCO regarding the course to which their appointment relates in accordance with the standard time scales set out in Section 11 of the AQF.
- 16.37.36 The Quality Team will disseminate the reports to the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Partner and Link Tutor.
- 16.37.37 The Link Tutor is responsible for ensuring that the partner has received the report and that it is fully considered by staff and student representatives at the partner.
- 16.37.38 The responsibility for drafting and submitting responses to External Examiner reports for each type of collaborative partnership is detailed in [Table 16.24](#).
- 16.37.39 Arrangements for dealing with any concerns raised by External Examiners which relate to the provision delivered by a partner are normally facilitated through the Link Tutor. Progress with addressing these concerns will be noted through the course annual report.
- 16.37.40 The Link Tutor is also responsible for ensuring that students are provided with the opportunity to view External Examiner reports and responses for their courses.

TABLE 16.19: RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RESPONDING TO EXTERNAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORTS FOR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Type of Collaborative Partner	Type of Collaborative Provision	Responsibility for Responding to External Examiner Annual Reports
Associate Partner	Dual Award Provision	The Course Leader (or equivalent) at the partner institution.
	Franchised Provision	The Course Leader at the UCO.
	Validated Provision	The Course Leader at the partner institution.
Link Partner	Study Centre Agreement	The Course Leader at the UCO.

	Articulation Agreement	N/A
	Progression Agreement	N/A
	Memorandum of Understanding	N/A

16.38 BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 16.38.35 The UCO is responsible for making progression decisions relating to all students on collaborative provision courses that lead to an award of the UCO.
- 16.38.36 The UCO will maintain up-to-date records on student progression and achievement for review purposes. Subsequently the partner must inform the UCO of all cases of withdrawal or non-progression and the reasons for these.
- 16.38.37 Full details regarding Boards of Examiners are detailed in Section 12 of the AQF and should be read in conjunction with this section.
- 16.38.38 Boards of Examiners meetings will normally be held at the UCO unless, due to the category of partner and / or the type of provision delivered, it has been agreed that they will take place at the partner's premises. This will be agreed at collaborative partner / provision approval or review and formally approved through the Academic Council via the TQSC and recorded in the CPOM.
- 16.38.39 In all cases the UCO requires that Boards of Examiners considering collaborative provision are chaired by a senior member of UCO staff and that the terms of reference of the Board are approved as consonant with those of Boards of Examiners at the UCO.
- 16.38.40 External Examiners for the course/s under consideration should attend the relevant Board of Examiners with additional membership that will be agreed with the partner.
- 16.38.41 Award recommendations will be made on the basis of assessed work and decisions will be confirmed through the UCO's Boards of Examiners (see AQF Section 12: Boards of Examiners).

16.39 CERTIFICATES AND TRANSCRIPTS

- 16.39.35 As the awarding body, the UCO retains sole responsibility for issuing certificates to those students who have satisfied the assessment and examination requirements for awards.
- 16.39.36 The responsibility for providing students with transcripts may be devolved to the partner with the format of the transcript being the subject of agreement between the two parties. Delegation of this function will be agreed at collaborative partner / provision approval or review, formally approved through the Academic Council via the TQSC and recorded in the CPOM.
- 16.39.37 Student data which appears on the certificate and transcript will be taken from that formally recorded on the UCO's student record system. Partners must therefore ensure that the data they provide to the UCO regarding students is accurate and must inform the UCO immediately if any details change, for example if a student changes their name upon marriage.
- 16.39.38 The wording on the certificate and transcript will be consistent with the UCO's general words and terms for these documents, including the name and location of the partner institution. Where an exceptional variation has been approved to the language of instruction and / or assessment from English, this will also be stated.

- 16.39.39 The location of the awards ceremony for graduands from partners will be a matter for negotiation between the partner and the UCO and will normally be written into the partnership agreement and/or the CPOM.

16.40 ANNUAL MONITORING & REPORTING

- 16.40.35 Following approval to deliver provision collaborative partners enter into the UCO's monitoring and reporting cycle (AQF Section 5: Annual Monitoring & Reporting) which covers a number of separate activities. The outcomes of these activities are reflected upon and drawn together in annual reports, to present an overall view of the collaboration. The standard monitoring and reporting cycle is described fully in in Section 5 of the AQF, which should be read alongside this section.
- 16.40.36 Annual monitoring and reporting is a separate process from course and institutional review, the latter of which is normally a periodic event providing an opportunity for greater reflection over a longer timeframe.
- 16.40.37 The responsibility for the different monitoring and reporting activities is dependent on the nature of the collaborative partnership and will be documented in the CPOM. The processes that will typically apply to the different type of collaborative partner are detailed in [Table 16.24](#).

TABLE 16.20: TYPICAL ANNUAL MONITORING & REPORTING PROCESSES FOR DIFFERENT COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Type of Collaborative Partner	Type of Collaborative Provision	Typical Annual Monitoring & Reporting Process
Associate Partner	Dual Award Provision	<p>a) Course Team Minutes To record ongoing Course Team activities.</p> <p>b) UCO Unit & Course Annual Reports (see AQF5) These reports should cover all delivery locations of the unit or course to allow for cross-site comparison and comments on the effectiveness of the sites where the courses are delivered should be included. These reports should be completed by relevant partner Unit and Course Leaders (or their equivalents) respectively. These reports are considered, approved and signed off by the relevant Course Team and the CPSC.</p> <p>c) UCO Institutional Annual Report (See AQF5). This should be completed by the partner staff member assigned to complete this report. These reports are considered, approved and signed off by the CPSC and TQSC on behalf of the Academic Council.</p>
	Franchised Provision	<p>a) Course Team Minutes To record ongoing Course Team activities.</p> <p>b) UCO Unit & Course Annual Reports (see AQF5)</p>

		<p>These reports should cover all delivery locations of the unit or course to allow for cross-site comparison and comments on the effectiveness of the sites where the courses are delivered should be included.</p> <p>These reports should be completed by relevant partner Unit and Course Leaders (or their equivalents) respectively.</p> <p>These reports are considered, approved and signed off by the relevant Course Team and CPSC.</p> <p>c) UCO Institutional Annual Report (see AQF5)</p> <p>This should be completed by the partner staff member assigned to complete this report.</p> <p>These reports are considered, approved and signed off by the CPSC and TQSC on behalf of the Academic Council.</p>
	Validated Provision	<p>a) Course Team Minutes</p> <p>To record ongoing Course Team activities</p> <p>b) UCO Unit Annual Reports (see AQF5)</p> <p>These should be completed by relevant partner Unit Leaders (or equivalent) respectively.</p> <p>These reports are considered, approved and signed off by the relevant Course Team.</p> <p>c) UCO Course Annual Report (see AQF5)</p> <p>This should be completed by the partner Course Leader (or equivalent).</p> <p>These reports are considered, approved and signed off by the relevant Course Team and CPSC.</p> <p>d) UCO Institutional Annual Report (see AQF5)</p> <p>This should be completed by the partner staff member assigned to complete this report.</p> <p>These reports are considered, approved and signed off by the CPSC and TQSC on behalf of the Academic Council.</p>
Link Partner	Study Centre Agreement	<p>a) Course Team Minutes</p> <p>To record ongoing Course Team activities.</p> <p>b) UCO Unit & Course Annual Reports (see AQF5)</p> <p>These reports should cover all delivery locations of the unit or course to allow for cross-site comparison and comments on the effectiveness of the sites where the courses are delivered should be included.</p> <p>These reports should be completed by relevant partner Unit and Course Leaders (or their equivalents) respectively.</p> <p>These reports are considered, approved and signed off by the relevant Course Team and CPSC.</p> <p>c) UCO Institutional Annual Report (see AQF5)</p> <p>This should be completed by the partner staff member assigned to complete this report.</p> <p>These reports are considered, approved and signed off by the CPSC and TQSC on behalf of the Academic Council.</p>

	Articulation Agreement	Brief annual summary of student numbers, other pertinent data, and any updates to the risk assessment prepared by the Link Tutor and sent to CPSC.
	Progression Agreement	Brief annual summary of student numbers, other pertinent data, and any updates to the risk assessment prepared by the Link Tutor and sent to CPSC.
	Memorandum of Understanding	Brief annual summary of student numbers, other pertinent data, and any updates to the risk assessment prepared by the Link Tutor and sent to CPSC.

- 16.40.38 The Link Tutor will be responsible for coordinating the completion and submission of annual reports with partners and for forwarding completed reports on to the Partnerships Quality Manager which are then considered by the CPSC, TQSC and Academic Council.
- 16.40.39 Where processes for annual monitoring and reporting are reviewed and amended by the UCO, it is the responsibility of the Link Tutor to fully brief their partner in relation to the changes.
- 16.40.40 In cases where monitoring indicates that there is a potential risk to quality and / or standards, the UCO reserves the right to invoke an extraordinary institutional review event or to suspend the collaborative provision until it is satisfied that faults have been rectified and, if this does not prove to be the case, to terminate the provision in line with the processes described in Part 6.

16.41 COURSE AND UNIT MODIFICATIONS

- 16.41.35 All courses delivered through collaborative partners must be taught as approved by the UCO and information published to students must be drawn from the approved documentation only.
- 16.41.36 Any proposed modifications to courses or units delivered through partners must be processed through the UCO's standard course and unit modification procedures described in AQF Section 4: Course & Unit Approval & Modification.
- 16.41.37 Partners may also be permitted to make an amendment to the pattern of unit delivery. This must be discussed with the Link Tutor for the course to ensure that the new pattern remains appropriate. Any changes must be approved through the UCO's standard course and unit modification procedures and communicated to the Partnerships Quality Manager who will ensure that the course unit structure on the student record system is updated.

A) FRANCHISED PROVISION

- 16.41.38 In the case of Franchised Provision, the partner may make suggestions for improvements to the course to relevant UCO faculty. Where suggestions are agreed by the Course Team amendments to the course and / or units should be processed through the UCO's course and unit modification procedures described in AQF Section 4: Course & Unit Approval & Modification.
- 16.41.39 It may also be the case that UCO faculty initiates changes to a course / unit which requires implementation at the partner. In such circumstances transition arrangements for implementation at the partner will be considered through the UCO's standard course and unit modification procedures described in AQF Section 4: Course & Unit Approval & Modification.

- 16.41.40 In both cases it is the responsibility of the Partner Manager to communicate the approved changes to the partner.

B) VALIDATED PROVISION

- 16.41.41 In the case of Validated Provision, the partner may propose a course or unit modification.
- 16.41.42 Course and unit modifications will normally be discussed with partner faculty to ensure that the alterations are appropriate and then be processed through the UCO's standard course and unit modification procedures described in AQF Section 4: Course & Unit Approval & Modification.

16.42 APPROVAL OF PARTNER STAFF (ASSOCIATE PARTNERSHIPS)

- 16.42.35 At events to approve the delivery of provision, partners will be required to submit CVs of all staff teaching on the course(s) under consideration, a list of which units they will be teaching on, and confirmation from the UCO's TQSC that they have individually been approved as appropriate to deliver the unit(s).
- 16.42.36 It is recognised, however, that between approval and review events partner staff delivering provision may change. The UCO will continue to assure itself of the suitability of new members of staff by requesting the partner to submit to the UCO a copy of new partner staff CVs plus information as to which units they will teach on when such changes occur.
- 16.42.37 Approval of new partner staff must be sought from the TQSC, who will update and authorise the Collaborative Partner Staff CV Coversheet indicating approval, followed by confirmation of this to the partner.
- 16.42.38 Partner staff who have not been approved will not be eligible to teach on the course.
- 16.42.39 The Link Tutor will be responsible for receiving CVs from the partner and coordinating signature through the TQSC unless described otherwise in the relevant CPOM.
- 16.42.40 The Link Tutor will ensure that the TQSC is provided with a copy of the Collaborative Partner Staff CV Coversheet (AQF16-11) to note the update to this record.

16.43 COLLABORATIVE PARTNER STAFF DEVELOPMENT (ASSOCIATE PARTNERS)

- 16.43.35 The UCO aims to ensure that, wherever practicable, staff teaching on courses leading to an award of the UCO at partner institutions are invited to participate in its subject-based and pedagogical staff development courses, and that they are engaged in the business of the relevant course.
- 16.43.36 Partner staff have open access to relevant procedural documents, useful web links and help guides produced by UCO and will also be provided with relationship-specific information, which includes the CPOM.
- 16.43.37 Partners based overseas will be provided with a set of developmental sessions at the beginning of the collaboration through the portfolio with which they are linked. Members of partner staff may also have the opportunity to meet with key contacts from administrative departments to familiarise them with UCO processes.
- 16.43.38 The Link Tutor provides appropriate staff development opportunities and facilitates the attendance of partner staff at course team and portfolio and UCO events. This may include providing staff development and instruction with regard to academic policy and procedures, moderation and assessment, etc. Reporting structures on this activity are in place which, where appropriate, feed into the annual monitoring reporting cycle.

- 16.43.39 The UCO also provides opportunities for professional development during the course of the relationship. Fee waivers may be available to promote and incentivise engagement; these opportunities are negotiated on an individual basis and include:
- a) Relevant activity-specific training sessions such as training on the use of the UCO's VLE, data management and quality assurance workshops, etc.
 - b) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses provided by the UCO.
 - c) Support through faculties and central services where needed, typically covering subjects such as assessment, moderation, and changes to quality assurance processes.
 - d) Access to other academic courses provided by the UCO.
 - e) Representation on UCO committees.
- 16.43.40 In addition, staff development may be accessed by partner institutions with the implementation of strategic initiatives, such as the use of learning technologies, on an individually negotiated basis.
- 16.43.41 Other, specific, staff development requirements may need to be addressed as a result of approval / review events, feedback from External Examiners and through the outcomes of the annual monitoring process. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 16.43.42 Unless otherwise agreed in advance and included in the CPOM, costs associated with staff development will be borne by the partner institution.

16.44 PUBLIC INFORMATION, PUBLICITY & MARKETING

- 16.44.35 The UCO aligns with guidance and advice regarding consumer law published by the Competition and Marketing Authority²¹, ensuring that such information is valid, reliable, useful and accessible.
- 16.44.36 For all collaborative activity, the UCO ensures that it maintains effective control of public information as well as of recruitment, publicity and marketing materials, especially where these are published directly by a partner institution. The UCO specifically seeks to ensure that these materials, irrespective of the medium in which they are produced, avoid:
- a) Inaccurate information about the contents or status of the award or the relationship between the partner and the UCO.
 - b) Inappropriate or misleading comparisons with other providers.
 - c) Misleading statements about the recognition of awards by public or other authorised bodies.
 - d) Incorrect advice about the recognition of awards by professional bodies or bodies in other countries.
 - e) Bringing UK higher education into disrepute.
- 16.44.37 No marketing material will be produced by the partner regarding the beginning of a new collaboration with the UCO until the formal collaboration agreement has been signed.
- 16.44.38 Where new provision is in Phase 1 (Initial Proposal Approval), the partner will normally not be permitted to advertise the course either formally or informally in any manner.
- 16.44.39 Where the new provision is in Phase 2 (Partner/Provision Approval), the partner will normally only be permitted to advertise the course either formally or informally until an Initial Approval Event has been held successfully. At this point the course must be marketed as 'subject to

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers>

approval'. Once the Final Approval Event has been held successfully, all approval and delivery conditions have been signed off, and the confirmation letter has been produced, the partner may remove this caveat.

- 16.44.40 If the partner organisation is to produce publicity and marketing materials, they will ensure that they state that the course leads to an award of the UCO but is delivered by the partner. Where entry requirements are given for the course, this will include any English language requirements. Materials must always include the UCO logo in the approved format and refer to the UCO by its full and correct title.
- 16.44.41 Information presented by the partner through their public website will be verified as accurate by the Partner Manager, in conjunction with the Marketing, Admissions, Recruitment and Communications departments, following approval of the partner or a course, and thereafter on a periodic basis. This process will give assurance that the information conforms to the appropriate UCO policies.
- 16.44.42 A Published Information Report Forms (AQF16-24) verifying that information published on the partner's website will be completed, and details of any transgressions noted and evidenced. Partners will be required to correct or update information that has been found to be inaccurate or misleading.
- 16.44.43 The final draft of any hard copy materials must be checked by the UCO to ensure that all information presented is accurate and does not mislead a student as to the nature of the collaboration and the standing of the award offered. The CPSC (and where required the TQSC) shall be responsible for signing off all publicity information report forms.
- 16.44.44 Course information presented will be verified against the approved documents held by the Quality Team. The area of the UCO responsible for verification will be described in the CPOM and records of verification will be maintained by the Quality Team.
- 16.44.45 If as a result of this the partner is required to make any amendments to the materials, final versions must be copied to the UCO for final verification of their accuracy.
- 16.44.46 Additionally, the Marketing, Admissions, Recruitment and Communications departments will undertake a periodic web search to ensure that there are no institutions claiming to be in a collaborative partnership with the UCO that have not been approved.

PART 7: PERIODIC REVIEW OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS & PROVISION

16.45 INTRODUCTION

- 16.45.35 The UCO reviews collaborative partnerships and provision periodically (normally every five years) to review collaborative activity at a greater depth and over a longer timeframe than annual monitoring allows.
- 16.45.36 The process used for reviews is normally undertaken according to the type of collaborative partner and provision as detailed in [Table 16.25](#).

TABLE 16.21: THE NORMAL PERIODIC REVIEW PROCESSES FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNER & PROVISION

Type of Collaborative Partnership / Provision		Normal Periodic Review Process
Associate Partner		Periodic Institutional Review (see Section 16.46)
Associate Partner Provision	Franchised	Periodic Course Review (see Section 16.47 & AQF Section 6: Periodic Review)
	Validated	Periodic Course Review (see AQF Section 6: Periodic Review)
	Dual Award	Periodic Course Review (see AQF Section 6: Periodic Review)
Link Partner		According to the type of provision as listed below.
Link Partner Provision	Articulation	Articulation Periodic Review (see Section 16.48b)
	Progression	Progression Periodic Review (see Section 16.48c)
	Study Centre	Study Centre Periodic Review (see Section 16.48a)
	Memorandum of Understanding	Memorandum of Understanding Periodic Review (see Section 16.48d)

- 16.45.37 Periodic Institutional Reviews may be scheduled alongside Periodic Course Reviews of collaborative provision where this is appropriate.
- 16.45.38 Schedules for collaborative partner and provision periodic review are considered annually by the CPSC, TQSC and the Academic Council.
- 16.45.39 The organisation of all collaborative partner and provision periodic reviews is the responsibility of the Quality Team.

16.46 ASSOCIATE PARTNER PERIODIC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

A) INTRODUCTION

- 16.46.35 All associate partners undergo periodic institutional review by the UCO once every five years as a minimum, unless an extraordinary periodic review is invoked by the UCO's Academic Council upon recommendation by the TQSC. This may be due to significant

concerns raised through monitoring and reporting processes, through External Examiners reports or where the nature of the relationship with the UCO changes significantly.

16.46.36 The main aims of periodic institutional review of associate partners are:

- a) To consider whether the partnership is operating in accordance with:
 - i. The relevant processes set out in the UCO's AQF and other overarching UCO policies, or approved variances to these.
 - ii. The procedures and responsibilities outlined in the Partner Agreement between the UCO and the partner and the Collaborative Provision Operations Manual (CPOM), paying particular attention to those aspects which have been delegated to the partner.
 - iii. Any requirements of the QAA (for example alignment with the QAA's Quality Code for Higher Education) and PSRBs, as appropriate.
- b) To provide continued assurance to the UCO that the partner's governance, management and mechanisms for quality assurance and enhancement remain robust regarding the type of provision delivered.
- c) To assist partners in the evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses at an institutional level in regarding to teaching and learning and the strategic management of the provision.
- d) To draw on feedback from External Examiners and students to identify potential improvements to the management of the partnership that will enhance the student experience.
- e) To review the Partner Agreement and affirm the continuation of the collaborative partnership.

16.46.37 Periodic institutional review is intended to be a two-way process and to provide for greater reflection on the operation of the partnership than annual monitoring activity.

16.46.38 Aims of periodic subject and course review are detailed in Section 6: Periodic Review of the AQF.

B) SCHEDULES & MONITORING OF PROCESS OF ASSOCIATE PARTNER PERIODIC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS

16.46.39 The schedule and deadline dates for the institutional review process and documentation requirements will be confirmed by the Head of Quality & Partnerships in consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), the Partnerships Quality Manager, the Link Tutor and partner staff.

16.46.40 The partner will identify a coordinator to act as the point of contact with the UCO. The Partnerships Quality Manager will normally lead on the review from the UCO's perspective.

16.46.41 The CPSC and TQSC will be informed of periodic institutional review processes and their progress through regular updates at committee meetings.

C) ASSOCIATE PARTNER PERIODIC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS

16.46.42 A risk-based approach is taken for the institutional periodic review process for Associate Partners and involves the review of the partnership from both the UCO's and Partner's perspectives using relevant documentary evidence and critical evaluation review reports submitted by both parties and, depending on a risk assessment of these reports either proceeds to a Periodic Institutional Review Meeting (if risks related to the partner or

partnership are identified) or a Periodic Institutional Review Event (if medium-high risks related to the partner or partnership are identified).

16.46.43 In all cases the Periodic Institutional Review process will normally take place sequentially as follows:

- a) The Partner produces a "Partner Periodic Institutional Review Report" using form AQF16-25a, appending relevant supporting evidence.
- b) The Head of Quality & Partnerships and Partnerships Quality Manager review the submitted Partner Periodic Institutional Review Report, requesting clarification or further supporting evidence from the Partner as required.
- c) The Head of Quality & Partnership and the Partnerships Quality Manager in liaison with relevant Link Tutors produce a critical evaluation of the partner's report on behalf of the CPSC using form AQF16-25b, which also identifies and assesses any risks associated with the partner or partnership.
- d) The critical evaluation of the partner's report and the risk assessment will be considered at an Extraordinary Partner Periodic Institutional Review CPSC meeting to discuss and agree the report and to recommend the next stage of the process to the TQSC which based on the agreed risk assessment will either be:
 - i. Progression to a Partner Periodic Institutional Review Meeting (where it has been determined that there are low-medium risks concerning the Partner and Partnership) with Partner and UCO Senior Staff to discuss the report and to pursue any lines of enquiry.
 - ii. Progression to a Partner Periodic Institutional Review Event (where it has been determined that there are medium-high risks concerning the Partner) which may be focussed on one or more areas of the partner or partnership where risks have been identified.
- e) A written report of Partner Periodic Institutional Review meetings and events will be produced summarising meeting / event discussions, outcomes, conditions and agreed actions as appropriate.
- f) Partner Periodic Institutional Review outcomes will be recommended to the CPSC, TQSC and Academic Council for formal re-approval of the Collaborative Partner and Partnership.

C) THE PARTNER PERIODIC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT (FORM AQF16-25A)

16.46.44 The first stage of the Partner Periodic Institutional Review process is the production of a review report by the partner using the Partner Periodic Institutional Review Form (AQF16-25a). This report provides the partner with the opportunity to provide a reflective narrative and evidence on the following over the review period:

- a) Nature, Ethos & Strategy
- b) PSRB Accreditation
- c) Partnership with the UCO
- d) Governance & Management Arrangements
- e) Quality Assurance & Enhancement Arrangements
- f) Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategies
- g) Feedback Arrangements

- h) Student Data
 - i) Student Experience
 - j) Student Complaints, Appeals, etc. Policies & Cases
 - k) Student Support Services
 - l) Staff Resources & Staff Development
 - m) Learning Resources.
 - n) Facilities.
 - o) Financial Resources, Stability & Viability
 - p) Major issues identified or experienced over the review period.
 - q) A SWOT Analysis / Risk Assessment at an Institutional Level and Action Plan.
- 16.46.45 The partner will be expected to provide supporting evidence in the form of appendices to support their review report.
- 16.46.46 Guidance and supporting evidence requirements are provided in form AQF16-25a.
- 16.46.47 Where a partner is based outside of the UK the report and supporting evidence must be provided in English.

D) THE CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE PARTNER PERIODIC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT (FORM AQF16-25B)

- 16.46.48 Further to receiving the Partner Periodic Institutional Review Report from the partner, the Head of Quality & Partnerships, and the Partnerships Quality Manager in liaison with relevant Link Tutors and other relevant UCO staff (for example, the Finance Director to review financial matters, and the Registrar to review registration and assessment processes) will critically review the report and complete form AQF16-25b.
- 16.46.49 The critical review will also include the following:
- a) A review of issues, enhancements and good practice identified from Institutional, Course, Unit, External Examiner and PSRB Annual Reports and how these have been addressed by the UCO and / or partner.
 - b) A review of issues, enhancements and good practice identified from the Partnership Log and interactions with the Partner.
 - c) A review of the Partner Agreement and Collaborative Provision Operations Manual.
 - d) A review of the Partner's Due Diligence (including the last three years of the Partner's accounts, financial forecast, and strategic plan).
 - e) A review of the Partnership Risk Assessment.
 - f) Production of an Action Plan identifying any proposed conditions for Partner re-approval or recommended enhancements to current Partner practice in response to issues or risks identified.
- 16.46.50 The Head of Quality & Partnerships and the Partnerships Quality Manager may where required liaise with the Partner to clarify the report or request additional supporting evidence to inform the review of the partner's report.
- 16.46.51 The Partner Periodic Institutional Review Report and the critical evaluation of the report will be considered at an extraordinary CPSC meeting where the outcome of the critical evaluation will be agreed and recommended to the TQSC. The TQSC (electronically or by

Chair's Action) will confirm whether the Periodic Institutional Review progresses to a Partner Institutional Review Meeting, or a Partner Institutional Review Event as recommended in the critical evaluation.

E) THE PARTNER PERIODIC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW MEETING

- 16.46.52 Where the TQSC agrees that the risk associated with the Partner and Partnership is low-medium, a Partner Periodic Institutional Review Meeting will take place between senior Partner and UCO staff to discuss the outcome of the critical evaluation, pursue any lines of enquiry and agree the outcome of the Periodic Institutional Review, including any conditions for re-approval of the partnership.
- 16.46.53 Senior partner staff will normally include the Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent) and heads of departments covered in the Partner Periodic Institutional Review Report. Senior UCO staff will normally include senior staff involved in the management of the partnership including the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Head of Quality & Partnerships, Partnerships Quality Manager and Link Tutors, one of who will be delegated to chair the review meeting. Additional relevant staff from either party may also be invited.
- 16.46.54 The Partner Periodic Institutional Review Meeting will normally be held at the Partner's main teaching premises where partner facilities may be viewed but may be held virtually where this is appropriate.
- 16.46.55 The agenda for the Partner Periodic Institutional Review Meeting will be agreed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) but will normally include:
- a) Private meetings of the UCO senior staff to agree lines of enquiry, partner staff responses to these and outcomes of the meeting.
 - b) Meetings with senior staff to discuss the low-medium risk issues identified in the Critical Evaluation of the Partner Periodic Institutional Review Report.
 - c) A meeting with a representative sample of students on UCO-approved courses where risks are associated with the student experience.
 - d) A tour of facilities to include any new or refurbished facilities including specialist facilities, where risks are associated with facilities.
- 16.46.56 A written record of the Partner Periodic Institutional Meeting will be made to confirm agreed outcomes, including timelines for any re-approval conditions.
- 16.46.57 Review Meeting discussions will enable UCO staff in attendance to make an informed judgement about whether to recommend re-approval of the partnership, which may be granted with or without conditions in line with the [Possible Partner Periodic Institutional Review Outcomes](#).
- 16.46.58 Formal notification regarding the outcome of the event including any conditions and timelines for their completion will be confirmed to the partner in writing.

F) THE PARTNER PERIODIC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW EVENT

- 16.46.59 Where the TQSC agrees that the risk associated with the Partner and Partnership is medium-high, a Partner Periodic Institutional Event will take place.
- 16.46.60 The Partner Periodic Institutional Review Event will normally last for one day be held at the partner's main teaching premises where partner facilities may be viewed but may be held virtually where this is appropriate.
- 16.46.61 The agenda for the Partner Periodic Institutional Review Event will be agreed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) but will normally include:

- a) Private meetings of the Review Panel to agree lines of enquiry, partner staff responses to these and outcomes of the event.
 - b) Meetings with senior staff to discuss the medium-high risk issues identified in the Critical Evaluation of the Partner Periodic Institutional Review Report.
 - c) A meeting with a representative sample of students on UCO-approved courses where risks are associated with the student experience.
 - d) A tour of facilities to include any new or refurbished facilities including specialist facilities, where risks are associated with facilities.
- 16.46.62 A Partner Periodic Institutional Review Event Panel will be appointed as described in [Section 16.46G](#).
- 16.46.63 Having reviewed the Partner Periodic Institutional Review Report and Critical Evaluation of the Partner Periodic Institutional Review Report, the event will provide the Review Panel an opportunity to pursue lines of enquiry with partner staff, and for partner staff to clarify matters and respond to their questioning as appropriate.
- 16.46.64 Review Event discussions will enable the Review Panel to make an informed judgement about whether to recommend re-approval of the partnership, which may be granted with or without conditions in line with the [Possible Partner Periodic Institutional Review Outcomes](#).
- 16.46.65 Formal notification regarding the outcome of the event including any conditions and timelines for their completion will be confirmed to the partner in writing.

G) THE PARTNER PERIODIC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW EVENT PANEL

- 16.46.66 Membership of the Review Event Panel is normally the same as that for the Collaborative Partner Approval Process as detailed in [Table 16.4](#) and allows panellists to focus on their specific areas of expertise and to pursue relevant lines of enquiry as appropriate.
- 16.46.67 Any change in the composition of the panel must be agreed in advance by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) who will ensure that the membership is appropriate for the context of the review event.
- 16.46.68 Review Panel members will be provided with guidance regarding the scope of their role by the Quality Team prior to the event.
- 16.46.69 Review Event Panel members are required to attend for the entire review event. They are expected to have reviewed the documentation submitted prior to the event and should come to the event prepared with appropriate lines of enquiry.

H) POSSIBLE PARTNER PERIODIC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OUTCOMES

- 16.46.70 Possible outcomes of Partner Periodic Institutional Reviews are:
- a) Re-Approval of the partnership is granted with no conditions.
 - b) Re-Approval of the partnership is granted with conditions.
 - c) Re-Approval of the partnership is not granted and will be terminated.
- 16.46.71 Re-approval of a partnership is normally for a maximum of a further 5 years.
- 16.46.72 Recommendations may also be made where these will enhance the partnership; recommendations do not have to be addressed by the partner, but it is expected that actions taken to progress them, or reasons for not doing so, will be included in the partner's response to the periodic institutional review outcomes.
- 16.46.73 Both conditions and recommendations can be directed towards the partner and / or the UCO.

16.46.74 Good practice may also be identified for wider dissemination by the partner and UCO.

I) RESPONDING TO PERIODIC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OUTCOMES

- 16.46.75 Following the review meetings and events, an outcome report to formally record and communicate the review outcomes to the partner in writing will be prepared by the Panel Secretary. The report will contain a full record of the event including discussions held, the agreed approval conditions and recommendations and reasons for conclusions and outcomes.
- 16.46.76 The Panel Secretary will circulate the outcome report to the members of the review panel for confirmation and final approval and authorisation by the Panel Chair.
- 16.46.77 The Panel Secretary will then circulate the approved outcome report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Head of Quality & Partnerships, Partnerships Quality Manager, relevant Link Tutors, and relevant partner staff. The Panel Secretary will also provide the partner with an event outcome response form and a deadline for the response to any conditions.
- 16.46.78 The partner (in consultation with the Link Tutor) will be responsible for completing and returning the Partner Review Conditions and Response Form (AQF16-26) with appropriate supporting evidence in response to the review conditions and recommendations within the requisite timeframe to the Quality Team. This will be forwarded to the review meeting UCO staff and / or Review Event Panel as appropriate to confirm that review conditions and recommendations have been responded by the partner to sufficiently. The delegated chair of the review meeting / event will authorize that the partner's responses have been met and will recommend re-approval of the partner to the TQSC, and thereafter formal approval by the Academic Council.
- 16.46.79 Following approval of the re-approved partnership by the Academic Council:
- a) The Partnerships Quality Manager shall confirm re-approval of the partnership with the partner institution and relevant internal colleagues (including the TQSC, CPSC, relevant Link Tutors and Registry Team).
 - b) The Collaborative Activity Register will be updated by the Quality Team to reflect re-approval of the partnership.
 - c) The Partnership Agreement is updated as agreed and signed between the partner and the UCO.
 - d) The Partnerships Quality Manager shall update the partnership risk assessment which will continue to be monitored through the CPSC.

16.47 ASSOCIATE PARTNER PROVISION REVIEW: FRANCHISED PROVISION

- 16.47.35 The review of Franchised Provision will normally take place through the UCO's standard Periodic Review process detailed in Section 6 of the AQF.
- 16.47.36 At this event partner faculty will be required to include a number of additional documents for the review panel, in addition to the normal requirements specified in Section 6 of the AQF. These include:
- a) An updated delivery site report confirming the ongoing suitability and availability of resources (AQF16-05).
 - b) An evaluation document (AQF16-27) prepared by partner faculty which describes any changes to the institution since original provision approval and provides an evaluative

commentary on the relationship covering academic quality and standards, student experience, and course management and liaison.

- c) An updated Due Diligence and Risk Assessment Form (AQF16-04) provided by the Partnerships Quality Manager in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships.

16.47.37 Re-approval of the collaborative relationship for a further five-year period will be made through the standard Periodic Review process, subject to conditions and recommendations to be addressed by the partner.

16.47.38 Confirmation that the outcomes have been fulfilled will be noted at CPSC and TQSC meetings and subsequently by the Academic Council.

16.47.39 Following approval by the Academic Council:

- a) The Head of Quality & Partnerships will confirm re-approval in writing to relevant partner and UCO colleagues.
- b) The Quality Team will update the Collaborative Activity Register.
- c) The collaboration contract will be updated as appropriate.

16.48 LINK PARTNER PROVISION REVIEW

16.48.35 The review of Link Partners involves a review of the provision being delivered; an institutional level review is not normally undertaken as the provision delivered does not lead to an award of the UCO.

16.48.36 The review date of Link Partners is noted on the same schedule as for institutional reviews to ensure that a full picture of collaborative activity is maintained.

A) STUDY CENTRE ARRANGEMENTS

16.48.37 Following approval, study centre arrangements with Link Partners must be monitored to ensure that the quality and standards of the facilities of the premises remain of an appropriate quality and standard for the provision being delivered.

16.48.38 The date for review of study centre arrangements will be included on the Collaborative Activity Register considered by the CPSC annually.

16.48.39 A review of a Link Partner's premises as a study centre is required at the end of the original period of approval / re-approval (i.e. a minimum of every five years).

16.48.40 The Partnerships Quality Manager will provide confirmation that a review is due in the current academic year to the appropriate Course Leader to produce a short reflective report on the provision.

16.48.41 The report will include:

- a) A comparison of the achievement of students taught at the study centre against those taught elsewhere.
- b) A reflective summary regarding how issues raised within External Examiner reports have been addressed; copies of External Examiner reports and responses for the provision during the previous three years should be submitted as evidence for and in support of this summary.
- c) An update to the description of required learning resources considered at approval, and confirmation regarding how students are currently able to access them.

- d) An update to the statement describing the provision of academic and pastoral support considered at approval and confirmation regarding how students are currently able to access these.
- 16.48.42 In addition, the following should be reviewed and updated as appropriate:
- a) Due Diligence and Risk Assessment Report (AQF16-04)
 - b) Delivery Site Report (AQF16-05)
- 16.48.43 The Study Centre Review report will be considered by the CPSC to ensure that the student experience at the study centre remains appropriate and sound. If there is any doubt as to this, a panel will be convened to review the collaboration, in accordance with the Study Centre arrangement approval process.
- 16.48.44 The Study Centre Review report (and response if required) will be considered and endorsed through the TQSC and formally re-approved by the Academic Council.
- 16.48.45 Following re-approval by the Academic Council:
- a) The Head of Quality & Partnerships will confirm re-approval of the arrangement in writing to relevant partner and UCO colleagues.
 - b) The Quality Team will update the Collaborative Activity Register.
 - c) The collaboration contract will be updated as appropriate.

B) ARTICULATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 16.48.46 Following approval, articulation arrangements with Link Partners must be monitored to ensure that the quality and standards of teaching are maintained and that the curricula and assessment on the originating course do not depart from the destination course through the natural process of curriculum development thereby invalidating the confirmation of equivalency gained through the original mapping exercise.
- 16.48.47 The date for review of articulation arrangements will be included on the Collaborative Activity Register considered by the CPSC, TQSC and Academic Council annually.
- 16.48.48 A review of an articulation arrangement is required at the end of the original period of approval / re-approval (i.e. a minimum of every five years) if the UCO and Link Partner wish to continue with the arrangement.
- 16.48.49 A review is also required at an intermediate point if the originating or destination course undergoes a significant change or series of cumulative changes which alter it significantly from that originally approved. This is identified through the ongoing liaison between the partner and the UCO through the Link Tutor (or equivalent). In either case the Partnerships Quality Manager in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships will convene an Articulation Review Panel to discuss the nature and quality of the existing agreement, and whether it should be reaffirmed. To facilitate discussion, the Link Tutor should prepare the following brief document:
- a) An Articulation Arrangement Review Report (AQF16-28) which critically reflects on the management of the articulation arrangement during the previous approval period and:
 - i. Provides details of the number of students who have progressed following this route, comparing their achievement to the cohort as a whole.
 - ii. Includes an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the arrangement, highlighting how improvements could be made.
 - iii. Provides information relating to relevant issues raised in External Examiner reports and information as to how these have been addressed.

- 16.48.50 The due diligence and risk assessment form for the partner should also be reviewed and updated by the Partnerships Quality Manager in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships. Where aspects of either the risk assessment or due diligence have changed significantly, the Partnerships Quality Manager will bring this to the attention of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 16.48.51 The Articulation Arrangement review report and response will be considered and endorsed through the TQSC and formally re-approved by the Academic Council.
- 16.48.52 The Chair of the Academic Council will sign-off the report.
- 16.48.53 Following re-approval by the Academic Council:
- a) The Head of Quality & Partnerships will confirm re-approval of the arrangement in writing to relevant partner and UCO colleagues.
 - b) The Quality Team will update the Collaborative Activity Register.
 - c) The collaboration contract will be updated as appropriate.
- 16.48.54 Where the destination course is discontinued, every effort will be made to provide a suitable replacement for the articulation. In these circumstances the Head of Quality & Partnerships should be informed to ensure that centrally held information, including contracts, is kept up to date.

C) PROGRESSION ARRANGEMENTS

- 16.48.55 Following approval, progression arrangements with Link Partners must be monitored to ensure that the course provided by the partner institution remains a suitable and appropriate entry qualification for the specified UCO course.
- 16.48.56 Where there are sizeable student numbers involved in a progression arrangement from a particular institution, UCO faculty may wish to identify a member of staff to carry out liaison duties and to report on the achievement of students from that institution as a discrete group within the relevant monitoring report.
- 16.48.57 The date for review of progression arrangements will be included on the Collaborative Activity Register considered by the CPSC, TQSC and Academic Council annually.
- 16.48.58 A review of a progression arrangement is required at the end of the original period of approval / re-approval (i.e., a minimum of every five years) if the UCO and Link Partner wish to continue with the arrangement.
- 16.48.59 The review of progression arrangements will require the following documentation considered at initial approval / previous review to be reviewed and updated as appropriate:
- a) The Course Mapping document considered at initial approval to ensure that the originating and destination courses have not departed from that considered at initial approval and therefore remains useful in making judgements for progressing students onto specified UCO courses as appropriate.
 - b) Reviewed and update Due Diligence and Risk Assessment Form (AQF16-04).
- 16.48.60 The Course Leader in liaison with the Partnerships Quality Manager will be responsible for undertaking the review of the Course Mapping document and Risk Assessment Report, both of which will be considered by the CPSC and TQSC and recommended to the Academic Council for formal re-approval.
- 16.48.61 Following re-approval by the Academic Council:

- a) The Head of Quality & Partnerships will confirm re-approval of the arrangement in writing by disseminating the Articulation Arrangement Review Confirmation Form to relevant partner and UCO colleagues.
- b) The Quality Team will update the Collaborative Activity Register.
- c) The collaboration contract will be updated as appropriate.

D) MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

- 16.48.62 Memoranda of Understanding shall be reviewed in line with the review date agreed by the UCO and the Partner and stated in the Memorandum of Understanding.
- 16.48.63 The Partner Institution shall complete an Institutional Annual Report Form (see AQF5) and review the current Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that the arrangement remains appropriate for both parties.
- 16.48.64 The Institutional Annual Report shall be considered by the Senior Management Team.
- 16.48.65 Any recommended amendments made to the Memorandum of Understanding shall be approved by the Senior Management Team, following which the Memorandum of Understanding shall be updated and signed by both parties.

PART 8: TERMINATION OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS & PROVISION

16.50 INTRODUCTION

- 16.50.1 Collaborative partnerships and provision may be terminated by either party. In all cases an exit strategy must be agreed with the partner to safeguard the experience of all students and staff involved and to ensure that they are provided with the opportunity to successfully complete the agreed activities; all collaborative relationships are governed by a legally binding agreement which includes a clause dealing with termination that must be followed.
- 16.50.2 Notification to terminate a collaborative relationship (either at the request of UCO or partner faculty) must be provided to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Head of Quality & Partnerships in writing at the earliest opportunity.
- 16.50.3 Collaborative relationships will automatically lapse if they are not reviewed, at which point the collaborative contract will also expire.
- 16.50.4 Whatever the reason for the termination, and whoever it is instigated by, the proposal to terminate must first be approved by the TQSC using the Collaborative Activity Termination Form (AQF16-29).
- 16.50.5 If approved, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will facilitate a meeting or correspondence with the partner to discuss the proposed termination and agree an exit strategy, both of which must be approved by the TQSC and the Academic Council.
- 16.50.6 Once the termination proposal and exit strategy have been approved, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will prepare a formal termination letter for the partner which will set out the agreed exit strategy. If any communication to continuing students at the partner institution is planned, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) must be consulted about the wording and mode of this communication.
- 16.50.7 The exit period is a high-risk phase of any partnership. To facilitate this, the exit strategy will be monitored by the TQSC through regular updates which will be noted on the Collaborative Activity Termination Form.

16.51 EXIT STRATEGIES

- 16.51.1 The Exit Strategy will aim to ensure a smooth departure from the relationship while preserving the integrity and continuation of the students' education. The only exception to this will be in situations where there are no students registered on any of the provision delivered in the UCO's name. In these circumstances confirmation of termination will be provided to the partner in writing on receipt of a fully completed and signed Major Course and Unit Modification Form (see AQF04-18) from the partner (to formally request termination of the partnership / closure of the provision).
- 16.51.2 Consideration must be given to students currently enrolled on collaborative provision and the student experience during the run-out period; students will normally be given the opportunity to complete their course within the standard time frame.
- 16.51.3 Production of the Exit Strategy is the responsibility of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) (or through delegated authority), in conjunction with the relevant UCO and partner faculty and will include an update to the Due Diligence and Risk Assessment Form (AQF16-04).
- 16.51.4 The Exit Strategy will:
- a) State the titles of the courses associated with the partnership.

- b) Clarify key dates, such as the end of the 'run out' period, the enrolment deadline for the final cohort and the final Board of Examiners.
 - c) Provide details regarding student support, quality assurance and academic liaison that will apply during the 'run out' period.
 - d) List any action to be taken to inform students of the termination and monitor the 'run out' period.
 - e) Include information regarding the formal monitoring requirements for the implementation of the strategy, and the requirement to confirm to the Academic Council that the exit has been concluded.
 - f) Confirm when the courses can be removed from the UCO's student record system and from the UCO and partner websites.
- 16.51.5 All exit strategies devised as a result of termination of a collaborative relationship will be presented to the Academic Council by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) for approval.
- 16.51.6 The "run-out" of the relationship will be monitored by the Partnerships Quality Manager and the CPSC in accordance with the approved Exit Strategy.

16.52 FOLLOWING CONCLUSION OF THE EXIT STRATEGY

- 16.52.1 Following confirmation to the Academic Council of the conclusion of the strategy by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), the Partnerships Quality Manager in liaison with the Head of Quality & Partnerships will:
- a) Issue a formal letter to the partner confirming termination of the relationship and the date from which this applies.
 - b) Notify the Admissions Department and Academic Registry to ensure that the relevant courses have closed as agreed.
 - c) Request through the Marketing Department that relevant publication and promotional material relating to the closed courses be removed from the UCO's website and other locations as appropriate.
 - d) Update the Collaborative Activity Register to reflect the termination of the relationship.

16.53 CLOSING A COURSE DELIVERED THROUGH A PARTNER

- 16.53.1 To close a course delivered through a partner, either on an individual basis or as a result of the termination of the relationship, the partner should submit a Course Modification Form (see AQF04-17) to the Quality Team for approval by the CPSC, TQSC and Academic Council.
- 16.53.2 The modification form will confirm that suitable arrangements have been made for students currently registered on the course that will allow them to complete their studies, as appropriate.
- 16.53.3 Where more complex arrangements are required, it may be necessary to also implement an Exit Strategy, which identifies roles and responsibilities in greater detail.

PART 9: STUDENT EXCHANGES

16.54 INTRODUCTION

- 16.54.1 Student exchanges are formal agreements the UCO has with other institutions to enable students to continue their studies whilst experiencing a different educational environment.
- 16.54.2 They provide students with the opportunity to study their subject from a different perspective, experience a new culture should the exchange be international and meet new colleagues. Student exchanges can also serve to broaden students' horizons and may demonstrate to future employers that they are adaptable to new and challenging situations, a useful transferable skill.
- 16.54.3 Students studying an eligible subject are able to spend a period of time studying at a partner institution in another country. Students on an exchange at a partner institution will continue to pay the required tuition fees to the UCO (as their home institution) but will not pay any tuition fees to host institution. Students will, however, be liable for their living costs and transportation expenses.
- 16.54.4 The academic work that students complete at a partner institution as part of an exchange programme will be credited to their UCO degree, subject to advance approval.
- 16.54.5 This section of the AQF sets out the UCO's formal quality assurance arrangements for student exchanges taking into account the need for sound planning prior to a student's departure (with particular attention to student support).
- 16.54.6 Any course may permit a student to undertake a student exchange provided the exchange meets the criteria set out below and the exchange is with an approved partner institution.

16.55 APPROVAL OF STUDENT EXCHANGES

- 16.55.1 Student Exchanges will normally be arranged with an approved partner institution or with an organisation with which the UCO has a Memorandum of Understanding.
- 16.55.2 The approval of student exchange arrangements depends on whether the exchange is offered on an occasional or standing basis for individual students and / or groups students as outlined below.

A) OCCASIONAL EXCHANGES

- 16.55.3 Occasional exchanges do not require approval beyond that of the Course Team, except where a key aspect of the curriculum is altered to facilitate the exchange. In such cases, approval of the Enhancement of Teaching, Learning & Assessment Sub-Committee (ETLASC) is required.
- 16.55.4 Students will normally receive full recognition for their exchange period. This may be in the form of a certificate or on their transcript.

B) STANDING EXCHANGES

- 16.55.5 A standing student exchange will need to be approved by the Course Team and by the ETLASC. Approval by the TQSC is not normally required unless a key aspect of the curriculum is altered to facilitate the exchange.
- 16.55.6 The ETLASC should consider variations of student exchanges proportionately, i.e. scrutinise specific exchange proposals rather than scrutinise the specifics of the course or its units.

C) ACCREDITED EXCHANGES

- 16.55.7 A student exchange may enable students to transfer any credits they gain to their UCO award (i.e. an accredited exchange).
- 16.55.8 For an accredited exchange, the Course Team must map the learning to be achieved during the exchange against the Learning Outcomes that would have been achieved on the 'home' course to ensure a reasonable match between the exchange learning and that of the 'home' course.
- 16.55.9 Students gaining credits during their student exchange should normally complete the 'home' course within the normal planned duration of that course i.e., the exchange credits should replace the credits a student would have gained had they studied at the UCO for that period of time.
- 16.55.10 If students' study is prolonged for a further year or part year, funding and resourcing implications must be considered (particularly in respect of undergraduate courses and especially in the case of a standing arrangement for groups of students).
- 16.55.11 Students on an accredited exchange should receive full recognition of the credits on their transcript and be issued with a year abroad (or similar) certificate.
- 16.55.12 It is anticipated that the credit points assigned at the partner institution will normally conform to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). In such cases, 2 UK Credits = 1 ECTS credit point. Similarly, the marks/grades achieved on an exchange should be transferred using a mutually recognised ECTS method that enables marks/grading to be readily translated into their 'home' equivalents.
- 16.55.13 The chair of the Board of Examiners and the UCO's External Examiners should be informed about any student exchange arrangements in advance of the Board of Examiners meeting to enable them to seek clarification on any aspects of the exchange for progression or award purposes. All assessment mark/grade conversions should be completed and confirmed before the Board of Examiners meeting.
- 16.55.14 For standing exchange arrangements for groups of students, the Course Team Leader, Partnerships Quality Manager, Head of Quality & Partnerships and ETLASC chair should also be informed. Proposals for these will also need to gain business approval from the Senior Management Team (SMT).

16.56 STUDENT EXCHANGE APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

- 16.56.1 A learning agreement must be negotiated before a student departs on any exchange. This agreement must set out the details of the student's programme of study or work placement. For accredited exchanges, the learning agreement will ensure that all essential parts of the 'home' course have been considered and taken into account.
- 16.56.2 Student support arrangements must be agreed between the Course Team and each student. Normally an appropriate UCO member of staff is allocated to a student (or group of students) as a key contact for the duration of the exchange.
- 16.56.3 Students' linguistic ability should be sufficient for study at the partner institution before the student departs.
- 16.56.4 Students should be made particularly aware of cases where an accredited exchange makes a significant contribution to the classification of the 'home' award, especially if the student will be studying in a foreign language.

- 16.56.5 Any issues or good practice arising out of student exchanges should be notified to relevant UCO staff (Course Team Leader, Head of Quality & Partnerships and ETLASC chair) to ensure that student exchange policy and practice is enhanced across the UCO as appropriate.
- 16.56.6 Approved Course Information Forms should be amended to include a reference to the potential for student exchanges, particularly in respect of standing arrangements for groups of students.
- 16.56.7 Where student exchanges necessitate a change to course outcomes or the award or course title to be conferred on a student, this will require approval by the TQSC and Academic Council through the UCO's course and unit modification process (see AQF Section 4) and will require business approval from the Senior Management Team.
- 16.56.8 A fact sheet providing details of each student exchange opportunity will be provided detailing eligibility criteria, language of instruction and details about the partner institution as a minimum. This shall be provided to students by the Course Leader normally through the VLE.

16.57 REVIEW OF STUDENT EXCHANGES

- 16.57.1 Student Exchanges will be reviewed annually and periodically in line with the UCO's Annual Monitoring and Reporting and Periodic Review processes as described in AQF Section 5.
- 16.57.2 Students participating in any Student Exchange will be asked to evaluate their experience normally through an evaluation questionnaire, the results of which shall inform annual reporting and periodic review of the course to which the exchange relates.

PART 10: PRACTICE-BASED EDUCATION

16.58 INTRODUCTION

- 16.58.1 The UCO is committed to developing student employability and working with employers to produce graduates who have the knowledge, professional standards, competences and proficiencies for successful employment. Practice-based learning as an integral component of a program of study contributes to students' developing professional and employability skills.
- 16.58.2 The following processes describe the UCO's requirements for the approval and management of practice-based educators that provide placements for students studying on programs of study for which practice based learning is integral.
- 16.58.3 These processes follow good practice to ensure that the UCO meets its responsibilities regarding the management and quality of the student learning experience in addition to their safety and wellbeing whilst on practice-based placements.
- 16.58.4 Practice-based learning also includes within its scope work-based learning, placements or any education provided by another institution or organisation responsible for delivering teaching and learning within a work-based setting, who within this context are described as practice-based educators.

16.59 PRINCIPLES

- 16.59.1 The principles upon which practice-based educators are chosen should include the following:
- a) The learning associated with a practice-based educator must be designed to take account of relevant external reference points (e.g. the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code, any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body expectations and UCO policies).
 - b) Courses must have in place arrangements for the quality assurance of practice-based education placement opportunities, including management of risks relating to health and safety, quality and other risks associated with the specific proposals for a given course.
 - c) Students must be registered as a student of the UCO (or of an approved collaborative partner organization) for the duration of the practice-based placement.
 - d) Learning outcomes that contribute to the overall aims and learning outcomes of the course and/or unit(s) must be appropriate for the practice-based learning experience and should be clearly defined within the course and/or unit information forms.
 - e) Practice-based learning opportunities must be of an appropriate length and quality to ensure that the identified learning outcomes can be achieved.
 - f) Any professional considerations and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) expectations must be taken into consideration.
 - g) Information provided to prospective and current students (e.g. Course and Unit Information Forms, Course Handbooks, Course Prospectus or Brochures and web-based course pages must clearly state the nature and duration of any practice-based learning and that this is integral to the course.
 - h) Documentation must be clear to all parties, including any reasonable adjustments to accommodate needs of disabled students.
 - i) The arrangements for practice-based learning within courses must be approved through the normal course approval processes (Academic Quality Framework Section 4 – Course & Unit Approval & Modification). Approval must include consideration of draft guides/handbooks or

equivalent for students and for practice-based educators and, where applicable, for practice-based supervisors/mentors.

- j) The responsibilities of students, academic staff and practice-based educators must be clearly defined and communicated to all parties concerned, and there must be evidence that all parties accept their responsibilities, i.e. through a Placement Agreement, Practice Education Handbooks (or equivalent).
- k) Any assessment of practice-based learning must form part of a coherent learning strategy for the course and be subject to the normal processes of assessment and moderation and the standards of student achievement overseen by appropriately qualified external examiners.
- l) Where practice-based educators are involved in monitoring student progress and/or assessment of student work, they must be trained appropriately, and a record kept of this.

16.60 RISK-BASED APPROACH

16.60.1 In line with good practice, the UCO takes a risk-based approach to approve and manage the practice-based educators it works with to ensure academic standards and quality and the appropriateness of the placement regarding the health, safety and welfare of students and any associated liabilities.

16.60.2 The following risk management principles are used to achieve this:

- a) Having appropriate processes for the approval and review of prospective placements.
- b) Placements accepting the UCO's health and safety expectations whilst students are on placement.
- c) Clarity of understanding by each party of their roles and responsibilities.
- d) Preparation of the student/s prior to their placement to enable them to be in a position to understand any risks and make informed judgements.
- e) Having appropriate processes for enabling problems, including any health and safety issues, to be raised and resolved prior to, during, and at the conclusion of the placement.
- f) Having contingency plans in case there are exceptional circumstances regarding the placement.
- g) Providing appropriate training or briefings to UCO staff and practice-based educators regarding the placement and any policies, regulations and arrangements that they must follow.
- h) Having appropriate processes for the monitoring and evaluation of placements.
- i) Assessing the needs of disabled students in order that reasonable adjustments can be made at placements.
- j) Assessing risks associated with working with clients who may be vulnerable.

16.60.3 The planning, procedures, and information requirements associated with the practice-based education provider will vary according to the level of risk identified ('Low Risk', 'Medium Risk', and 'High Risk') with actions to address risks being dependent and proportional upon the issue, the country/region and the level of risk involved.

16.60.4 Where the provider does not initially meet the required standard, additional information from the provider will be required and reasonable control measures may need to be put in place (see guidance provided with the Practice-Based Educator Provider Risk Assessment Form (Appendix 1 - AQF16-30a).

16.60.5 Placements assessed as 'High Risk' by the Placement Coordinator upon completion of the Practice-Based Educator Provider Risk Assessment Form (Appendix 1 - AQF16-30a) must

be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) for a decision as to whether the placement can proceed and what control measures are required.

16.61 HEALTH & SAFETY

- 16.61.1 The UCO has a statutory duty of care to protect, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its students during placement activities and must therefore take reasonable steps to ensure that all practice-based learning environments are compliant with statutory health and safety requirements.
- 16.61.2 Students undertaking practice-based placements are, in effect, acting as an employee of practice-based educator for the duration of the placement, and as such are owed an identical duty of care by the practice-based education provider.
- 16.61.3 Students are also responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions whilst on placements.
- 16.61.4 As part of the approval and review process of practice-based education providers a suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be undertaken, and appropriate control measures should be identified and adopted. The Risk Assessment Form for Practice-Based Education (Appendix 1 - AQF16-30a) must be used to undertake an evaluation of risk and as a record of risk assessment for the practice-based education partner being proposed.
- 16.61.5 Practice-based education partners must confirm that they take proper account of health and safety considerations and must ensure that students who undertake a placement with them receive appropriate briefing on health and safety matters related to their organization by completing a Practice-Based Education Provider Health and Safety Questionnaire (Appendix 2 - AQF16-30b) which must be received by the Placement Coordinator prior to the student commencing the placement.
- 16.61.6 All accidents / incidents involving students during their placement must be reported to the Placement Coordinator and the Placement Provider.
- 16.61.7 Although the UCO cannot accept responsibility for matters over which it has no control, in circumstances where matters of health and safety arise, the UCO shall undertake a prompt investigation and give due consideration to the implications for any other student(s) who may be engaged in the same or a similar placement.
- 16.61.8 The placement provider and students must be informed of who and how to contact the UCO, in case of an accident or emergency involving a student whilst on their placement.
- 16.61.9 Details of where and when students are on placements should be held centrally by the Placement Coordinator. Students' personal details are held centrally by the UCO Registry and students required to keep these up-to-date to enable contact with themselves and/or next of kin as necessary.
- 16.61.10 In the case of an emergency involving a student on placement or major incident (for example, a natural disaster in the vicinity of the student placement), the UCO's process for dealing with emergencies and major incidents must be followed. At the University, all emergency situations/issues should be directed through the Vice-Chancellor's Group via the UCO's Main Switchboard (+44 (0)020 7089 6106) in the first instance. The Incident Management Team shall be convened and make the decision to invoke the Disaster Recovery Plan as necessary.

16.62 INSURANCE

16.62.1 Appropriate insurance should be considered as part of the risk assessment for proposed Practice-Based Education Providers. The following guidance is provided regarding insurance and liability.

A) LEGAL LIABILITY

16.62.2 Normally, students shall be the legal liability of the practice-based education provider for the duration of their placement. Therefore, any injury, loss or damage caused or suffered by the student whilst they are under the supervision of the placement provider is the responsibility of the placement provider.

B) PUBLIC LIABILITY

16.62.3 The UCO's Public Liability insurance covers the UCO in the event of a claim arising out of our own negligence (where a claim could be brought by the student against the UCO) and covers the UCO and the student for any claim made as a result of a negligent act carried out by the student whilst they are on placement (where a claim could be brought by the placement provider against either the student or the UCO).

C) EMPLOYER'S LIABILITY

16.62.4 Practice-based education providers are normally asked to accept liability for the student for the duration of the placement as the student is directly under their control and supervision. Where this is agreed a copy of the Employer's Liability Certificate of Insurance is asked for, so that we are aware of the policy number, limit of liability, date of expiry and insurance company. Within the UK a reciprocal arrangement is in place within the Insurance sector and most Employer's Liability insurance policies accept the student as a 'temporary employee'.

D) TRAVEL AND PERSONAL ACCIDENT COVER IN RELATION TO OVERSEAS TRAVEL

16.62.5 Appropriate travel and personal accident cover for students should be considered if the proposed Practice-Based Education Provider is based overseas, taking into consideration advice from the British Foreign Commonwealth Office.

E) MEDICAL MALPRACTICE / CLINICAL NEGLIGENCE / PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

16.62.6 Students working within NHS hospitals in the UK should be covered for professional risks under the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts. If the placement is in a GP's surgery, independent practice (such as a physiotherapy practice), private hospital, hospice or nursing home, the Placement Coordinator needs to ask the provider if their insurance covers the liability of the student for injuries to third parties, including clinical errors, or property damage arising from their duties within the organisation. If such cover is not provided, they should liaise with the UCO's Vice-Chancellor's Group for further advice. It may be necessary for the student to be a member of a relevant professional body in order for Clinical Negligence cover to be in place.

F) MOTOR INSURANCE

16.62.7 Students wishing to use their private car whilst on placement for business purposes, other than driving to and from the placement, must check with their motor insurers to ensure that they have 'business use' on their policy, not just 'social, domestic and pleasure' use.

G) CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

16.62.8 Any criminal acts committed by the student are not covered under any insurance arrangements.

16.63 SAFEGUARDING AND DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

- 16.63.1 The UCO has clear policies related to safeguarding, including processes for checking where DBS is required (please see the UCO's Safeguarding Policy and DBS Policy & Procedure for further details)
- 16.63.2 Placements which involve engagement in regular and unsupervised 'regulated activity' (as defined by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012) with children or in certain adult settings may require students to undergo an enhanced DBS check and gain a satisfactory DBS before they start their placement.
- 16.63.3 For some PSRB courses an enhanced DBS will be required prior to the student commencing their course.
- 16.63.4 Where a satisfactory DBS is a prerequisite for a course or a placement that is a required element of the course), this must be clearly communicated to applicants in advance of entry to the course, and/or to students prior to undertaking units that include a mandatory placement, through published materials, including the course / unit information forms, prospectus / brochure and course webpages and any other relevant information and guidance.
- 16.63.5 DBS checks are normally arranged through the University and should be initiated in sufficient time to ensure that the student's course, placement can go ahead. Occasionally they may need to take place through a placement provider.
- 16.63.6 Students must be fully briefed about the UCO's safeguarding and DBS policies and procedures prior to the commencement of their placement or work-based learning activity.

16.64 LONE WORKING

- 16.64.1 In circumstances where a situation of lone working may be required this should be identified in the Health and Safety Questionnaire (Appendix 2 - AQF16-30b) and taken into consideration in the risk assessment and approval of the placement.
- 16.64.2 The placement provider is normally responsible for risk assessment if sending a student into a situation of lone working and may have procedures that apply. For further information the UCO's Out of Hours Working Policy and the Health and Safety Executive guidance regarding Lone Workers.

16.65 APPROVING PRACTICE-BASED EDUCATION PROVIDERS & PLACEMENTS

- 16.65.1 Every practice-based education provider and placement must be approved before the student commences the placement.
- 16.65.2 All practice-based education provider and placement must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) or their nominee (normally the Placement Coordinator), depending on the level of risk provider poses, before the student commences the placement.
- 16.65.3 It is the responsibility of the Placement Coordinator, in liaison with relevant staff, to complete the following documents to evaluate the suitability of a placement provider (the overall content of these documents should not be changed however they can be adapted to reflect local nomenclature relevant to particular programs or formatting of the document can be changed to suit local needs):
 - a) Appendix 1: Risk Assessment Form for Practice-Based Education Providers (AQF16-30a)
 - b) Appendix 2: Placement Provider Health and Safety Questionnaire (AQF16-30b)
 - c) Appendix 3: Student Placement Conduct and Health and Safety Agreement (AQF16-30c)
 - d) Appendix 4: Practice-Based Education Audit Record (AQF16-30d)

A) UCO RISK ASSESSMENT FORM FOR PRACTICE-BASED EDUCATION PROVIDERS (APPENDIX 1 – AQF16-30A))

16.65.4 All practice-based education placements must be approved in line with the level of risk established through the UCO Risk Assessment Form for Practice-Based Education Providers (Appendix 1- AQF16-30a).

16.65.5 This should identify the level of risk the placement provider poses and once completed should assure the individual approving the placement that the placement will:

- a) Provide the opportunities and resources for the student to achieve the intended learning outcomes at the required standard and level as per the course / unit information form/s.
- b) Provide support for the student from a designated member of staff in the placement setting.
- c) Fulfil their responsibilities under health and safety legislation.
- d) Provide an experience that complies with the requirements of any relevant PSRBs, as appropriate.
- e) Make reasonable adjustments as identified through a needs assessment for students with disabilities.

16.65.6 If any residual risks are high, the placement provider must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).

16.65.7 If the residual risk is low-medium, the placement provider is normally approved by the Placement Coordinator.

B) PLACEMENT PROVIDER HEALTH AND SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE (APPENDIX 2 – AQF16-30B)

16.65.8 The Placement Coordinator must be assured before the commencement of the placement that placement providers are willing and able to provide the student with a safe, legal (legislation in respect of the country where the placement provider is located) and appropriate working environment and that they are aware that it is their legal responsibility to provide this.

16.65.9 The Placement Provider Health and Safety Questionnaire (Appendix 2 - AQF16-30b) must be completed by the Placement Coordinator in liaison with the proposed placement provider. Following this the Placement Coordinator must be assured that the placement provider is:

- a) Aware that they have responsibilities to ensure that the student placed with them receives adequate support and guidance pertaining to their role and/or activities within the placement provider.
- b) Aware of and willing to undertake any role they may have in the assessment of students in a fair and appropriate manner.
- c) Aware that they are expected to provide the UCO with feedback about the progress of the placement as requested.

16.66 ALLOCATING PRACTICE-BASED EDUCATION PROVIDERS & PLACEMENTS

16.66.1 Where the UCO is responsible for allocating students to a placement, the Placement Coordinator shall ensure that each student has an equal opportunity to undertake a placement at each available placement provider.

16.66.2 Where the student is responsible for selecting, organising and securing a placement, they must be given sufficient notice of this responsibility as per course/module requirements and must be given adequate guidance from the Placement Coordinator. This guidance may include:

- a) The expectations for the type of placement/WBL activities to fulfil module/course requirements and the appropriateness for level of study.
- b) Considerations of the specific needs of the student with respect to their achievement of the learning outcomes and those arising from any student entitlements, e.g. in relation to disabilities.
- c) Considerations of equal opportunities and inclusivity.
- d) The extent to which the student's preference for type and/or geographical location of placement can be facilitated and supported.

16.66.3 The student must not commence a placement prior to the approval of the Placement Provider. Where students organise their own placements, the student must understand that any change made to the originally approved placement provider will require a new placement approval process.

16.66.4 An auditable trail should be kept of all requests to obtain information from both the placement provider and student.

16.66.5 Students who commence placements without UCO agreement will not be insured. This must be made explicit in guidance to students and placement providers.

16.66.6 Students must complete Appendix 3 (AQF16-30c) prior to any placement.

16.67 MANAGEMENT & QUALITY ASSURANCE OF PRACTICE-BASED EDUCATION

16.67.1 The UCO retains overall responsibility for the quality management and oversight of placements that form an integral part of any award delivered in its name.

A) THE PLACEMENT COORDINATOR

16.67.2 The Placement Coordinator has overall responsibility of overseeing the management of all practice-based education placements. Their responsibilities normally include:

- a) Ensuring that the risk assessment of the placement is undertaken.
- b) Arranging and/or approving placement providers.
- c) Supporting students in identifying relevant placement.
- d) Ensuring that students are appropriately prepared for their placement, including their responsibilities and induction.
- e) Ensuring that a record/database of students in placement is maintained.
- f) In the case of international students requiring a visa, monitoring and reporting to Registry any changes in students' circumstances whilst on placement, e.g. attendance.
- g) Providing advice and guidance to staff, students, placement providers in relation to placements.
- h) Supporting students for the duration of the placement.
- i) Arranging and/or making visits to students during their Placement for assessment and/or other purposes.
- j) Undertaking and completing an audit record of Practice-Based Education Providers and Placements to provide assurance that that due consideration has been given to the management of placements regarding course design, approval and periodic review and that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage the placement/ experience in liaison with Course Leaders and other relevant staff.

B) AUDITING PRACTICE-BASED EDUCATION PROVIDERS & PLACEMENTS (APPENDIX 3 – AQF16-30d)

16.67.3 To provide assurance that due consideration has been given to the management of placements regarding course design, approval and periodic review and that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage the placement/ experience, and audit of each Practice-Based Education Provider shall be undertaken:

- a) As part of the approval process when a new course / programme / unit for which practice-based education is integral is approved.
- b) As part of the periodic review process for an existing course / programme / unit for which practice-based education is integral.
- c) As part of the annual monitoring and reporting process for an existing course / programme / unit for which practice-based education is integral.
- d) When is it deemed necessary by the Placement Coordinator, e.g. in response to any concerns or poor feedback raised by the student or the provider.

16.67.4 The Managing Placements and Work-Based Learning Audit Record (Appendix 4 - AQF16-30d) should be used to record the outcome of the audit and should be included as an appendix to any documentation submitted as part of the UCO's course / unit approval and modification, periodic review and annual reporting and monitoring processes.

C) APPROVING & MANAGING PRACTICE-BASED EDUCATION PLACEMENTS CHECKLIST

16.67.5 To enable the effective approval and management processes of Practice-Based Education Placements the checklist provided in Appendix 5 (AQF16-30e) should be used to ensure that all elements are considered pre-, during and post-placement. This checklist should be used in conjunction with the approval process described above.

16.68 TERMINATION OF A PRACTICE-BASED EDUCATION PLACEMENT

16.68.1 As part of their briefing, students must be made aware of any consequences for failing to successfully complete any required practice-based learning activity.

16.68.2 The Placement Coordinator and Course Leader should ensure that procedures are in place to identify at an early stage any potential problems which may prevent the progress of the student or the satisfactory completion of the learning outcomes. Students should be informed of the procedures which they should follow and the UCO staff with member whom they should make contact if problems do occur.

16.68.3 Courses must have in place an appropriate process for considering and supporting students who have failed placement, including opportunities to retrieve the failure, in line with UCO Regulations.

16.68.4 If it is necessary for the UCO to withdraw a student in situations where they have consistently demonstrated an unacceptable level of engagement with their placement or, in the event of a student wishing to leave the placement and suspend their studies, the UCO's regulations and procedures for student withdrawal or suspensions of studies will apply.

16.68.5 The relevant Fitness to Practice Policy may also be applied for the suspension and exclusion of students from their course on the grounds of professional unsuitability, where a student who is registered on a course leading to a professional qualification or conferring practitioner status is deemed to have become professionally unsuitable for that qualification or status.

16.68.6 The Practice-Based Education Provider must have clear information about the action to be taken if they are no longer able to offer the learning opportunity or if they have any problem or complaint concerning the conduct of the student.

DIAGRAM 16.2A: COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY INITIAL PROPOSAL APPROVAL PROCESS (PART 2)

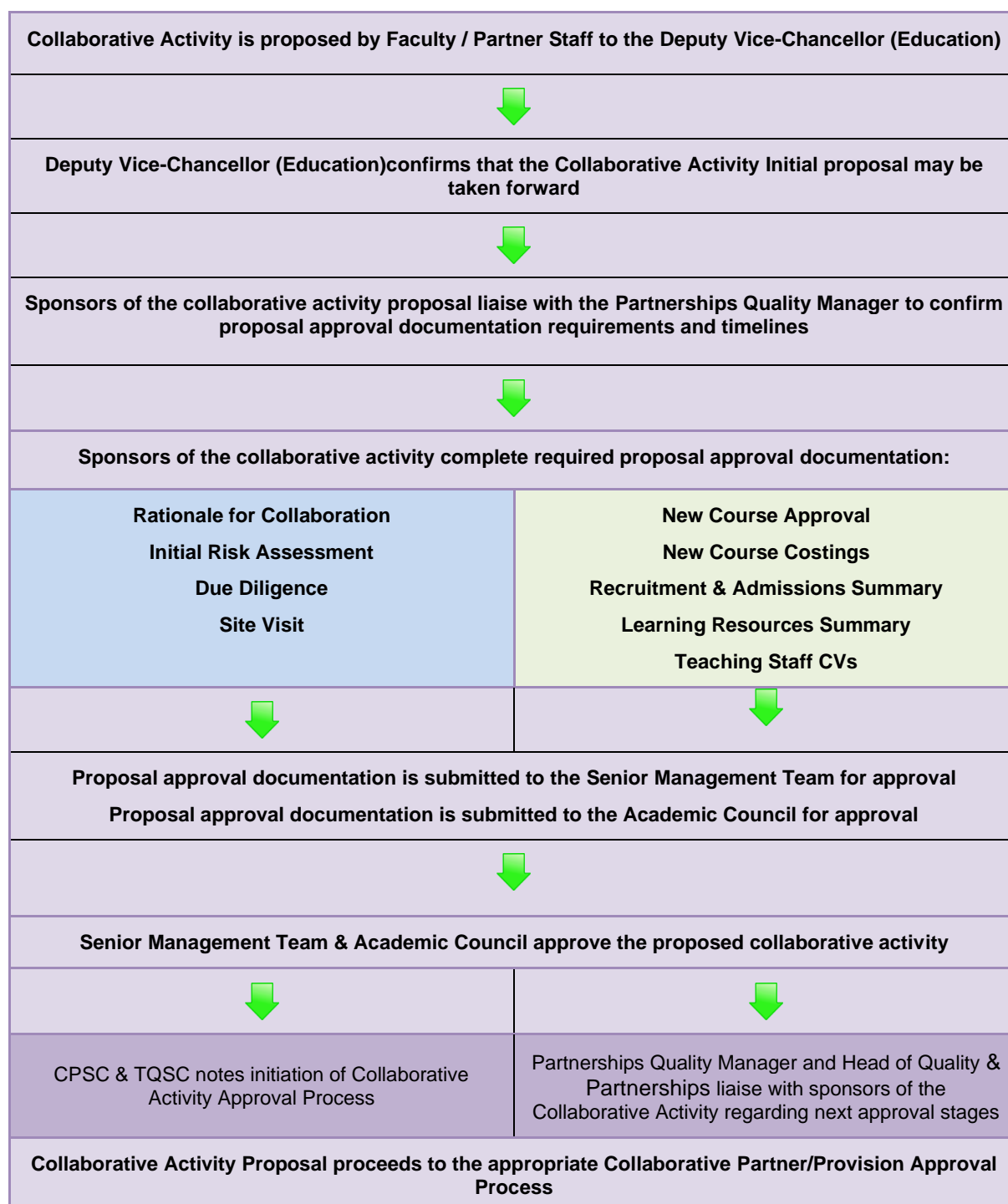
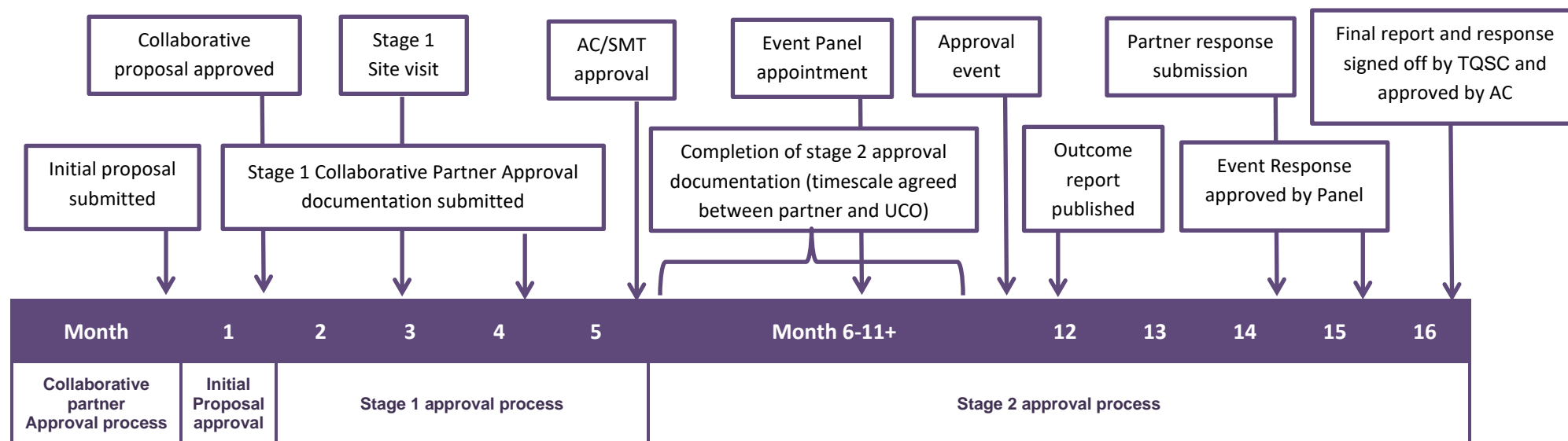


DIAGRAM 16.2B: THE RECOMMENDED TIMELINE FOR THE COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY APPROVAL PROCESS



Submission of Initial Proposals for Collaborative Partnerships

To align with the normal UCO institutional calendar, it is recommended that initial collaborative proposals should be submitted at least 4 months prior to scheduled Academic Council meetings.

Recommended Submission dates:

- Last week of July for Stage 1 approval by SMT/Academic Council in December
- Last week in October for Stage 1 approval by SMT/Academic Council in March
- Last week in January for Stage 1 approval by SMT/Academic Council in June
- Last week in April for Stage 1 approval by SMT/Academic Council in September

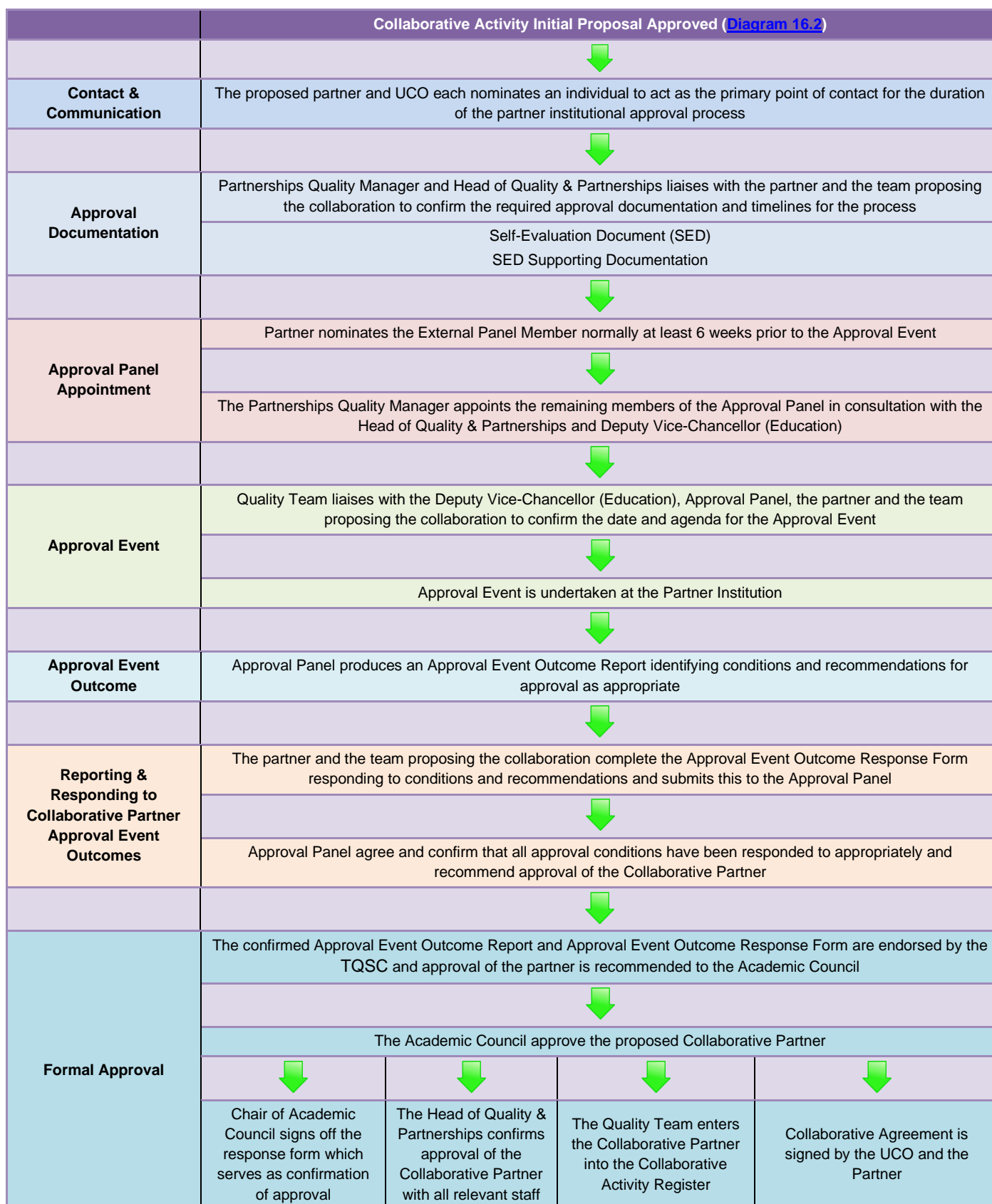
DIAGRAM 16.3: COLLABORATIVE PARTNER APPROVAL PROCESS (PART 3)


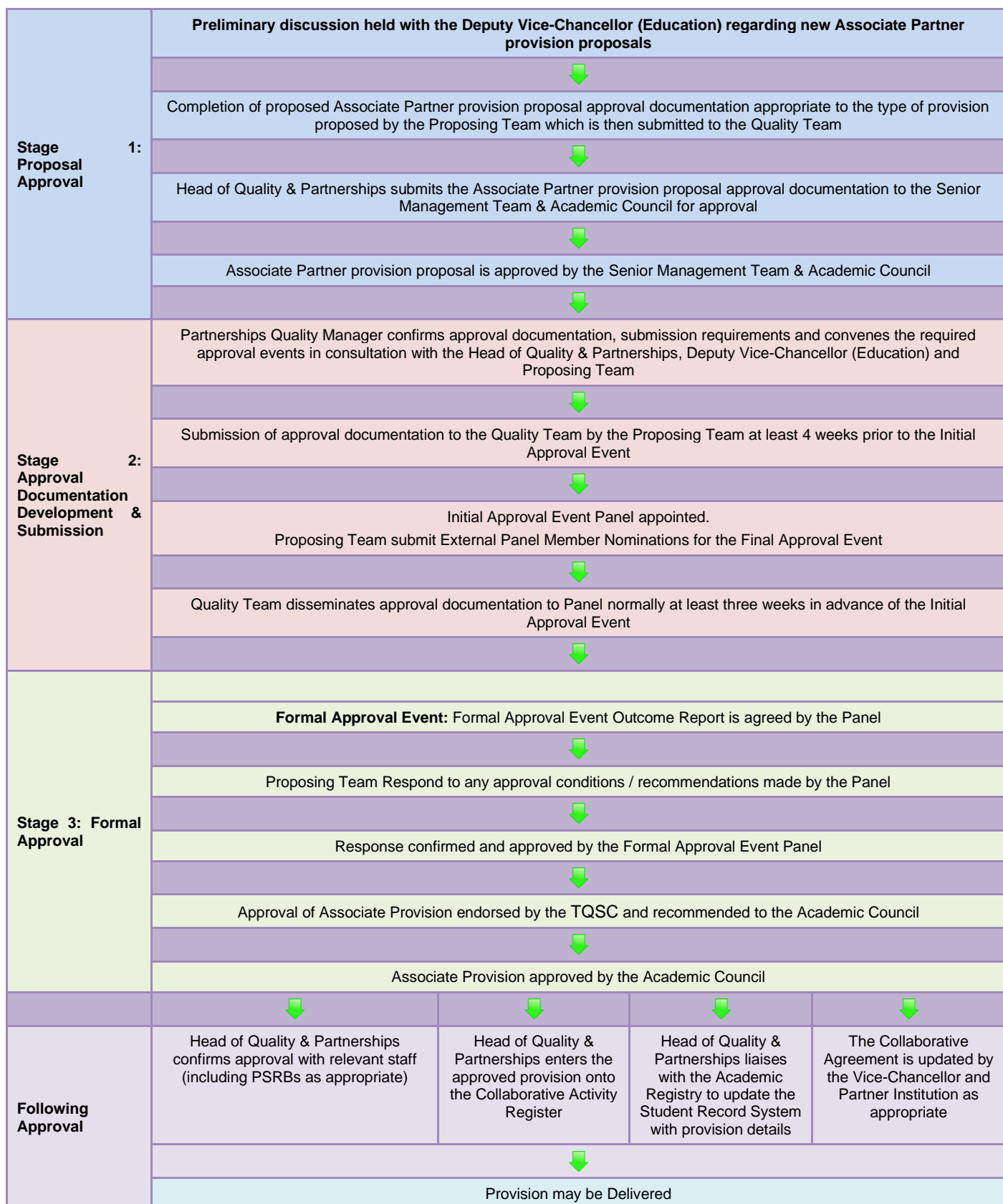
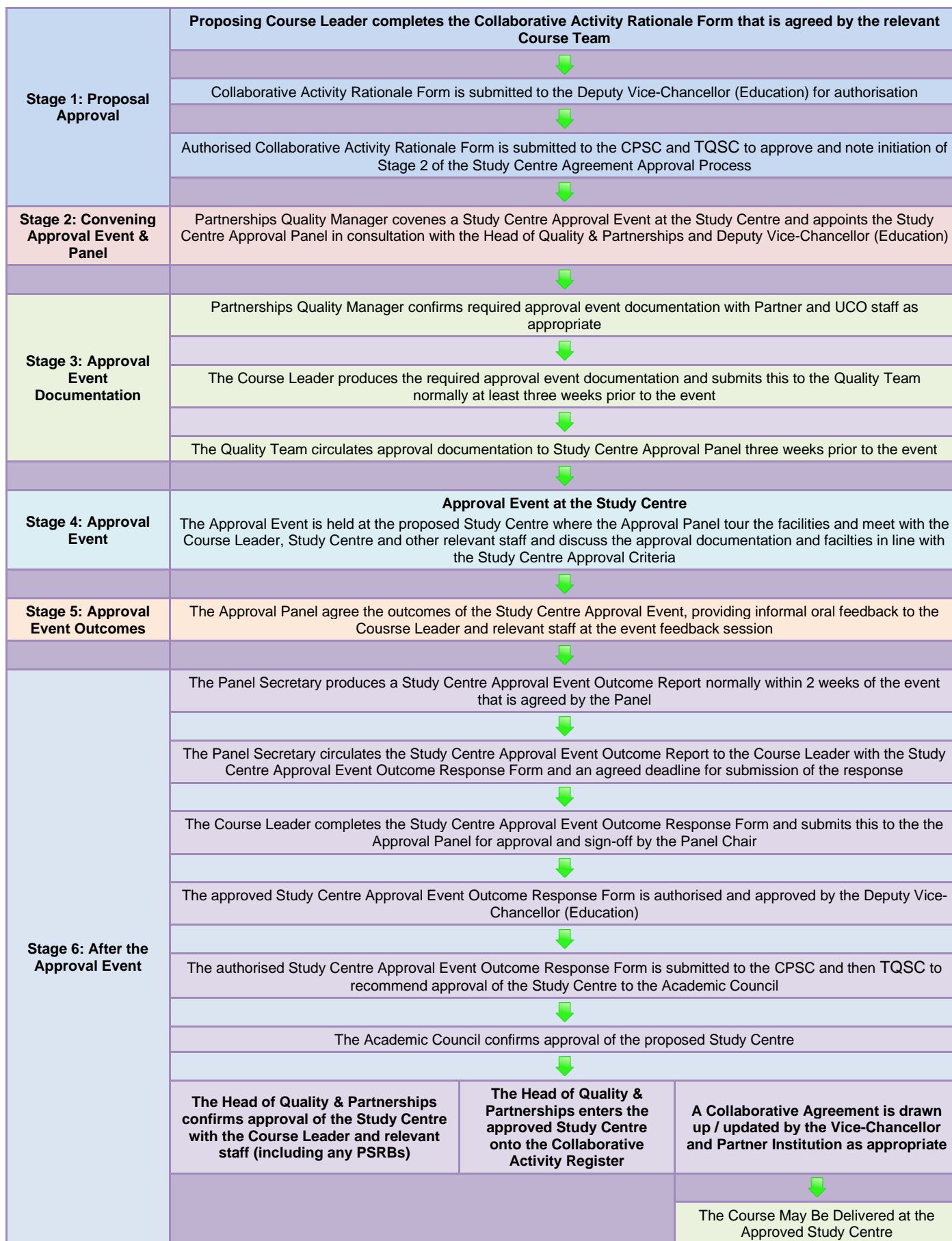
DIAGRAM 16.4: ASSOCIATE PARTNER PROVISION APPROVAL PROCESS (PART 4)


DIAGRAM 16.5: LINK PARTNER STUDY CENTRE AGREEMENT APPROVAL PROCESS


AQF16: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
AQF16-01	Collaborative Activity Register Template
AQF16-02	Memorandum of Understanding Template
AQF16-03	Collaborative Activity Proposal Form
AQF16-04a AQF16-04b	Collaborative Activity Due Diligence & Risk Assessment Form Collaborative Activity Due Diligence & Risk Assessment Form Appendix 1: Financial Due Diligence
AQF16-05	Collaborative Activity Delivery Site Visit Report Form
AQF16-06	Associate Partner Approval Self-Evaluation Document Template
AQF16-07	Partner Approval External Panel Member Guidance
AQF16-08	Partner Approval Panel Feedback Form
AQF16-09	Partner Approval External Panel Member Nomination Form
AQF16-10	Partner Approval Conditions & Response Form
AQF16-11	Collaborative Partner Staff CV Coversheet
AQF16-12	Dual Award Mapping Template
AQF16-13	Study Centre Statement Template
AQF16-14	Study Centre Approval Conditions & Response Form
AQF16-15	Articulation Arrangement Rationale Template
AQF16-16	Articulation Mapping Template
AQF16-17	Articulation Event Conditions & Response Form
AQF16-18	Progression Arrangement Rationale Template
AQF16-19	Progression Arrangement Event Conditions & Response Form
AQF16-20a AQF16-20b AQF16-20c AQF16-20d	Link Tutor Handbook Link Tutor Handbook Appendix 1: Continuous Monitoring Form Link Tutor Handbook Appendix 2: Mid-Year Report Form Link Tutor Handbook Appendix 3: End-Year Report Form
AQF16-21	Partner Visit Log Template
AQF16-22	Partnership Annual Report Form
AQF16-23	Collaborative Provision Operations Manual Template

AQF16-24	Partner Published Information Report Form
AQF16-25a AQF16-25b	Partner Periodic Institutional Review Report Template CPSC Critical Evaluation of the Partner Periodic Institutional Report Form
AQF16-26	Partner Review Conditions & Response Form
AQF16-27	Franchised Provision Review Evaluation Document Template
AQF16-28	Articulation Arrangement Review Report Form
AQF16-29	Collaborative Activity Termination Form
AQF16-30a AQF16-30b AQF16-30c AQF16-30d AQF16-30e	Practice-Based Education Appendix 1: Risk Assessment Form Practice-Based Education Appendix 2: Health & Safety Questionnaire Practice-Based Education Appendix 3: Student Conduct and Health & Safety Agreement Form Practice-Based Education Appendix 4: Audit Record Practice-Based Education Appendix 5: Approving & Managing Practice-Based Education Placements Checklist



Academic Quality Framework

Section 17: Glossary of Terms

2022-2023

Academic Quality Framework

Section 17: Glossary of Terms

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be read by all members of the UCO.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	To define and clarify terminology and abbreviations used throughout the Academic Quality Framework.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Annual Review Administrative Amendments to update change in HE regulatory body.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Annual Review Updated to include reference to Unistats and to remove reference to Unit Handbooks and KIS/WIS.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2020 PRAG Chair	Annual Review Administrative amendments to reflect new UCO committee structure and other agency title changes.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendment to reflect new academic year and current course titles and section number from 18 to 17.	Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V7.0	Jun 2022 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect new academic year and updated committee titles and remits.	Head of Quality & Partnerships	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

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Equality Impact	
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)	
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)	X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)	
<p>If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk</p>	

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abbreviation / Term	Description
AC	Academic Council; the main decision-making committee of the UCO for academic matters.
Academic Quality	Academic quality is concerned with how well the learning opportunities made available to students enable them to achieve their award. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for them.
Academic Standards	Threshold academic standards are the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Academic standards should be at a similar level across the UK.
AQF	Academic Quality Framework; the document that sets out the UCO's procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.
ARC	The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) is responsible for overseeing the UCO's audit and risk management and to report thereon to the Board of Directors.
Board of Directors	The UCO's governing body.
Board of Examiners	Boards of Examiners consider the results of assessments at all stages of a course, determine progression and recommend awards, including the classification of awards where appropriate.
BONE	The UCO's Virtual Learning Environment
CAR	Course Annual Report; an annual monitoring report produced at course level.
CIF	Course Information Form; a form providing students with specific information about each course of study.
Course Handbook	A student-focused document that provides students with detailed information about each course of study.
Course Recruitment Groups	Course Recruitment Groups keep under review the course admissions policy and practice, including matters related to Widening Participation, student numbers, and makes recommendations accordingly to the Senior Management Team. It promotes fairness and consistency in the UCO's Admissions Policies.
Course Teams	Course Teams are responsible to the relevant Portfolio Board of Studies for the day to day administration and management of the Course. The Course Teams ensure that the validated curriculum is delivered and assessed in accordance with the relevant Course Information Forms and Unit Information Forms.
CPD	Continuing Professional Development

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CPSC	The Collaborative Provision Sub- Committee (CPSC) provides assurance that the academic arrangements between the University College of Osteopathy (UCO) and its collaborative partners protect the standard of the UCO award and the quality of the learning opportunities of students, ensuring that all collaborative provision is developed and delivered in line with the agreed validation documents and the UCO Academic Quality Framework on behalf of the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC).
DBS	Disclosure & Barring Service
Discover Uni	The official website for comparing UK higher education course data, which includes official data for undergraduate courses on each university and college's satisfaction scores in the National Student Survey, jobs and salaries after study and other key information for prospective students.
EDIC	The Equality Diversity & Inclusivity Committee (EDIC) assures, improves and promotes equality for all UCO users, within the UCO, as required under the Equality Act 2010.
EMG	Engagement & Monitoring Group (EMG); a group which consists of the appropriate Course Leaders, relevant staff and the Student Support Team. Its purpose is to monitor student engagement and attendance to enable supportive measures to be put in place for students as appropriate to enable them to complete their course of study.
ETLASC	The Enhancement of Teaching, Learning & Assessment Sub-Committee (ETLASC) role is to ensure that progress continues against the UCO's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy on behalf of the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC).
FEC	The Finance & Estates Committee (FEC) is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the UCO's financial and estates strategies and to report thereon to the Board.
FHEQ	The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies published by the QAA; an important reference point for providers of higher education. The FHEQ, and associated guidance for implementation, has been written to assist higher education providers to maintain academic standards; to inform international comparability of academic standards, especially in the European context; to ensure international competitiveness; and to facilitate student and graduate mobility.
GOsC	The General Osteopathic Council; the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body for Osteopathy.
Graduate Outcomes Survey	The Graduate Outcomes survey is the biggest annual social survey in the UK and captures the perspectives and current status of graduates. Students take part in the survey 15 months after they finish their studies.
HEP	A Higher Education Provider; an institution or organisation providing higher education.
HSC	The Health & Safety Committee (HSC) is responsible for overseeing health and safety matters at the UCO.

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IAR	Institutional Annual Report; an annual monitoring report produced by partner institutions.
IHS	Introduction to Healthcare Sciences course – a non-accredited pre-entry course for the pre-registration health care courses delivered by the UCO.
KPI	Key Performance Indicators; a set of quantifiable measures that a company or industry uses to gauge or compare performance in terms of meeting their strategic and operational goals.
LASER	Laser Learning Awards; develops, accredits and quality assures courses and qualifications at all levels of education and training and is licensed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to award the Access to HE Diploma.
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NSS	National Student Survey; a widely recognised authoritative survey completed by students at all publicly funded Higher Education Institutions in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, as well as other providers of higher education.
OAR	Operational Annual Report; an annual report produced by senior managers on operational aspects of the UCO.
OEI	Osteopathic Education Institution; an educational institution providing osteopathic education.
OfS	Office for Students; the independent regulator of higher education in England.
OHC	The Occupational Health Committee (OHC) is a standalone committee that meets when required to consider reasonable adjustments to the methods of learning and assessment through which students acquire and demonstrate osteopathic competences, for students/potential students who have declared or have an observed significant health issue or disability.
OPS	Osteopathic Practice Standards; The Osteopathic Practice Standards are published by the GOsC and describe the standards expected of osteopaths and include guidance to assist osteopaths in meeting these standards. The purpose of the standards is to ensure quality care for patients and to protect them from harm.
PBE	Pre-Boards of Examiners (Pre-Boards) (PBEs) take place in advance of Boards of Examiners meetings and consider Portfolio Board approved student award, progression, and assessment profiles and then make proposals for consideration by the Boards of Examiners in accordance with the UCO's regulations as approved by its validating bodies.
PDR	Professional Development Review undertaken annually by staff.
Policy	A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual.
PRG	Policy & Regulations Group; a subcommittee of the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee which monitors the development and review of

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	academic policy and regulations, the quality assurance framework, and the Academic Council governance committee structure.
Procedure	An established or official way of doing something.
PSRB	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body; the body that sets and monitors the standards and outcomes of programmes of study leading to professional accreditation.
QAA	The Quality Assurance Agency; the independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education.
Quality Assurance	Quality assurance refers to a range of review procedures designed to safeguard academic standards and promote learning opportunities for students of acceptable quality.
Quality Code	The UK Quality Code for Higher Education; this gives all higher education providers a shared starting point for setting, describing and assuring the academic standards of their higher education awards and programmes and the quality of the learning opportunities they provide.
Quality Enhancement	Quality enhancement refers to taking deliberate steps to bring about continual improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experience of students.
RAG	Reporting to the Senior Management Team (SMT), the Resource Allocation Group (RAG) is responsible for making recommendations concerning the UCO's resource allocation model.
REC	The Research Ethics Committee (REC) is responsible for undertaking ethical consideration of research proposals whether it involves participants within the institution or outside the institution; this currently includes students and staff from the UCO and applications from students from other institutions who would like to carry out work with our faculty, students or patients.
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RQ	Recognised Qualification; Under the Osteopaths Act 1993 the GOsC is the statutory regulatory body for osteopaths and osteopathic education providers. The GOsC ensures that courses of osteopathic education meet its requirements for standards and quality, as well as governance and management of the course provider. Those that do are recognised and awarded Recognised Qualification (RQ) status. This allows graduates from those courses to register with the GOsC and practise osteopathy legally in the UK. RQ is subject to approval from the Privy Council.
RSSC	The Research and Scholarship Strategy Committee (RSSC) reports to Academic Council and focuses on research and scholarship activity and development across the UCO. It takes responsibility for the assurance and enhancement of research activities of the UCO.
SB	The Scrutiny Board is a sub-committee of the relevant Course Team and is responsible for the receipt, consideration and modification of all examination material for the specified course.

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SCF	The Staff Consultative Forum (SCF) provides a forum for staff consultation and participation related to institutional direction and matters related to staff.
SMT	The Senior Management Team (SMT) ensures there is effective leadership, management and co-ordination of all the major academic and support activities undertaken by the UCO.
SEEC	SEEC Level Descriptors; Credit level descriptors define the level of complexity, relative demand and autonomy expected of a learner on completion of a module or programme of learning. They provide a description of levels of learning through a hierarchy of knowledge and skills.
SSLCGs	Student-Staff Liaison Consultation Groups (SSLCGs); these groups are subcommittees of the Education Enhancement & Strategy Committee (EESC). They serve as the arena for students to discuss with faculty and staff significant group issues connected to learning, teaching, student support, and UCO services and environment. They also provide an opportunity for staff to consult with students about institutional developments under consideration.
DAP	Degree Awarding Powers; Taught degree awarding powers (DAP) give UK higher education providers the right to award bachelor's degrees with honours and other taught higher education qualifications, but not postgraduate research degrees.
The Charity Commission	Regulates the administration and affairs of registered UK charities.
TQSC	The Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC) oversees the provision of all taught education delivered under the name of the UCO on behalf of the Academic Council
UCO	University College of Osteopathy
UAR	Unit Annual Report; an annual monitoring report produced at unit level.
UIF	Unit Information Form; a form providing students with specific information about each unit of study.
VCG	The Vice-Chancellor's Group collectively acts to ensure effective leadership of the UCO and to oversee strategic planning processes.
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WPSC	The Widening Participation Sub-Committee (WPSC) reports to the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee (TQSC) and, on its behalf, oversees the development, implementation, and review of the UCO's strategy, policies and procedures to support the access, success and progression of students from groups under-represented in higher education

AQF18: APPENDICES

Form / Template Reference Number	Form / Template Title
N/A	N/A