



Senate

<b>Paper Title</b>	<b>Higher Education Review and quality assurance update</b>
<b>Outcome requested</b>	Senate is asked to <b>note</b> the update on the QAA's Higher Education Review process and other quality assurance issues.
<b>Points for Senate members to note and further information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Queen Mary will undergo Higher Education Review in 2016-17</li><li>• How does Senate assure itself that Queen Mary is compliant with the <i>UK Quality Code for Higher Education</i>?</li><li>• Do members feel that Senate is able to demonstrate the level of monitoring and self-reflection required to meet the expectations of Higher Education Review?</li></ul>
<b>Regulatory/statutory reference points</b>	Senate has general responsibility for the academic activity of Queen Mary, including the management of academic standards and the quality of provision.
<b>Strategy and risk</b>	Higher Education Review judgements indicating that an institution requires improvement to meet UK standards, or does not meet UK standards, would lead to reputational damage. This reputational impact would have a negative effect on recruitment and the student experience.
<b>Reporting/consideration route for the paper</b>	n/a
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## 1. UK Quality Code for Higher Education<sup>i</sup>

- 1.1 The Quality Assurance Agency's *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* replaced the Academic Infrastructure as the series of national reference points used by higher education providers to help them ensure and enhance academic quality and maintain the standards of academic awards. The remaining chapters of the *Code* will be published at the end of October 2013.
- 1.2 Each chapter of the *Code* contains an expectation which has been designed to meet the sector's call for clarity on what is mandatory within the *Code*. Higher Education Review, conducted by the QAA, will determine whether institutions have met these expectations.
- 1.3 Indicators of sound practice replace the precepts in the previous Code of Practice. These are not mandatory but exist as a guide to assist HE providers in determining how they will meet the *Code's Expectations*.
- 1.4 ARCS is undertaking a mapping exercise with each chapter of the *UK Quality Code* to ensure that Queen Mary meets the mandatory expectations, and that we have taken account of the indicators of sound practice. Any issues requiring immediate attention will be reviewed, with changes to policy being considered by Senate, or one of its Boards, for formal approval.

## 2. Higher Education Review<sup>ii</sup>

- 2.1 The QAA's Higher Education Review replaces Institutional Review from 2013-14. The new methodology commences with a desk-based review used to determine the length of the review visit. The frequency of reviews (four or six year intervals) is dependent on the outcomes of previous reviews. This varied approach was introduced to address the wishes of the government in developing a more risk-based approach to HE, and also to fulfil the Principles of Better Regulation in UK Higher Education.<sup>iii</sup>
- 2.2 The outcomes of the HER process include four judgements. The first of these relates to threshold academic standards and there are three categories: meets UK expectations, requires improvement to meet UK expectations, does not meet UK expectations.
- 2.3 Judgements are also given on the quality of learning opportunities, information and enhancement as follows: commended, meets UK expectations, requires improvement to meet UK expectations, does not meet UK expectations.
- 2.4 The review judgements may differentiate between areas of provision (eg. postgraduate taught or collaborative). Any recommendation of 'requires improvement...' or below is considered to be unsatisfactory and will require a period of intense follow-up action.

Recommendations given in the review report will be specific and will indicate a time frame by which the issue(s) must be resolved.

2.5 The action plans in response to unsatisfactory judgements will be closely monitored by the QAA over the course of an academic year; if progress is acceptable then the judgement will be revised to 'meets UK expectations'. If progress is unsatisfactory, then either the judgement is downgraded to 'does not meet UK expectations' and a further action planning phase is undertaken, or if this judgement is not improved within a further year (or one year in the case of the lowest judgement being received following review) then HEFCE's policy for unsatisfactory quality is invoked.

2.6 As with previous review methodologies, institutions are required to submit a Self - Evaluation Document and supporting evidence. This documentation will be used by the review team to undertake the desk based-review which will determine the length and intensity of the review.

2.7 Institutions are required to demonstrate how they assure themselves that their approach to quality assurance is effective in meeting the expectations of the quality code (and other external reference points) and how this could be further improved. It is essential to demonstrate the following during the desk-based review:

- That we systematically monitor and reflect on the effectiveness of our engagement with the quality code.
- That monitoring and self- reflection uses management information and comparisons against previous performance and national and international benchmarks where appropriate and applicable
- That monitoring and evaluation is inclusive of students (and other stakeholders where relevant)
- That our monitoring and self-reflection should lead to the identification of strengths and areas for improvement, and subsequently to changes in procedures and practice.

### **3. Educational Partnerships Board**

The Educational Partnerships Board has been established as a sub-Board of Senate. An interim arrangement for the Board has been agreed by QMSE until the appointment of a Vice-Principal (International) is made. The Board will be chaired by the Principal and will incorporate an additional discussion of wider international issues after the core business of each meeting.

### **4. Annual Programme Review**

The Annual Programme Review process will operate an interim year in 2013-14 to accommodate the REF, and to phase in revisions for 2014-15 and beyond. Proposals are currently under discussion within Faculties and a revised process will be submitted to the December meeting of Senate for further consideration.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuringstandardsandquality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/higher-education-review/pages/default.aspx>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.hebetterregulation.ac.uk/HEConcordat/Pages/default.aspx>

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