



Academic Quality Framework

Section 9: Student Guidance & Learner Support

2023-2024

Academic Quality Framework

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This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of general interest to all students, and of particular interest to staff including those studying at Collaborative Partners 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	Major Amendments to reflect current practice for supporting student	Head of Student Services	Master Version:	Annually and on an “as

Academic Quality Framework 2022-2023 / Section 09: Student Guidance & Learner Support

	Academic Council	learning, including the removal of reference to Academic Tutors.		J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	required” basis.
V9.0	June 2023 TQSC	Minor amendments to better reflect and incorporate the roles and responsibilities of Collaborative Partners.	Head of Student Services	Master Version: SharePoint – Quality Team 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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Section 9: Student Guidance & Learner Support

Contents

9.1	Supporting Students Studying at the UCO	4
9.2	Supporting Students Studying at Partner Institutions	4
9.3	Student Charter	4
9.4	Staff Responsibilities for Student Support at the UCO	5
9.4	Course Leaders	6
9.5	The Academic Registry	7
9.1	The Finance Team	7
9.6	The Learning Hub	7
9.7	The IT Team & Computing Services	8
9.8	IT Induction & Training	8
9.9	Virtual Learning Environment (BONE)	8
9.10	The Students' Union	9
9.11	The Student Voice & Student Representation	9
9.12	Student Appeals, Complaints & Discipline	9
9.13	Careers Advice	10
AQF09:	Appendices	10

9.1 SUPPORTING STUDENTS STUDYING 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 at the UCO 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 are also Student-Staff Liaison Consultative Groups (SSLCGs) for each student cohort / year group, 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 SUPPORTING STUDENTS STUDYING AT PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

- 9.2.1 The UCO's Partner institutions are likewise dedicated to ensuring that appropriate and effective student support mechanisms are in place for students studying on courses that lead to a UCO award.
- 9.2.2 Partner arrangements for Student Support are carefully considered as part of the UCO's Partner Approval processes (see AQF Section 16: Collaborative Activity) and where these differ from those provided by the UCO (which are set out below), they are approved as a variance to the UCO's Student Support arrangements.
- 9.2.3 Partner institutions inform their students of Student Support arrangements in line with the approved variance and reflect and review these annually to ensure that they remain accessible, effective and appropriate.

9.3 STUDENT CHARTER

- 9.3.1 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.
- 9.3.2 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.
- 9.3.3 The UCO and UCO Students' Union normally review the Student Charter together annually.

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>

9.4 STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR STUDENT SUPPORT AT THE UCO

a) THE HEAD OF STUDENT SERVICES

- 9.4.1 The **Head of Student Services** has overall responsibility for student support at the UCO, and line manages the Mental Health & Disability Co-ordinator and Learning Advisors which make up the Student Support Team. Counselling services are available for students through referrals.
- 9.4.2 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.
 - 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 MENTAL HEALTH & DISABILITY CO-ORDINATOR

- 9.4.3 The **Mental Health & Disability Co-ordinator** 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) MENTAL HEALTH & DISABILITY CO-ORDINATOR AND LEARNING ADVISORS

The Mental Health & Disability Co-ordinator 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 Mental Health & Disability Co-ordinator 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 Mental Health & Disability Co-ordinator 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.

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>

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.

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.

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>

⁷ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

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

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 Mental Health & Disability Co-ordinator, 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

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