



Senate

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| Paper Title | Quality Handbook 2014-15 |
| Outcome requested | Senate is asked to consider and approve the Quality Handbook for 2014-15 |
| Points for Senate members to note and further information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Quality Handbook summarises QMUL's procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning, referring to the main QA webpages providing detailed guidance at http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/index.html • It is a key element of the QMUL Quality Framework for the assurance of academic standards. • It is a resource for staff and students and is available to the public on the internet. This meets the HEFCE requirement that institutions make available a statement of quality assurance policies and processes as part of the Wider Information Set. • There are few substantive changes to this edition. A brief summary of the major changes is provided at the beginning of each chapter. • Changes have been made to take account of the establishment of the Educational Partnerships Board, to align information with changes to the Academic Regulations approved by Senate in June 2014, to make reference to the new provision for Professional Doctorate programmes, and to make more reference to information provided on the ARCS webpages. • References to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy will be updated to refer to the Student Experience, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy after Senate. |
| Questions for Senate to consider | Senate is invited to comment on the 2014-15 edition of the Quality Handbook for publication on the ARCS web pages at http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/index.html |
| Regulatory/statutory reference points | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code at http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuringstandardsandquality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx 2. The HEFCE Wider Information Set. For further information see http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/it/publicinfo/thewiderinformationset/ |
| Strategy and risk | The Quality Framework is key to the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience. |
| Reporting/consideration route for the paper | Senate is invited to comment on the handbook. |
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Queen Mary
University of London

Quality Handbook
2014-15

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1. Quality and Standards at Queen Mary, University of London

There are no substantive changes to this chapter.

1.1 Introduction

The Quality Handbook sets out Queen Mary's procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning. The dissemination of knowledge is a primary aim, specifically "to provide all our students, wherever based, an education that is judged internationally to be of the highest quality, and which exploits innovations in teaching, learning and assessment" (QMUL Strategy 2014, Strategic Aim 3).

All teaching and support staff work towards this aim, and have a collective responsibility both for ensuring a high quality learning experience for students, and for the standard of the awards made.

1.2 The quality framework

QMUL's quality framework for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning is informed by the Strategic Plan, by the Student Experience, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, by the Queen Mary Statement of Graduate Attributes, and by the key external reference points provided by the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code. QMUL's quality framework comprises:

- Programme development, approval and withdrawal processes
- Programme specifications for all taught programmes
- Guidance on collaborative provision
- The Academic Regulations which specify programme and assessment regulations
- The Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework
- The use of External Examiners in all examinations and Examination Boards
- Student representation and feedback mechanisms, and student induction
- Annual Programme Review and Taught Programme Action Plans, including the analysis of student data on admission, progression and completion
- Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes Review
- Periodic Review of the teaching and learning provision made by all academic schools and institutes
- External reviews by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.

The advice in this handbook and the information on the quality assurance webpages may be reviewed and updated through the year in light of internal discussions and the publication of external guidance.

1.3 Responsibility for quality and standards at Queen Mary

Senate is the custodian of quality and standards at Queen Mary, and its work is informed by reports from the Principal and Vice-Principals and the Chairs of its Boards. Monitoring and review processes also report directly to Senate, which has oversight of these key quality assurance mechanisms.

Queen Mary's academic governance structure places responsibility for quality and standards on individuals rather than committees. The Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) has responsibility for quality and standards, and specifically for undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision. The Vice-Principal (Research) has responsibility for quality and

standards in research, including research degree programmes working with the Director of the Doctoral College. The Vice-Principal (International) has responsibility for oversight of Queen Mary's broad range of present and prospective international activities. The Vice-Principals are supported by advisory groups or other boards with representation from all faculties, the Students' Union and relevant Professional Services departments, and make regular reports to Senate. Faculty Vice-Principals and Executive Deans, Deans for Taught Programmes and Deans for Research and School/Institute leads for teaching and research have responsibility for quality and standards at Faculty/School/Institute level.

The Academic Registry and Council Secretariat (ARCS) advises the Vice-Principals and Deans as appropriate on the effectiveness of QMUL's policies and procedures for the management of academic standards and for quality assurance. ARCS monitors and reviews the operation of these policies and procedures within Schools and Institutes with the aim of ensuring a set of consistent approaches across QMUL. ARCS staff are able to provide advice on all aspects of quality and standards. Colleagues in Schools/Institutes are encouraged to contact ARCS staff with any queries that they may have.

Information on where to find more detailed sources of information and guidance is also provided throughout this Handbook which is supplemented by the quality assurance web pages: <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/index.html>

2. Graduate attributes

There are no substantive changes to this chapter.

2.1 Purpose

The Queen Mary Statement of Graduate Attributes expresses QMUL's commitment to the personal development and employability of its graduates, and was developed in consultation with Queen Mary students, staff, alumni and selected employers. The graduate attributes make explicit the distinctive features of a Queen Mary graduate so that these can be shared with prospective students, parents, employers and other stakeholders, and are also intended to facilitate College-wide enhancement around curriculum development and employability.

2.2 Scope

The Graduate Attributes apply across QMUL's taught provision i.e. all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes.

2.3 The Graduate Attributes

The Graduate Attributes are the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours that a student can expect to develop by engaging fully with their programme of study and the wider student experience.

The Queen Mary Statement of Graduate Attributes has three key themes that express QMUL's vision for its students as follows:

- Engage critically with knowledge
- Have a global perspective
- Learn continuously in a changing world

These are followed by four themes that delineate the behaviours, values, skills and knowledge with which graduates demonstrate that QMUL's vision for its students has been achieved:

- Rounded intellectual development
- Clarity of communication
- Research capacity
- Information expertise

For more information see:

- <http://www.qmldistinction.qmul.ac.uk>
- <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/gacep>
- http://www.learninginstitute.qmul.ac.uk/graduate_attributes/

2.4 Implementation

The implementation of the Graduate Attributes programme is supported by the Centre for Academic and Professional Development.

Work embedding the Graduate Attributes has focused on 5 key strands:

- curriculum enhancement (supporting Schools to progressively embed graduate attributes into curricula);
- extra-curricular enhancement (supporting on-campus activity managers and the Queen Mary Students' Union to embed graduate attributes into extra-curricular activities);
- web resources (to embed information and tools to support student and staff engagement into QML Distinction and QMPlus);
- student promotional campaign (to provide information and a range of motivational and developmental messages to students through student media); and
- funded projects (to embed new activities - in schools, faculties and institution-wide - to enhance the support for graduate attributes development).

3. Appointment and role of external examiners and external members

There are no substantive changes to this chapter. Changes have been made in line with changes to the Academic Regulations 2014-15 approved by Senate in June 2014, and to update the information requirements to make payments to external examiners.

Taught Programmes

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is:

- to ensure that QMUL's degrees are comparable in standard to those awarded by other UK universities;
- to ensure fairness and consistency in assessment procedures and student classification;
- to scrutinise the effectiveness and appropriateness of the assessment system;
- to assure the wider community of the standard of QMUL's degrees and the fairness of its assessment procedures.

This procedure takes in to account the precepts and guidance in Chapter B7 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

3.2 Scope

This procedure covers the appointment and role of external examiners and external members for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes of study. It does not cover research degrees or non-award-bearing continuing education.

3.3 Associated documents

Associated documents including the following can be found on the External Examiners for Staff web page: <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/external-examiners/external-examiners-info-for-staff/index.html>

- External examiner nomination form
- External member nomination form
- External examiner extension of appointment form
- Fee payment forms

Associated documents including the following can be found on the External Examiners' Resources web page: <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/external-examiners/external-examiners-resources/index.html>

- *Assessment Handbook*
- *Academic Regulations*
- *Guidance for External Examiners*
- *Guidance for External Members*
- External examiner report pro-formas (UG, UG SMD, PG)
- External member report pro-forma

3.4 Accountability of external examiners and external members

The formal responsibility of external examiners and external members is to the Principal; their annual reports are addressed to the Principal (although sent to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance)), and an external has the right to make a confidential report to the Principal at any time.

External examiners and external members have a crucial role in quality assurance:

- External examiners' primary duty is to ensure that the standard of awards is consistent with those awarded across the UK university system in that discipline. In addition, intercollegiate examiners (members of other colleges of the federal University of London) have responsibility for ensuring consistency in standards across the University;
- External examiners and external members have a key responsibility to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly, and that decisions in relation to individual students are taken after due deliberation;
- External examiners and external members are asked to review the examination process, and to comment on its operation. The reports of external examiners are also a key source of information in the monitoring of modules and programmes of study;
- because of their experience of assessment procedures at other institutions, external examiners and external members are in a position to offer valuable advice and counsel to examination boards and programme/module organisers.

3.5 Procedure for the appointment of external examiners

Nominations for the appointment of new external examiners should be made on the external examiner nomination form, and sent to the Academic Secretariat by the relevant Subject Examination Board Chair along with a short CV for the nominee. This should follow consultation with the programme/module organiser and the Head of School.

Where an award is offered by QMUL also in collaboration with a partner, the same external examiner should be appointed to both Subject Examination Boards (and will need to write a report for each Board). Where the award is delivered with a UK partner, both institutions must approve the nomination before it can be considered confirmed.

The nomination is reviewed for approval against the appointment criteria provided by the QAA in the UK Quality Code, listed below by the Faculty Dean for Taught Programmes and the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance). Where the nominee does not strictly meet the appointment criteria (and a letter of justification has been submitted) the nomination is also forwarded to the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) for approval by the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance).

An external examiner is usually appointed in October/November of the academic year in which s/he is to act, so that there is sufficient opportunity for briefing by the school before draft examination question papers have to be considered in February/March.

3.5.1 Appointment criteria (from Ch. B7 of the QAA UK Quality Code for HE)

Person Specification

Institutions appoint external examiners who can show appropriate evidence of the following:

- i. knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
- ii. competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof

- iii. relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate
- iv. competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures
- v. 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
- vi. familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed
- vii. fluency in English, and where programmes 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)
- viii. meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
- ix. awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula
- x. competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Conflicts of interest

Institutions do not appoint as external examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances:

- i. member of a governing body or committee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners
- ii. anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study
- iii. anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study
- iv. anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study
- v. anyone 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 programme(s) or modules in question
- vi. former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s)
- vii. a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution
- viii. the succession of an external examiner from an institution by a colleague from the same department in the same institution
- ix. the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution.

Terms of office

The duration of an external examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity.

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.

External examiners normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time.

3.6 Procedure for the appointment of External Members

External members are only appointed to the Degree Examination Boards (DEBs). Normally, one external member is appointed to the Undergraduate DEBs and one external member is appointed the Postgraduate DEBs. The undergraduate external member is not normally required to attend the Undergraduate Dentistry, Medicine, or Law DEBs as external examiners are present at these meetings.

Nominations for the appointment of a new external member should be presented on the external member nomination form and should be forwarded to the Academic Secretariat along with a copy of the nominee's short CV.

The nomination is reviewed for approval against the appointment criteria listed below by the Chairs of the relevant Degree Examination Boards, and by the Vice-Principal (Teaching & Learning).

3.6.1 Appointment criteria

External members should satisfy the following criteria:

- i) They should be people of seniority and experience, who can command authority. They should normally be employed either at the level of Senior Lecturer or Deputy Academic Registrar or above;
- ii) They should not normally hold more than two simultaneous external examiner roles at first degree level;
- iii) They should not normally be appointed to a Degree Examination Board from which a member of the Board is an examiner at the external's institution;
- iv) Former members of staff should not be appointed as an external member for at least five years after they have left QMUL;
- v) External members should normally be serving senior academics or administrators to ensure that they are fully conversant with standard policies and practices across the sector. An external member who retires from his/her permanent post will continue as an external member until the expiry of the period of office, but a retired person should not normally be appointed as an external member. A person who is not currently the holder of a senior administrative appointment or a senior lecturer post or above will not be eligible for nomination as an external member;
- vi) An external member should not normally be drawn from the same institution as his/her predecessor;
- vii) An external member who has completed a term of office may not be re-appointed until five years have elapsed;
- viii) An external member should not be employed in any other capacity by QMUL.

In the event that the nominee does not meet one of the criteria indicated above, a letter of justification must be included with the nomination. The term 'normally' should be removed from the appointment criteria to determine whether a letter of justification is required.

3.7 Period of appointment

The period of appointment shall normally be from 1 September to 31 December four years later. This will enable the external examiner/member to be involved in assessments from the start of the academic year, and to continue in office to deal with reviews, further assessment, resits etc. Continuing external examiners/members need not be re-nominated annually. In exceptional cases, an external examiner's contract may be extended for a fifth year to ensure continuity. An extension of appointment form should be submitted to the Academic Secretariat to extend the appointment of an external examiner/member to a fifth year. The extension will be considered using the same procedures as those used for the appointment of a new external examiner/member. The extension of appointment of an external examiner/member who has regularly failed to attend examination boards and submit annual reports will not be approved.

An external examiner/member who wishes to resign before the expiry of his or her normal period of office is required to write formally to the Principal (sent to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance)), giving sufficient notice for the appointment of a replacement.

In the event that a programme ceases to be offered by QMUL or does not recruit students in a particular year and the services of an external examiner are no longer required, prior to the completion of the period of appointment, it is the responsibility of the Chair of the Subject Examination Board to inform the external examiner of this matter. The Academic Secretariat must also be informed to enable accurate central record keeping.

The termination of an external examiner or external member's appointment by QMUL, before the expiry of his or her normal period of office, should be made by a formal recommendation to the Vice-Principal (Teaching & Learning) from the Chair of the Examination Board or the Academic Registrar. This recommendation must be supported by the Dean for Taught Programmes, or the Associate Dean (Education Quality) in the case of the School of Medicine and Dentistry; the Vice-Principal (Teaching & Learning) will then make the final decision. Reasons for termination of an appointment by QMUL include failure to perform his/her duties (including regular non-attendance at examination boards and non-submission of annual reports) and/or a breakdown in the relationship with QMUL.

3.8 Briefing

Upon appointment, the Academic Secretariat will send an external examiner/member a letter of appointment together with the following documentation:

- two copies of the external examiner's/member's agreement form;
- a personal details form (required for payment purposes);
- the last report of the previous external examiner/member and the response written from QMUL, where applicable.

The letter will include the URL (<http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/external-examiners/external-examiners-resources/index.html>) of the web page where External Examiners/Members can download the following:

- QMUL's External Examiner/Member Guidelines;
- a report pro-forma for the External Examiner's/Member's first report;
- the Academic Regulations;
- the Assessment Handbook;

- an expenses claim form.

External examiners and members are encouraged to use a web page to access guidelines, regulations and pro-formas as this will ensure that they always use the most up-to-date version of each. The Assessment Governance Administrator will ensure that the web page always provides the most recent version of every document available for downloading and/or viewing.

QMUL's letter of appointment gives a general outline of the responsibilities of external examiners/members but the detailed role of each external will vary according to the discipline, the custom and practices of the examination board, and the distribution of responsibilities among the panel of external examiners. It is therefore essential that a new external examiner is carefully briefed by the chair of the Subject Examination Board as soon as possible after his/her appointment has been confirmed. The responsibility for briefing a new external member rests with the Academic Registrar.

The briefing by the Chair of the Examination Board to the external examiner should cover the following:

- general information on the school/subject area, including information provided to students, such as the school handbook and the regulations for the programme/s of study to be examined;
- the names of other external examiners on the Subject Examination Board, and the programmes of study for which they will be responsible, together with the options for which each external will be solely responsible;
- the programme's aims and learning outcomes (and, where relevant, those of individual modules), together with their syllabi and the means by which they will be assessed;
- the conventions used by the Subject Examination Board in assessing individual pieces of work (whether scripts, projects, coursework, etc) – for example, are marks deducted for poor presentation; procedures for dealing with late submission of coursework; procedures for dealing with cases where students answer too many questions;
- the 'calendar' of events over the coming year, including the deadlines for submission of work to external examiners, and for its return, the dates of meetings of the board, and dates on which external examiners are required to attend QMUL (for example, to examine projects, or to hear presentations).

The briefing by the Academic Registrar to an external member should cover the following:

- general information on practices and procedures at QM;
- the conventions used by the Degree Examination Boards;
- the 'calendar' of events, including the dates on which external members are required to attend QMUL for Degree Examination Boards.

On an annual basis, the Academic Secretariat will post on the external examiners' dedicated web page the details of any major changes to QMUL's regulations and procedures.

3.9 Duties of External Examiners

External Examiners have the following 'core' duties:

3.9.1 General

- i. to comment upon the assessments for each module for which they are responsible, the extent to which the assessments cover the syllabus, and whether they enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes;
- ii. to consider, comment upon, and approve (or otherwise) all examination question papers, and to comment upon marking schemes for individual papers, assessment criteria, and model answers;
- iii. to confirm whether or not the standard of marking is satisfactory by scrutinising a sample of assessed work for each module (sample size to be agreed between the board and the examiner);
- iv. to comment upon the standards of achievement of students, and the comparability of this achievement to standards elsewhere;
- v. to comment upon the standards of proposed awards, and their comparability to similar awards made elsewhere;
- vi. to make known any causes for concern in relation to academic standards achieved by students, the standards of modules, and the standards of awards to be made;
- vii. exceptionally, upon written request, to provide independent opinion where there is a significant, unresolved difference between marks awarded by first and second markers on a script or piece of work;
- viii. to advise the Subject Examination Board on appropriate actions where the marks for a module are significantly outside the normal pattern, and to endorse (or not) recommendations by markers for actions where the marks for a module are significantly outside the normal pattern;
- ix. to attend meetings of the Subject Examination Board, and to participate fully in decision making;
- x. to endorse (or otherwise) decisions on results and progression, and recommendations for award;
- xi. to attend meetings of the Degree Examination Board, where desired;
- xii. to submit a full written report, including an optional confidential report to the Principal;
- xiii. in addition, for external examiners who are intercollegiate examiners, to comment upon the standard of the University of London awards conferred by QMUL and their comparability with similar awards at other colleges of the University of London;
- xiv. to perform any other duties requested by Senate or the Degree Examination Board, following appropriate consultation over the nature of those duties.

By agreement with the Subject Examination Board and in consultation with the relevant schools and institutes, external examiners may also carry out other duties including: the approval of project topics and essay titles, interviewing students on their programmes of study and experiences, commenting informally on proposed curriculum changes, commenting upon proposed changes to assessment methods.

External examiners also have a less tangible role in encouraging good practice, and advising the examination board on dealing with difficult problems.

Where the method of programme delivery is non-standard (for example, distance learning), the external examiners will wish to discuss with the internal examiners the arrangements for sampling work and moderating the internal marking, to satisfy themselves that the standards are appropriate and that individual candidates are being treated fairly. This discussion should take place at a very early stage in the session and both internal and external examiners should collaborate in monitoring the effectiveness of the arrangements throughout the session. External examiners are particularly requested to comment on the effectiveness of the

sampling and moderation procedures as they relate to non-standard programme patterns in their annual reports.

3.9.2 Moderating examination question papers

The Subject Examination Board is responsible for overseeing the production and agreement of examination papers; this is often delegated to a small sub-committee of examiners (scrutiny committees). Examination papers (including marking schemes, assessment criteria and model answers) are prepared by internal examiners in accordance with the approved minimum standards and template. These are then reviewed by a scrutiny committee before being sent to the appropriate external examiner for review and approval. Examination papers for all sittings of examinations must be set, scrutinised and approved according to the approved procedure. External examiners must review and approve all examination papers, including resit papers, even when individual questions may have been agreed separately in the past.

The external examiner must satisfy him/herself that the question paper:

- is appropriate to the level of the module;
- is an appropriate means of testing whether candidates' have achieved the stated outcomes of the module;
- covers the full range of the syllabus;
- is fair – i.e. that some candidates will not be at an advantage other than by virtue of their academic ability and commitment.

Any comments or amendments suggested by the external examiner must be responded to or acted upon. The external examiner must be informed of action taken in response to their comments.

In the event that an external examiner refuses to agree an examination paper, for whatever reason, this shall be reported to the Chair of the Degree Examination Board and the Academic Secretary, or nominee. The Chair of the Degree Examination Board shall take a decision on whether or not the paper should be approved or if amendments are needed. This decision shall be based on consideration of the objections detailed by the external examiner and the viewpoint brought forward by the school setting the paper.

3.9.3 Moderating coursework tasks

There is not the same requirement for coursework tasks to be approved by the external examiner as there is for examination papers. It is however good practice for schools to seek the external examiners' views on the nature of the proposed assessment. This is of particular relevance for those modules that are assessed solely by coursework and Subject Examination Boards are encouraged to engage the external examiner over the design of the assessment of these modules.

3.9.4 Moderating examination scripts and other assessed coursework

External examiners have the right to examine any script or other assessed material. In the case of assessed coursework, External examiners would normally only request to see any items of significant assessed coursework produced by a student. The definition of 'significant' will vary between disciplines, but Subject Examination Boards should ensure that individual items of coursework which count for more than 25% of the overall mark are available to the external for scrutiny if required. Where coursework has been returned to students, the Subject Examination Board must have a means of having these available to external examiners if requested.

The role of the external examiner is to moderate the marking of internal examiners. The selection of scripts/assessed work to be sent to the external examiner is a matter for determination between the external examiner and the Chair of the Subject Examination Board. The external examiner must have sufficient evidence to determine that internal

marking and award recommendations are of an appropriate standard and are consistent. Sampling arrangements will therefore normally provide for an External Examiner to see the following:

- a sample of scripts / assessed work from the top, middle and bottom of the range, including some first class examples and some failures;
- scripts / assessed work of borderline candidates;
- exceptionally: scripts / assessed work where the internal examiners differ significantly on the mark to be awarded.

The scripts/assessed work must be accompanied by the comments of the internal examiners. Evidence of double marking/moderation (where required by QMUL's *Code of Practice on Double Marking and Moderation*) must be clear and the marks of the two internal examiners must be easily distinguishable. If there has been a discrepancy between the two internal markers, the final agreed internal mark must be clearly identified for the external examiner. Every effort must be made internally to finalise an internal mark prior to the despatch of the assessed work to the external examiner. Where there is disagreement between the internal markers, the following procedure shall be employed:

1. The markers shall attempt to resolve the difference through discussion, and to agree upon a mark.
2. Where the markers fail to agree upon a mark:
 - i. *Where the difference is of ten per cent of the total marks available or fewer:* The markers may split the difference, rounding to the nearest whole number.
 - ii. *Where the difference is greater than ten per cent of the total marks available, or the markers do not wish to split the difference:* The assessment shall be marked for a third time, and that third mark shall stand. The third marker shall review the marking trails of the first two markers when deciding upon a mark.

The third marker shall be an independent and experienced marker with appropriate subject experience; this shall normally be a member of QMUL staff, but may be an external examiner (by specific agreement with the external, as this is not part of their core responsibilities).

Where moderation indicates the need for a significant alteration to the mark for a script/assessed work, the relevant internal and external examiners should consider whether the change relates to that piece of assessed work alone, or whether the marks for the whole cohort should be reviewed. If the latter appears necessary, the examiners have discretion on whether to remark all scripts, or to scale marks in relation to agreed benchmarks. Such re-scaling should be reported to, and endorsed by, the assessing Subject Examination Board.

External Examiners must not be asked to undertake any of the following:

- first or second marking;
- revise the marks awarded for the script / assessed work of an individual student other than through giving an opinion in specific exceptional cases at the request of the internal examiners where it has not been possible to resolve the matter internally. Where such exceptional cases involve changing the mark of an individual (rather than a cohort) they must be carefully documented in the Subject Examination Board minutes.

3.9.5 Examination Boards

QMUL has a two tier system of Examination Boards: Subject Examination Boards (SEBs) consider marks, progression and any circumstances that may have impacted on these, and make recommendations for award. Degree Examination Boards (DEBs) are award boards

and approve awards and classifications as well as ratify other results achieved and progression decisions.

All external examiners are required to attend the Subject Examination Board for the programme to which they have been appointed and may attend the Degree Examination Board should they wish to do so. Exceptionally, where an external examiner is unable to attend a Subject Examination Board, the meeting may proceed in their absence provided that they provide comments on the candidates' performance prior to the meeting. These will be reported to the meeting and the external examiner will be asked to endorse all recommendations and decisions. At least one external examiner must be present at a Subject Examination Board meeting.

It should not be necessary for external examiners to undertake more than three visits to QMUL each year. Exceptions may be made where, for example, an external has to be present at a resit board or a QMUL Board meeting.

Subject Examination Boards expect to receive marks that have already been moderated by external examiners, except in the rare occasion where the performance of a candidate, or of candidates, raises an issue of policy on which the whole board must decide. The Chair of the Subject Examination Board therefore has the responsibility of ensuring that the marks and other information put before the Board incorporates the comments of externals. Some Boards ask external examiners to send their comments in writing a week before the board meeting; others organise a 'pre-meeting' at which all outstanding issues are resolved.

3.9.6 Debtors and alleged offenders

Students who are flagged as having tuition fee debts to QMUL should be considered by the Subject Examination Board, but their official results must be withheld until confirmation has been received that the debt has been settled.

Students who are alleged to have committed any examination offence must not be considered, but the board should agree arrangements for determining their performance when the question of the alleged offence has been resolved. The normal procedure is for the examination board to authorise its Chair, together with a named external examiner, to act on behalf of the Board when the question of alleged malpractice has been determined.

3.9.7 Classification for Honours

Degrees that are classified are based on the College Mark which is calculated using the appropriate method as outlined in the *Academic Regulations*. A Subject Examination Board does have discretion to take into account other factors when determining the class of degree. For example it can raise a candidate who is marginally below the boundary between two classes. In all cases, where discretion is applied, it must be recorded clearly in the minutes of the meeting. The decision may have to be defended on academic grounds in the event a candidate requests a review of the decision. The opinions of external examiners will be especially influential in such cases and the agreement of the external examiner must be recorded in the minutes of the Subject Examination Board.

3.9.8 Opinions of external examiners

Chairs of Examination Boards must ensure that externals are invited to express their opinions, particularly on difficult and contentious cases, and these opinions will always carry a particular weight. In routine cases where there are disagreements within the board, the final decision will normally be reached by the majority vote (the Chair having a second and casting vote in the case of a tie). Where, however, an external examiner expresses grave concern that a particular decision would be improper (for example, as being unfair to a candidate or a violation of appropriate standards), the Chair must seek the views of all of the external examiners on that issue. If the majority of external examiners are in agreement, the examination board must defer to their views, and the substance of the discussion must be recorded in the minutes or report of the meeting.

Where the external examiners, or the Examination Board, recommend a course of action which contravenes the *Academic Regulations*, programme regulations, or the *Assessment Handbook*, the Academic Registrar must be consulted without delay, and the discussions of the Examination Board on that item deferred until advice has been sought.

3.10 Duties of external members

External members have the following 'core' duties:

3.10.1 General

- i. to comment upon standards of achievement, as represented by the College Mark and degree classifications, and the comparability of these achievements to standards elsewhere;
- ii. to make known any causes for concern in relation to academic standards;
- iii. to provide an external perspective upon the interpretation of regulations, and upon recommendations for the suspension of regulations;
- iv. to provide advice upon the use of discretion - within the permitted scope of any QMUL policy - in order to agree results, progression, and awards;
- v. to attend meetings of the Degree Examination Board, and to participate fully in decision making;
- vi. to endorse (or otherwise) the awards, degree classifications, and progression decisions made by the Degree Examination Board;
- vii. to submit a full report, including an optional confidential report to the Principal;
- viii. in addition, for external members who are also intercollegiate members, to comment upon the standard of the University of London awards conferred by QMUL, and their comparability with similar awards at other colleges of the University of London;
- ix. to perform any other duties requested by Senate or the Degree Examination Board, following appropriate consultation on the nature of those duties.

External members also have a less tangible role in encouraging good practice, and advising the examination board on dealing with difficult problems.

3.10.2 Examination Boards

External members are required to attend all of the Degree Examination Boards for which they have been appointed. Exceptionally where an external member is unable to attend the Degree Examination Board, the meeting may go ahead in their absence.

It should not be necessary for an external member to undertake more than three to four visits each year to QMUL.

3.10.3 Opinions of external members

Chairs of Degree Examination Boards must ensure that external members are invited to express their opinions, particularly on difficult and contentious cases, and these opinions will always carry a particular weight.

3.11 External examiners / members reports

After the examination board has completed its deliberation on candidates, the external examiners/members will each be invited to give a brief oral report.

External examiners' oral reports should cover:

- their opinion of the assessment process, including its fairness, accuracy and efficiency;
- their opinion of the academic quality of the cohort(s) that they have just examined;

- their opinion of the quality of the teaching, as judged by their examination of the students;
- any recommendations to the examination board for improvements in the teaching or examination process;
- their opinion as to whether recommendations made in previous years have been properly followed up.

External members' oral reports should cover:

- their comments on the examination board proceedings;
- any recommendations for improvements in regulatory and procedural arrangements;
- their opinion as to whether recommendations made in previous years have been properly followed up.

Examination boards are normally very willing to respond to external examiners'/ members' comments. If, however, the Chair of an examination board fails to respond to critical comments in a positive manner, the external should contact the Academic Secretariat as a matter of urgency.

External examiners can make representations to the Chairs of the Degree Examination Board and to Senate if they are dissatisfied with a decision.

The report from a Subject Examination Board to the Degree Examination Board must detail any case where the majority of external examiners disagreed with a decision concerning the classification of a particular candidate.

External examiners / members are also required to make a formal annual report to the Principal (though addressed and sent to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance)) following the principal examination board meeting each year. This is an essential part of QMUL's quality assurance framework. External examiners' reports form a major source of information in the annual review of the QMUL's teaching programmes and in internal periodic reviews.

External examiner reports are also made available to student representatives via Student-Staff Liaison Committees; hence references to individual students in reports should be avoided. A confidential report may be attached as an appendix to an external examiner's report in the event that an external examiner wishes to report a matter relating to an individual student.

The Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) will read all external examiner/member reports and highlight comments that require a formal response. All reports are also considered by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning). Chairs of examination boards are required to respond to the points made by external examiners, both directly (within a month after the submission of the report) and through the documentation produced for the reviews mentioned above.

The Chair of the examination board sends a written response to the external examiner, with a copy to the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance). Where the external examiner raises an issue of principle which has not already been addressed by the School (or equivalent), it should first be discussed at a staff meeting, or the examiners' next meeting, or at a meeting of the responsible curriculum/teaching committee, as appropriate to the circumstances.

The Academic Registrar is responsible for responding to the reports of external members. Normally the report is considered by Senate prior to the issue of a formal response to the external member.

Externals' comments and the responses from Chairs of examination boards are considered by the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance). An annual summary report is then written, focussing on good practice and issues that would potentially benefit from further consideration at institution level, and presented to the Senate and to the University of London.

In cases where an external examiner's report contains particularly sensitive comments, the Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning) will contact the appropriate exam board Chair or Head of School immediately when the report is received. The Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) will normally require a written response to serious criticism.

Report pro-formas are reviewed yearly by the Academic Secretariat. External examiners and external members are asked to download the pro-formas from a dedicated web page (<http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/external-examiners/external-examiners-resources/index.html>) and completed reports should be returned to the Academic Secretariat, by post or to the email address on the report pro-forma. Reports should be submitted within one month of an examination board, and in any case within six months. The Academic Secretariat pursues the non-submission of an external's report and reports the non-submission to the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning). An External's fee is released only on the submission of a report, and QMUL reserves the right to refuse to pay for late reports.

QMUL aims to establish and maintain constructive and effective relationships with its external examiners and external members. However any problems experienced either by an external examiner, an external member or an examination board should be reported immediately to the Academic Registrar or to the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning).

3.12 Payment

3.12.1 Fees

Fees will be paid by QMUL upon submission of a fee payment form from the examination board Chair to the Academic Secretariat. The fee amount is at the discretion of the examination board; however there is a base rate calculated using a fee payment formula that takes account of (for example) the number of scripts reviewed. Fees are only paid upon receipt of an annual report (at which time the Secretariat will request the payment form from the examination board); the report should be submitted within 30 days of the examination board; QMUL reserves the right to refuse payment for reports received more than six months after the board.

QMUL is not able to make any payment unless a personal details form has been returned to the Academic Secretariat. QMUL is also required to carry out right to work checks on all employees. Any external examiner/member who has not provided sufficient evidence of their right to work in the UK (normally an original passport, and visa if applicable) will not be paid. The normal payment date for fees is the 24th of each month, though the 'cut-off' for submission is the 5th of each month – claims processed after that date will be paid the following month.

3.12.2 Expenses

QMUL reimburses travel and subsistence expenses for external examiners, though externals should check with their examination boards as to whether they have a policy on (for example) first class travel, etc. To reclaim expenses, externals should submit a signed expenses claim form (at <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/external-examiners/external-examiners-resources/index.html>), together with the original hard copies of the receipts, to the Academic Secretariat (addressed to the Assessment Governance Administrator). The Secretariat will then log the claim and pass it to the examination board to arrange payment. Please note that QMUL cannot refund claims received more than three months after the board, or claims without original receipts.

Research Degree Programmes

3.13 Appointment of examiners for Research Degree Programmes

3.13.1 Scope

This procedure covers the appointment and role of examiners for postgraduate research programmes of study.

3.13.2 Associated documents

Associated documents including the following can be found on the Research Degrees Office web page:

<http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/research-degrees/research-degree-examiners/index.html>

- Guidance notes for examiners
- Outcome of examination form
- Expenses claim form
- Personal details form
- Academic Regulations

3.14 Accountability of research degree examiners

The formal responsibility of research degree examiners is to the Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board (RDPEB); their exam reports are reviewed by this Board and an examiner has the right to make a confidential report to the Principal at any time.

Research degree examiners have a crucial role in quality assurance:

- examiners' primary duty is to ensure that the thesis submitted for examination meets the requirements for the award as laid out in the regulations and, in their opinion, demonstrates a level of expertise consistent with that expected across the UK university system in that discipline;
- the reports of examiners are also a key source of information in the monitoring of research degree programmes of study;

3.15 Procedure for the appointment of research degree examiners

Nominations for the appointment of examiners should be made by the supervisor on the Examination Entry Form (RD01) with reference to the guidance issued by RDPEB and sent to the Director of Graduate Studies for review.

The nominations are then reviewed for approval against the appointment criteria listed below by the Research Degree Programme and Examination Board. Where the nominee does not meet the appointment criteria, supervisors are expected to submit an alternative examiner who does meet the criteria or provide a justification as to why this examiner should be appointed due to exceptional circumstances.

Examiners appointments are valid for a period of one year from the date of approval. If the exam has not taken place within this period, a new Examination Entry Form must be submitted for approval to RDPEB even if it is intended that the same examiners are re-appointed.

Examiners are not normally permitted to act more than once in an academic year. Any request to nominate an examiner who has already carried out an examination will be rejected unless the nominator demonstrates that there are exceptional circumstances that justify the re-appointment.

3.15.1 Appointment criteria

The Panel of Examiners normally comprises two examiners:

- one internal examiner who is normally a member of another College of the University of London;
- one external examiner who is external to the University of London.

Examiners for MPhil, PhD, MD(Res), DrPS and DClinDent normally fulfil the following criteria:

- i. Examiners should be experts in the field of the thesis but not necessarily in all parts of the precise topic.
- ii. At least one examiner should have experience of examining for a research degree in the UK, and examiners should have examined at least five such degrees between them. For the MD(Res), at least one examiner should have previous experience of examining for the MD(Res).
- iii. Nominated examiners must have had no direct involvement in the candidate's research or any close connections with either the candidate or supervisor which might inhibit a completely objective examination. They must not have taken an active role in considering the student's progression and/or transfer of status from MPhil to PhD.
- iv. An examiner should not normally be appointed more than once during a given year by members of the same School/Institute.
- v. NHS Consultants or the equivalent in the NHS who are not College or University employees may be appointed as internal or external examiners but they should hold an Honorary Senior Lecturer or above contract with a College or University. Other professional experts may be appointed as external examiners, but the normal requirements for examining experience across the examination team will apply.
- vi. Individuals who were previously members of staff, students or other members of Queen Mary, University of London, or another College of the University of London, must not be appointed as an external examiner until a period of three years has elapsed.
- vii. Individuals who have retired from academic positions at Queen Mary, University of London or another higher education institution may be appointed as internal or external examiners (subject to the provisions in above) if they remain active in their field of research.
- viii. Overseas examiners are appointed as external examiners only in exceptional circumstances and where it is considered that such an appointment is necessary.

3.16 Duties of research degree examiners

- i. Each examiner is asked to write an independent preliminary report on the thesis in advance of the oral examination. It is expected that each examiner will write their report after reading the thesis but before conferring with the co-examiner.
- ii. Typically the preliminary report identifies particular areas which the examiner believes should be explored with the candidate during the oral examination, and, if possible, makes an initial recommendation, based on an assessment of the thesis, for the result of the examination. These recommendations should not be indicated to the candidate in advance of the oral, which is an integral component of the examination.
- iii. The examiners should exchange their preliminary reports with each other before conducting the oral examination and send a copy to the Research Degrees Office after the examination has been completed.
- iv. The time, date and place of the oral examination are arranged by the candidate's supervisor. Examiners are required to attend and conduct the examination.
- v. The purpose of the oral examination is to examine the candidate on the subject of the thesis and relevant subjects. During the examination the examiners should seek to establish whether all the requirements for a thesis submitted for the relevant degree have been met (as laid out in the current Academic Regulations (http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/policy_zone/)), and to establish that the thesis is genuinely the work of the candidate. If there is any doubt that the thesis is the candidate's own work the examiners should contact the Research Degrees Office.
- vi. The examiners are advised to discuss between themselves the strategy they propose to adopt during the examination and to outline this to the candidate at its outset.
- vii. There are no set requirements about the conduct of oral examinations, nor about their duration, but they should be conducted in such a way that the candidate has adequate opportunity, encouragement and time to explain his/her research and to defend the thesis.
- viii. In addition to examining the candidate orally, the examiners have the discretion to examine the candidate by means of written papers or practical examination. This provision is rarely invoked and examiners are asked to contact the Research Degrees Office if they wish to do so.
- ix. At the conclusion of the oral examination the candidate and the supervisor (if present) should withdraw and the examiners should confer on the result in private.
- x. The examiners have discretion, after the initial private discussion, to consult the supervisor (irrespective of whether he/she was present at the oral) and/or the Research Degrees Office, particularly if they have doubts relating to the appropriate decision to be made.
- xi. The options open to the examiners in determining the results are set out in detail in the Academic Regulations (http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/policy_zone/).
- xii. Examiners are required to complete the Outcome of Examination form indicating which of the available decisions they have made and write a joint report giving the grounds on which their decision is based. The joint report should be on a separate sheet and should include the following:

- a. Name of the candidate;
 - b. Thesis title;
and at the end of the report:
 - c. Signatures of each of the examiners;
 - d. Date
- xiii. The report should have regard to the requirements of a thesis for the relevant research degree. It should not cross-refer to the examiners' preliminary reports unless the examiners wish the candidate to be sent a copy of those preliminary reports.
- xiv. If the examiners decide to refer the candidate to revise and resubmit the thesis for the degree, they should indicate in what ways the current thesis fails to satisfy the requirements for the degree, and should indicate clearly the revisions which they consider should be made.
- xv. The examiners should agree between themselves at the end of the oral examination the arrangements for drafting and finalising their joint report and for sending it, the Outcome of Examination form, their preliminary reports, and their copies of the thesis to the Research Degrees Office. This should be done within two weeks of the examination. If, for any reason, it is not possible for the reports to be returned within two weeks of the oral examination, one of the examiners should contact the Research Degrees Office to discuss the problem.
- xvi. If the examiners wish to advise the candidate orally and informally of their decision at the conclusion of their deliberations following the examination, they must make clear to the candidate that the result is not formal and final until confirmed and notified by letter from QMUL to the candidate.

3.17 Payments to research degree examiners

3.17.1 Fees

Fees will be paid upon submission of all the paperwork relating to the examination. The fee amount is set by the Research Degree Programmes and Examination Board.

QMUL is not able to make any payment unless a personal details form and a copy of an examiner's passport have been returned to the Research Degrees Office. The normal payment date is the 24th of each month, though the 'cut-off' for submission is the 5th of each month – claims processed after that date will be paid the following month.

3.17.2 Expenses

QMUL reimburses reasonable travel and subsistence expenses for examiners (it will not reimburse first class travel costs). To reclaim expenses, externals should submit a signed expenses claim form together with the original hard copies of the receipts, to the Research Degrees Office. RDO will then log the claim and pass it to Finance to arrange payment. Please note that QMUL cannot refund claims received without original receipts.

4. Programme and Module Development

There are no substantive changes to this chapter. Reference has been made to the new provision in the Academic Regulations for Professional Doctorate programmes (section 4.12).

4.1 Undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes

This information is aimed at Programme Proposers / Organisers in preparation for the design and revision of undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes and modules. It is intended only as a summary of the key procedures for programme and module approval, amendment and withdrawal, more detailed guidance can be found in the Programme and Module Developer Guidelines on the [Academic Secretariat](#) website.

4.2 Student Information System

The Student Information System (SIS) will continue to be used as the central repository of definitive programme and module information, which will be compiled from the forms submitted as part of the programme and module development procedures. The SIS will be used to automatically populate course information pages on the QMUL website. It is therefore imperative that schools and institutes ensure that the information provided is accurate and revisions are notified in a timely way.

4.3 Scope

QMUL's programme and module development procedures cover proposals for:

- all new undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes of study¹;
- the amendment or withdrawal of existing undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes of study;
- changes to the regulations of an undergraduate or postgraduate taught programme.
- approval of all new modules;
- amendment to previously approved modules;
- withdrawal of modules.

These procedures do not cover research degrees or non-award-bearing continuing education.

4.4 Associated documents

4.4.1 Programme documents

- Part 1 Programme Proposal Form
- Stage 1 Partnership and Programme Proposal Form
- Part 2 Programme Proposal Form
- Programme Specification Template
- Guidance on Programme Specifications
- External Adviser Guidelines
- Academic Regulations
- Programme Amendment Form
- Programme Withdrawal Form
- Change of Programme JACS Form

The documents and forms for programme development can be found on the on the [Academic Secretariat](#) website.

¹ For new programme developments that involve collaboration with another Higher Education Institution, Educational Partnerships Board must approve the partnership. For further guidance, see the relevant section on Collaborative Provision in the QA Handbook.

4.4.2 Module documents

- Module Proposal Form
- Half Module Proposal Form
- Module Amendment Form
- Module Withdrawal Form

The documents and forms for module development can be found on the on the [Academic Secretariat](#) website.

4.5 Programme Approval

The approval of a new programme of study is a two stage process. Part 1 is a planning process consisting of approval in principle of the business case and market focus of the programme proposal, taking account of the school/institute and QMUL strategic plan, likely demand and availability of resources. Part 2 involves the approval of the submission of the detailed academic content for the proposal, including the programme aims, outcomes, structure and the strategies for teaching, learning and assessment, which can be developed once approval in principle is received. A detailed Programme Specification is also required at this stage, in addition to evidence of the support of an expert in the area of the proposed programme external to QMUL.

Throughout the programme development process, consideration should also be given to other key QMUL internal reference points including the:

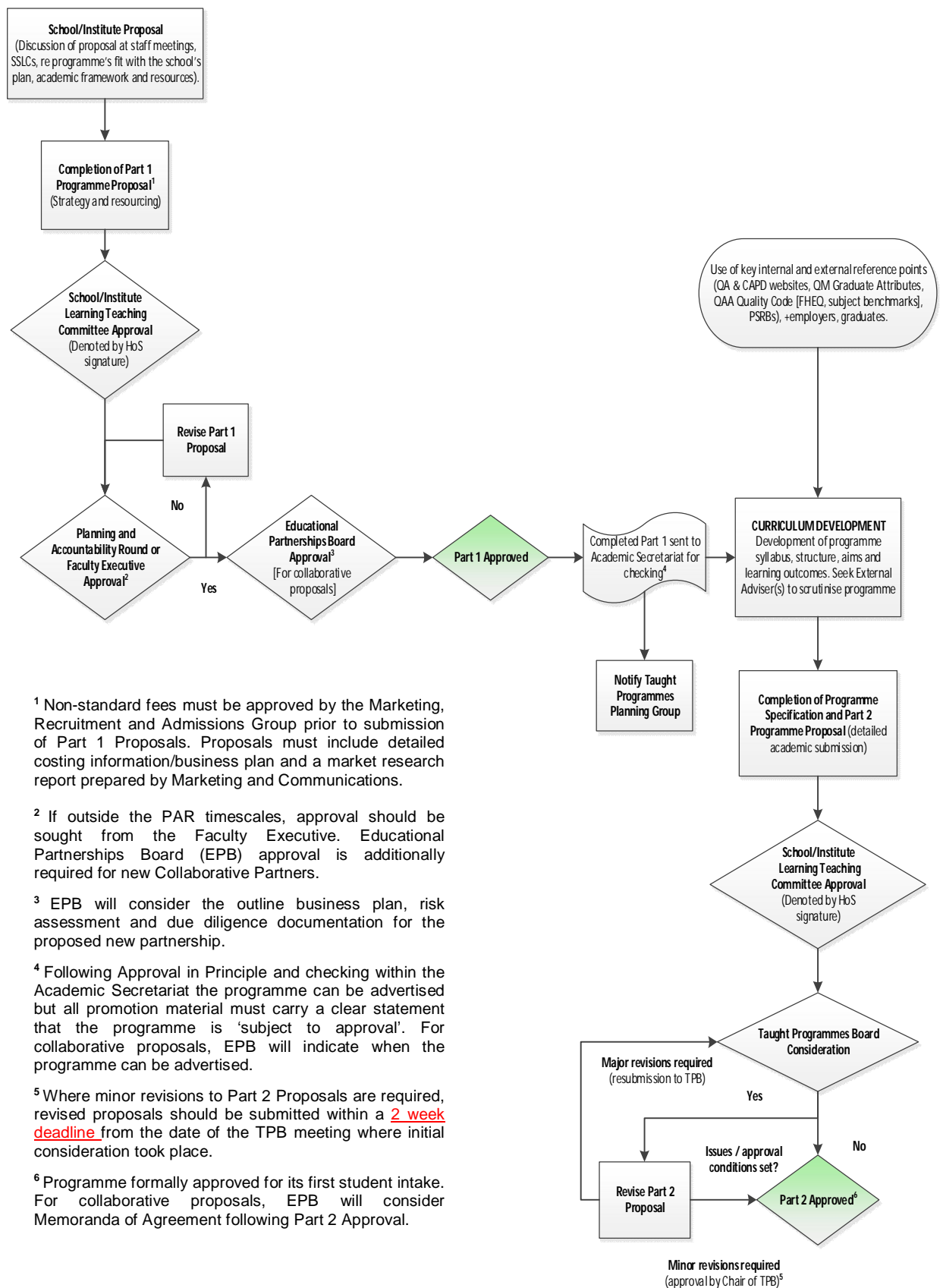
- [Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy](#);
- [QMUL Graduate Attributes Statement](#);
- [Academic Regulations](#);
- [QMUL Academic Credit Framework](#);
- [Centre for Academic and Professional Development](#) - Guidance on curriculum design
- [QMUL Code of Practice on Assessment and Feedback](#).

Ideally, the development process should start at least 12 months before the first delivery of a programme, to enable sufficient time to establish the market; develop the programme, consult across the institution, and undertake the approval processes.

Part 1 programme proposals for undergraduate programmes due to start in September of the following year should be completed and have received Faculty approval in principle **before the end of December 2014** in order to meet the UCAS deadline for students to make their applications. Postgraduate taught programmes should ensure they have been granted approval in principle to allow sufficient lead-in time for marketing the programme. Any proposal which involves collaboration with another institution or body must have Educational Partnerships Board (EPB) strategic approval of the partner organisation. For single, joint and dual collaborative programmes a Stage 1 Partnership and Programme Proposal form should be submitted to the Academic Secretariat for EPB consideration of the partner (instead of the Part 1 form).

Approval of Part 2 is the responsibility of the Taught Programmes Board. Part 2 programme proposals need to be submitted to the **25th February 2015 meeting** to meet the UCAS deadline for making offers and internal deadlines for data collection and timetabling.

4.51 Summary of the Programme Approval Process



4.52 Timeline of the Programme Approval Process

| Date | Process |
|----------------------|---|
| September – November | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the proposal was not submitted in the last Faculty Planning and Accountability Review (FPAR), draft Part 1/Stage 1 programme proposal for programmes due to start in September of the following year • Lodge Part 1/Stage 1 proposal with the Faculty Executive for approval, (following school/institute Learning and Teaching Committee Approval) • Submit the Stage 1 proposal to the Educational Partnerships Board (for collaborative programmes only) • Programmes can be advertised after Part 1 approval is confirmed but no offers can be made until Part 2 approval is confirmed • For collaborative programmes, the Educational Partnerships Board will indicate when programmes can be advertised. |
| December | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate programmes should have Part 1/Stage 1 approval before the end of December to meet UCAS timescales • Consider possible external advisers who might be willing to scrutinise the Programme Specification and Module Proposals and Specifications |
| January – February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft the Programme Specification and the Part 2 form (including Module Proposals for any new modules) • Send Part 2 proposal information to at least one external adviser for written comments • Part 2 programme proposals need to be submitted to the February meeting of Taught Programmes Board • For collaborative programmes, submit the Memorandum of Agreement or contract to the Educational Partnerships Board for approval. |
| September | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete nomination forms for any new External Examiners required • Start of new programme |

4.6 Programme Amendments

Amendments to existing programmes of study are initially considered and approved by school/institute Learning and Teaching Committees. A revised Programme Specification² and a *Programme Amendment Form* should be completed by the Programme Organiser. Minor changes require consideration only at school/institute level, for example, changing the selection status (core, compulsory, elective) of modules linked to the programme, and changes to student diets. Modifications that result in a significant change to the aims, outcomes, structure, or content of the original programme may need to be processed as a new programme approval. Schools/institutes are encouraged to discuss these types of changes with the Academic Secretariat for advice on the appropriate procedure.

The deadline for the submission of a programme amendment is **12th February 2015**. Programme amendments requiring Taught Programmes Board approval must be submitted earlier by **4th February 2015**. Programme title changes for all programmes should be submitted earlier, by **31st January 2015**, to meet UCAS and admissions timescales.

4.7 Programme Withdrawals

Programme withdrawals are considered by the Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Group (MRAG) and reported to Taught Programmes Board and the Taught Programmes Planning Group (TPPG). Current students must be consulted and arrangements for the completion of their studies must be made and agreed. For collaborative programmes the

² Programme Specifications should be annually reviewed even if no amendments have been made to a programme, and submitted to the Academic Secretariat by September. See the [Guidance Notes on Programme Specifications](#).

partner should be consulted about all arrangements for termination, which must be consonant with the obligations on both parties specified in the Memorandum of Agreement.

4.8 Module Proposals

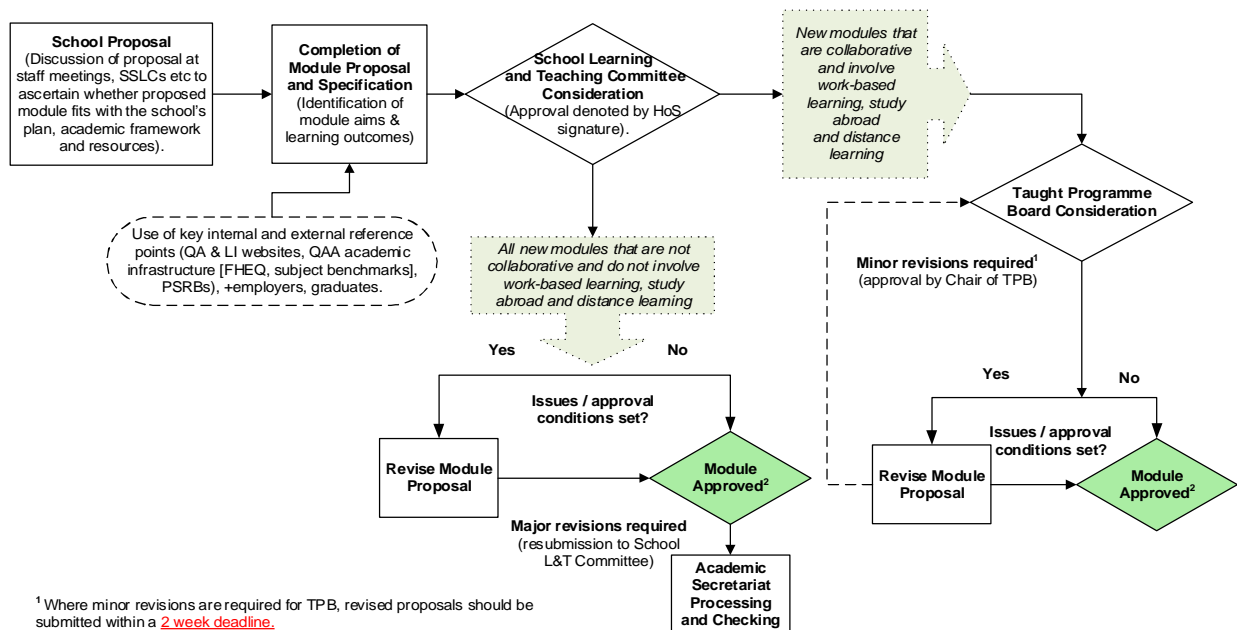
Proposals for new modules associated with a new programme of study will be considered as a package by Taught Programmes Board. The responsibility for approving new modules that are part of existing programmes of study is devolved to schools/institutes, subject to the published deadlines. Where new modules are introduced as core or compulsory, the programme specifications(s) should be updated and submitted with the module proposal.

The following kinds of new modules require Taught Programmes Board approval:

- modules developed as part of a new programme of study;
- modules relating to a programme delivered through a collaborative arrangement;
- modules involving work-based learning or study abroad;
- modules involving distance learning.

For modules not requiring consideration by Taught Programmes Board, the Academic Secretariat will log the approved module and scrutinise the module proposal for completeness of information and the appropriateness of the new module details. Any issues identified by the Academic Secretariat will be referred back to the school/institute for follow up before any module is formally created on the SIS.

4.81 Summary of the Module Approval Process



¹ Where minor revisions are required for TPB, revised proposals should be submitted within a [2 week deadline](#).

² Module formally approved for its first student intake

Module Proposals due to start in the following year that require TPB consideration (non-standard modules) must be submitted to the February meeting date of TPB. In order for a Module Proposal to be considered it will therefore need to meet the three week deadline for papers prior to the final meeting date of TPB. All other Module Proposals not requiring TPB consideration must be submitted to the Academic Secretariat by 12th February for UG programmes and PGT programmes..

4.82 Timeline of the Module Approval Process (modules not associated with a new programme of study)

| Date | Process |
|--------------------|--|
| January - February | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft all Module Proposals (Semester A and B) and lodge with the School/Institute Learning and Teaching Committee for consideration• All standard Module Proposals and Specifications submitted to the Academic Secretariat by 12th February 2015. Non-standard³ modules must be submitted to the Academic Secretariat by 4th February 2015 to be considered at the February Taught Programmes Board meeting |
| September | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start of new module |

4.9 Module Amendments

School/institute Teaching and Learning Committees (or equivalent) consider and approve all module amendments, subject to the published deadline. The procedure for module amendments does not cover proposals to change the level or the credit value of a module; such proposals require the submission of module proposal form. For collaborative programmes, approval must also be sought from the partner institution. As with module proposals the school/institute should send the completed, signed module amendment form to the Academic Secretariat for scrutiny.

The deadline for the submission of module amendments for the following academic year is **12th February 2015**.

4.10 Module Withdrawals

A proposal to withdraw a module should be approved by the responsible school/institute(s) Teaching and Learning Committees (or equivalent). The deadline for the withdrawal of modules is **12th February 2015**. In the case of collaborative programmes, evidence that the partner institution has been appropriately consulted should be included.

4.11 Further Guidance

The Programme and Module Developer Guidelines provide detailed guidance on the procedures for programme and module approval, amendment and withdrawal. The guidelines and forms mentioned in this document can be found on the [Academic Secretariat](#) website, in addition to a detailed schedule of deadlines.

4.12 Research Degree Programmes

The Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board has the delegated authority for approving new research programmes or for permitting changes to the structures of existing programmes (for example the introduction of a compulsory taught module).

For new doctoral programmes that involve collaboration with another Higher Education Institution, the Educational Partnership Board must approve the partner. For further guidance, see the relevant section on Collaborative Provision in this Handbook.

In June 2014, Senate approved a framework for Professional Doctorate programmes (see the [Academic Secretariat](#) website for more information), which established a Professional Doctorates Committee (PDC) to oversee programme development. The PDC will consider proposals for new Professional Doctorate programmes and make recommendations for their approval to Taught Programmes Board and the Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board.

³ Module proposals that are collaborative, work-based learning, study abroad or distance learning need to be approved by Taught Programmes Board

5. Annual Programme Reviews

This chapter has been updated to include reference to the new programme level review which schools/institutes are asked to undertake in advance of the school/institute Annual Programme Review meeting with the Faculty Dean for Taught Programmes (section 5.3.2), and indicates that APR meetings will take place in the autumn after Postgraduate Taught Examination Boards have been held (section 5.3.1).

Taught Programmes

5.1 Purpose

Annual Programme Review (APR) is central to QMUL's assurance of the academic standards of its provision, with the aim of enhancing the student learning experience at its core. APR is a continuous process of reflection and action planning which is owned by those responsible for programme delivery; the main document of reference for this process is the Taught Programmes Action Plan (TPAP) which is the summary of the school/institute's work throughout the year to monitor academic standards and to improve the student experience. The TPAP is monitored at both Faculty and institutional level and reviewed annually.

The TPAP is used for all teaching and learning action plans (e.g. NSS, SSLC) hence it should include all actions, from any source, that relate to teaching and learning. The TPAP is produced by a web application linked to the FPAR, and can be updated throughout the year as necessary. Despite the organic nature of the TPAP there is an annual cycle for APR that culminates in a yearly meeting between the School / Institute and the Faculty Dean for Taught Programmes.

Academic staff with responsibility for the delivery of taught programmes are asked to consider the following as part of the review process:

- the progress achieved with the Taught Programmes Action Plan
- the extent to which intended learning outcomes are being attained by the students
- the academic standards set and student achievement of these
- the quality of the learning opportunities
- the Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy of the School / Institute
- notable achievements and good practice
- programme development / curriculum review including the cumulative impact of small/incremental changes
- information for students
- student support arrangements for collaborative programmes taught at the partner venue
- future plans/new initiatives/developments to include anticipated challenges and an approach for dealing with these

Notes will be kept of each School or Institute's Annual Programme Review meeting with the Faculty Dean for Taught Programmes; from these a summary report will be produced by ARCS which will be considered by the following:

- Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning)
- Academic Registry and Council Secretariat
- The Students' Union
- Senate

5.2 Scope

This procedure covers all taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study. It does not cover research degrees or non-award-bearing continuing education.

5.3 Process

The Annual Programme Review process centres on the Taught Programmes Action Plan which is a living document that can be updated over the course of the year as appropriate, and also includes provision for student representatives to provide comments and feedback. Each TPAP will be considered in detail at annual programme review meeting between the school / institute and the Faculty Dean for Taught Programmes. Alongside consideration of the TPAP, Schools and Institutes should take particular note of the general academic health of each programme, the resources and facilities available to it; student comments and action taken in response; points raised by External Examiners and evidence of good practice.

5.3.1 The Taught Programmes Action Plan (TPAP)

There will be a TPAP for each School and Institute, plus one for each of the three faculties and a College TPAP. There will also be a discrete TPAP for medium and large scale Collaborative programmes; these are defined as programmes with twenty or more students. The Collaborative TPAP shall be linked to the relevant School/Institute owning the programme, further guidance is provided in section 5.

These will be overseen as follows:

- (i) Schools by the Head of School, the Director of Taught Programmes and the School Manager for each School, and the School Teaching and Learning Committee;
- (ii) Faculties by the Dean for Taught Programmes, the secretary (ARCS) to DTPAG, the Faculty Executive, and DTPAG itself (comprising the School Directors of Taught Programmes);
- (iii) College by the VP for Teaching and Learning, the CAPD, VPTLAG and Senate.

School / Institute TPAPs may be considered as part of the preparation for the annual PAR meetings between Schools / Institutes and Faculty Executives, and will be formally reviewed at an annual programme review meeting in November - December, when completed actions will be removed. The TPAP is the means by which Schools / Institutes can summarise the review processes for their taught provision, and can demonstrate their actions in response to feedback on taught provision. The TPAP is provided as an online application, or web app. Schools and institutes will no longer be required to develop separate annual action plans for different sources, (e.g. the NSS). Instead any and all further actions from any source that relate to teaching and learning should be added to the TPAP.

The TPAP can be added to and amended at any point in the year, however it should be up-to-date and ready for discussion before the annual meeting between the School / Institute and the Faculty Dean for Taught Programmes. Making sure that the TPAP is up-to-date will include reflecting in a timely way on all source data (Student feedback including the NSS, the QMUL Student Survey, External Examiner reports, etc.). It also includes reflecting upon actions relating to smaller-scale partnership provision within the School / Institute TPAP, and the achievement of students entering programmes through other collaborative arrangements such as articulation agreements.

Student representatives should also be given the opportunity to review and provide comment in the appropriate comment boxes. The Students' Union will arrange an annual event to enable representatives to get together to discuss the TPAP and agree their commentary.

For more information please see the separate TPAP guidelines, or visit:

<http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/apr/94171.html>

5.3.2 Programme Review Template

Following the changes agreed to the APR process, Schools/Institutes are expected to have undertaken a programme review for each of the taught programmes that are offered. Programmes can be considered individually or as cognate groups if appropriate. The programme leader or convenor should review the data related to the programme (such as module evaluation results, progression information, etc.) and assess whether the delivery and performance of the programme has been as anticipated. A Programme Review Template has been produced which includes a series of prompts to assist the reviewer in focussing on specific areas that are of concern in the QA process.

The results of the review(s) should be submitted to the School / Institute Director of Taught Programmes (or equivalent). Review documentation (whether in the form of minutes or annotations to the programme review document) will be shared with the appropriate Dean for Taught Programmes (or nominee). Points arising from the programme reviews will be discussed at School and Institute Annual Programme Review meetings.

The Programme Review Template is available to download from:
<http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/apr/94171.html>

5.3.3 Annual Programme Review meeting

The annual programme review meeting will take place in semester one. The following persons should normally be present at these meetings:

- The Faculty Dean for Taught Programmes / Dean for Education or nominee
- Any other person nominated by the DTP/DE (such as the Faculty Administrative Officer)
- The Head of School/Institute
- The Director of Taught Programmes
- The Director of Administration
- The Director (or academic lead) of each collaborative taught programme
- Any other person nominated by the Head of School/Institute
- Representative of ARCS

Before the meeting schools and institutes should provide ARCS with any external accreditation reports referred to in the TPAP, together with the most recent version of their Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS). These plus other potential sources of actions, such as External Examiner reports or NSS results, will be supplied to the Faculty Dean for Taught Programmes in advance of the meeting.

The meeting will reflect on taught programmes within the School / Institute with reference to the TPAP, consider the School / Institute's LTAS, and review information for students. Any good or innovative practice should be identified so that it can be more widely disseminated, and developmental issues identified and reflected appropriately in the TPAP. As well as

agreeing further actions, completed, or superseded, actions may be removed from the TPAP with the agreement of the Dean. The meeting will be chaired by the Faculty Dean for Taught Programmes, and will follow a standard agenda.

5.4 Consideration

Notes will be taken of each annual programme review meeting, identifying priorities for action and good practice. Notes, together with the TPAP, will be considered by the School / Institute's Teaching and Learning Committee and Student-Staff Liaison Committee. In considering the notes Schools and Institutes should take account of the feedback provided at the meeting, together with any action points which should have been added to the TPAP for the following academic year.

Once the annual programme review meetings have been concluded, ARCS will provide a written overview report to Senate with a summary of meeting notes and a review of the process. The overview report will comment on any Faculty-wide trends, examples of new initiatives and good practice and any School/Institute concerns that should be brought to the attention of Senate. Senate must satisfy itself as to the conduct of the exercise (and that action has been taken to resolve or highlight any issues identified) referring issues back to the individual School/Institute/Faculty for comment as necessary, and referring instances of good practice to the Learning Institute or other central services for further development and dissemination as appropriate. Once Senate has considered the overview report it will be sent to all Chairs of Teaching and Learning Committees for discussion, with particular emphasis on considering and disseminating good practice.

For more information: http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/qa/programme_monitoring_apr/index.html.

5.5 TPAP for collaborative programmes

The TPAP for collaborative programmes includes most of the features as the School TPAP. In addition the process may focus on the following areas:

- Organisation and management: actions arising from joint management or academic committees (or equivalent) and actions relating to their operation.
- Quality assurance and review: actions that may arise in relation to the quality assurance requirements of the partner institution.
- Student progression: actions relating to student achievement and progression, it may also be useful to compare with other relevant QMUL provision.
- Visits to the partner institution (where relevant): actions that may arise as an outcome of partner institution visits.

In addition to the standard documents provided for the Annual Programme Review meetings, those involving a collaborative TPAP may also include the minutes of joint committees (or equivalent) with the partner institution that are concerned with quality assurance. It is also expected that the collaborative TPAP will be discussed at appropriate points in the relevant joint committee meetings with the partner.

Research degree programmes

5.6 Research degree programmes

The Research Degree Programmes and Examinations Board and the Doctoral College Management Group review information regularly on admissions, and research student progression and completion.

A new annual review process for research degree programmes is being developed in 2014-15 to dovetail with the Annual Review of Research and Innovation discussions held by the Vice-Principal (Research) with Schools and Institutes.

6. Periodic Review

There are no substantive changes to this chapter.

6.1 Purpose

Periodic Review is a developmental process which tests the effectiveness of a school/institute's mechanisms for the management of its programmes, ensuring that QMUL's policies and procedures are operating as intended to safeguard academic standards and to provide a high-quality learning experience for students.

The aims of Periodic Review are:

- to assess the effectiveness of a school or institute's processes for managing academic quality and standards, and that QMUL's agreed policies and procedures are operating as intended to assure and enhance the standard of provision;
- to consider how a school/institute is developing and implementing its Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, and how QMUL's Statement of Graduate Attributes is reflected in the curriculum;
- to evaluate the currency of a school or institute's programmes in the context of developments in the discipline, and its success in achieving its aims, and to consider its future plans;
- to review all partnership, or partner supported delivery;
- to commend and disseminate good practice;
- to provide public information on the quality and standards of the school/institute.

Periodic Review is a key component of QMUL's quality framework and therefore needs to be conducted with a degree of formality and objectivity. The intention is to engage in a structured and rigorous evidence-based dialogue in which there are high levels of transparency and a free flow of information. Review will be undertaken by a panel of peers in partnership with the school/institute and in a spirit of openness which encourages the embedding of good practice.

6.2 Scope

This procedure covers the Periodic Review of a school/institute's provision, including the schedule of reviews, the appointment and role of a panel, the responsibilities of the school/institute under review and the outcomes of a review and their consideration. The procedure covers all QMUL's taught and research degrees, including collaborative provision.

6.3 Associated documents

Associated documents, including a template for production of the SED, can be found on the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat (ARCS) web site: <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/periodic-review/index.html>

6.4 What is Periodic Review?

Periodic Review is an evaluation of a school or institute's systems and procedures for managing, maintaining and enhancing the academic quality and standards of teaching and learning. It involves a self-evaluation by the school/institute concerned followed by review of the self-evaluation by a panel comprising members of QMUL and external subject specialists from other higher education institutions or from the professions.

Periodic Review aims to identify and validate good practice and may also provide specific recommendations to improve academic quality and standards. These recommendations may

be relatively minor or they may be more substantial. They will always be discussed with the school/institute concerned.

The process of Periodic Review applies to undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and research degree provision in all academic schools, or institutes within QMUL. The process also applies to small-scale collaborative provision offered by the body under review. The majority of collaborative programmes will be considered within the overall provision for a given academic school/institute at QMUL. In recognition of the potential increased levels of risk to academic standards and quality, medium and large-scale collaborative programmes and programmes distinct from other school/institute structures will undergo a discrete programme, or group of programmes, Periodic Review process in line with the cycle of reviews. This does not apply to articulation, year abroad or research degree provision.

A school/institute preparing for Periodic Review will be supported by the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat.

6.5 Schedule and format

The schedule of Periodic Reviews is normally based on a six year cycle which is published by the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat. The schedule is determined by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) in consultation with faculty Deans for Taught Programmes and heads of schools, or the head of the relevant institute in the School of Medicine and Dentistry, and taking into account visits by professional and statutory bodies where possible.

The Academic Registry and Council Secretariat confirm the date for the Periodic Review, approximately six months in advance, in liaison with the head of school/institute, the Chair of the panel and the External Reviewers.

6.6 Self-Evaluation Document

Approximately six months in advance of a Periodic Review, schools/institutes are given a copy of the framework for a Periodic Review self-evaluation document. The framework for the self-evaluation document is based on guidance from the QAA and is designed so that its completion produces a self-evaluation of a school/institute's quality and standards. It is the responsibility of the head of school/institute to co-ordinate the completion of the self-evaluation document. It is recommended that the development of the self-evaluation is progressed via discussion within school/institute meetings or equivalent and that the final document commands independent local ownership.

Six weeks before the Periodic Review, the school/institute should lodge a draft self-evaluation document plus supporting documentation with the panel Secretary. Supporting documentation should consist of:

- External Examiner reports and responses for the past three years;
- a programme specification for each programme of study offered by the school/institute;
- taught programme action plans and any notes of annual programme review meetings for all provision including collaborative;
- collaborative provision agreements where appropriate;
- PSRB accreditation reports where appropriate;
- a report from the placement organiser (where appropriate) reviewing student, employer and external examiner feedback on placements;
- school/institute/programme handbooks for students, translated as necessary;
- a diagrammatic overview of the school/institute's committee structure for managing teaching and learning quality, including any collaborative provision;

- the school/institute's current teaching and learning strategy;
- minutes of school/institute teaching related committees, and Student-Staff Liaison Committees.

Please note that a dedicated SED with supporting documents will be required where collaborative provision is the subject of a separate panel meeting.

A formal meeting will be arranged to discuss the review and SED requirements with appropriate members of the school/institute under review. The purpose of this meeting is to assist schools/institutes in the production of an evaluative document which will provide the panel with the information it requires for a constructive Periodic Review meeting. The Periodic Review itself takes place over a relatively short period of time, and an appropriately structured SED will help make the most of the time available. The review secretary will provide feedback on a draft SED for schools/institutes that would find this helpful.

Once the draft SED has been agreed, full sets of documentation should be submitted electronically. Twelve hard copies of the SED (without appendices) are required. The appendices and the SED should be provided on twelve memory sticks. A paper copy of the SED and a memory stick will be sent to each member of the review panel. The school/institute may opt to submit copies of additional internal documentation, or external material, if it relates to an area identified in the self-evaluation document as a particular strength or weakness. The panel reserves the right to request copies of further school/institute documents in order to clarify particular areas of interest. However such requests will be kept to a minimum and will relate to existing documents only.

The Academic Registry and Council Secretariat circulate the documentation to the Periodic Review panel together with a copy of the previous Periodic Review report for the school/institute.

6.7 Student Surveys

The Academic Registry and Council Secretariat will discuss with the school/institute under review the availability of information on student opinion about their programmes (in addition to module evaluation and the new Queen Mary Student Survey), and will consider with the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) whether to conduct an on-line survey for students about the quality of their learning experiences. The school/institute will be expected to email students with a link to the anonymous survey web page. The Academic Registry and Council Secretariat will write a summary of the surveys, including student comments, for the panel to consider.

6.8 Panel composition

A Periodic Review panel will normally comprise:

- a Chair nominated by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning);
- Vice President (Education), Students' Union or nominee;
- a member of academic staff from outside of the Faculty/SMD in which the school/institute under review is based;
- the Director of the Centre for Academic and Professional Development and/or their nominee;
- Dean for Taught Programmes/Dean for Education, SMD;
- Vice-Principal (Research) or nominee from the Doctoral College;
- two External Reviewers;
- a member of the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat [Secretary].

For Periodic Reviews of institutes within the SMD, the Dean for Education, SMD will act as a panel member. For all other schools, the Dean for Taught Programmes of the Faculty in which the school is based will act as a panel member. If the home school/institute of the Dean for Taught Programmes or SMD equivalent is the school/institute being reviewed then a different Dean for Taught Programmes or equivalent will be asked to serve on the panel.

Reviews are chaired by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) or their nominee. The head of school/institute will be asked to nominate two subject specialists external to QMUL to join the Periodic Review panel as External Reviewers. In consultation with the Chair, the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat approaches the nominees and, on behalf of QMUL, invites them to participate in the Periodic Review.

Some reviews take place over two days, with a panel meeting on the afternoon of the first day to consider questions and lines of enquiry for the meetings with staff and students on the second day. The head of school/institute is asked to nominate a member of staff to be available to join the Periodic Review panel for its pre-meeting on the morning of the second day of the review if the panel requires assistance with any factual questions or to co-ordinate further information the panel may need. This person should have an overview of the school/institute's teaching, systems and procedures.

Where partner supported provision is subject to a separate panel meeting, this may require some adjustments to the panel membership, for example the head of school/institute may wish to nominate a different member of staff with an overview of the collaborative provision and QMUL may wish to include an internal panel member with experience of partner supported provision.

6.8.1 The External Reviewers

An External Reviewer is normally a senior academic who is not a member of QMUL staff. S/he should have knowledge of the discipline concerned and, where possible, should have experience of Periodic Review in their own institution or external review by the QAA or relevant professional body. S/he should not have had any formal links with the school/institute under review within the previous 5 years.

The External Reviewers play a vital role in assisting the panel to identify key issues to be explored during the visit to the school/institute and play a full part in the panel's meetings with school staff and students, and the identification of conclusions and recommendations. In particular, External Reviewers are able to identify excellence in provision, they are able to make comparisons with similar provision at other institutions and comment on the currency of a school or institute's programmes in the context of developments in the discipline, and can offer feedback on the appropriateness of aims and learning outcomes to future career development. External Reviewers are invited to comment on the report of the Review and the school/institute's response to the report. Each External Reviewer is provided with an outline of their role as a member of an Periodic Review panel and receives a fee paid from central funds.

6.9 The role of panel members

The role of all panel members is to:

- identify significant themes/issues for discussion;
- construct and manage an agenda for the Periodic Review which enables them to explore these themes/issues through dialogue with the school/institute;
- pursue lines of enquiry which allow them to test and verify whether current structures and procedures are fit for purpose;
- make evidence-based judgements about the maintenance and enhancement of quality and standards;
- make evidence based judgements about QMUL's relation with a partner institution (where appropriate)

6.10 The Periodic Review

Periodic Review is informed by the QAA's process for institutional review. A new method has been implemented, known as Higher Education Review. The QMUL review method and requirements will be considered in the light of the QAA Higher Education Review Handbook for Providers (June 2014) and the QAA UK Quality Code for HE, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review). However, Periodic Review is not conducted to a pre-determined template. Lines of inquiry are derived from panel members' analysis of the specific documentation produced for each Periodic Review. The expectation is that whilst Periodic Reviews will pursue a number of common and generic themes, each Periodic Review will be 'tailored' to local circumstances.

A Periodic Review usually takes place in the Colette Bowe Room (formerly the Council Room) in the Queens' Building on the Mile End Campus, but may also take place at a partner institution, or via video-conferencing facilities. A pre-meeting is arranged, up to one week before the actual Review meeting, between the panel Chair and the panel secretary. The agenda for this meeting includes:

- identification of broad areas for discussion;
- review of issues submitted in advance by the External Reviewers;
- clarification of any issues;
- confirmation of those members of staff who will meet with the Periodic Review panel;
- logistics for the Review.

A briefing meeting with the school/institute under review may also be arranged if the school or Panel Chair requests this.

The self-evaluation document acts as the basis for discussions between the panel and the school/institute. The panel meets with nominated academic, administrative, technical and support staff from the school/institute to discuss the self-evaluation document. This series of meetings normally takes place over one day. The panel also meets with students who should normally represent all programmes available within the school/institute. It is the school/institute's responsibility to arrange for staff and student representatives (undergraduate and postgraduate) to attend these meetings. The panel may opt to run parallel sessions with selected panel members meeting with different groups of staff/students.

An outline agenda is available for guidance, and can be downloaded from <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/periodic-review/index.html>. Specific questions are not prescribed for the panel to ask; instead the panel will base its questions on issues arising from the analysis of the school's self-evaluation document and student feedback.

Support and advice relating to all aspects of a Periodic Review are available at any stage from the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat.

6.11 Outcome

It is essential that feedback is provided quickly and in sufficient detail to support the school/institute and enable any recommendations for improvement to be implemented. Feedback is provided :

- as a written summary of the main commendations and recommendations within approximately three - five working days after the meeting;
- and a full written report.

The Secretary to the Review will write up the Panel's commendations and recommendations and, after the Chair has reviewed them, they will be sent to the School/institute and to Queen Mary Senior Executive.

The panel's conclusions and recommendations form the basis of a written report of the Periodic Review. The report is drafted by the Secretary to the panel and will, inter alia, include:

- developments since the previous QAA Subject Review/Periodic Review;
- aims and learning outcomes;
- curricula and assessment;
- quality of learning opportunities: teaching and learning, student admission and progression, and learning resources;
- the maintenance and enhancement of standards and quality;
- conclusions: commendable systems or procedures and any areas where further action has been identified as essential or advisable.

The Periodic Review panel agrees the content of the report and it is then sent to the head of school/institute for comments on factual accuracy. The report is finalised once any comments on factual accuracy are agreed by the Chair (and other panel members as necessary).

The school then considers and drafts a response. This response should take the form of a detailed and time bound action plan which gives an initial response to any issues raised and outlines how any recommendations will be addressed. The action plan should be lodged, electronically, with the Secretary to the Review three months after receipt of the final version of the Periodic Review report.

It is recommended that schools/institutes discuss the Periodic Review report and consider the implementation of the action plan within the relevant school or institute committee/s, and with partners as appropriate. School/institutes will also discuss the report and action plan with their Student-Staff Liaison Committee/s and keep students informed about action and progress in relation to issues raised by students in their discussion with the Periodic Review panel. Student concerns raised during a Periodic Review will be monitored by ARCS, in partnership with the Student Unions' Course Representative Co-ordinator. In addition, the Faculty Dean for Taught Programmes, who meets regularly with student course representatives, will also receive an update on student matters following each Periodic Review for consideration and discussion with student representatives.

The confirmed Periodic Review report and the action plan will be considered by the Vice-Principal and Executive Dean for the Faculty, Queen Mary Senior Executive and Senate. Any particular issues of concern that require support or monitoring will be the responsibility of the Vice-Principal and Executive Dean for the Faculty, who may convene a group of dedicated staff to support the School under review in taking forward action, while the Senate will take an overview of any institutional issues that might require attention

After twelve months the school/institute is required to lodge a progress report with the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat. This should include evidence that students have had the opportunity to see and discuss the report, and comment on any areas of concern they may have. The progress report will be considered by Senate, which reserves the right to request further progress reports if it deems necessary. The review report can be published or made available to individuals (both internal and external to the College) on request in accordance with HEFCE guidance.

6.12 Reviewing the process

The process of Periodic Review is subject to regular evaluation and review by the Senate.

7. Collaborative programmes

This section has been updated to incorporate the changes arising from the establishment of the new Educational Partnerships Board of Senate replacing QMSE in the approval process, and to take account of guidance from the Quality Assurance Agency in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B10: Management of collaborative arrangements. It also makes reference to the new provision for Professional Doctorate programmes.

Research Degree Programmes and Examination Board (RDPEB) is considering a new policy on collaborative PhD arrangements, and therefore the policy on split-site research degrees has been suspended pending recommendations to Senate.

7.1 Purpose

This information is aimed at academic and administrative staff who intend to develop programme proposals involving a collaboration with a UK or an overseas partner. It is intended as a summary of the key procedures leading to programme approval. Further details are provided in the QMUL Collaborative Provision Framework and Guidance Notes for Collaborative Proposals available at <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/collaborative-provision/index.html>.

The purpose of the guidance is to support the development of collaborative provision within a strategic context, assessing and managing potential risks while supporting the management of quality assurance arrangements.

The approval process for new collaborative provision has been reviewed to include new arrangements for partnership approval by the Educational Partnerships Board.

It has also been streamlined to fit with QMUL's arrangements for new programme approval. Please note that this process starts after partner approval has been granted. The Summary of the Programme Approval Process, including the collaborative programmes, can be found in Chapter four of the Quality Handbook (*Programme and Module Development*). In addition, the [Queen Mary Collaborative Provision Framework](#) has also been updated.

7.2 Scope

7.2.1 The policy covers all partnerships that lead to an award of Queen Mary University of London, or an award made jointly with another institution, or to admission to one of the QMUL's programmes with advanced standing or involving the exchange of staff or students. It also includes partnerships that facilitate admission to programmes and/or have a role in determining entry standards.

The policy does not cover:

- Joint awards with overseas institutions: QMUL does not currently enter into joint award agreements with institutions outside the UK; it can enter into dual award arrangements in such cases;
- Franchise or validation arrangements.

The policy does not include individual research collaborations which are managed by the Joint Research Management Office (JRMO) or by the Business Development Office.

QMUL does not enter into serial arrangements under any circumstances. A serial arrangement is where the partner institution delegates the responsibilities agreed with QMUL to another party through a separate arrangement.

7.2.2 Types of collaborative activities covered by the procedures

The [QAA UK Quality Code Chapter B10: Management of Collaborative Arrangements](#).

defines collaboration provision as “all learning opportunities leading or contributing to the award of academic credit or a qualification that are delivered, assessed or supported through an arrangement with one or more organisations other than the degree-awarding body.”

The procedures cover the following types of collaborative arrangements:

- General co-operation agreements;
- Articulation agreements;
- Collaborative programmes for undergraduate and taught postgraduate provision (single, joint or dual award) including Distance Learning, Placement and Work-based learning;
- Placement learning: work-based placements, internships, academic study placements (Study abroad and Exchange programmes, including Erasmus+ exchanges)
- Agency agreements;
- Visiting associate students studying at QMUL;
- Research degree programmes: **policy currently being revised**;
- Research Agreements.

In June 2014, Senate approved a framework for Professional Doctorate programmes which established a Professional Doctorates Committee (PDC) to oversee programme development. Where the proposal involves a partnership with another institution, this will also need to be approved by Educational Partnerships Board (EPB). Guidance on developing a proposal for a Professional Doctorate programme, and on programme requirements, is under development. For more information on Professional Doctorates, please contact [Mary Childs](#), Assistant Academic Registrar, Academic Standards & Quality.

Detailed definitions of the collaborative arrangements can be found in the QMUL Collaborative Framework and Guidance documents at: <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/collaborative-provision/index.html>

7.3 Associated documents

The following documents and templates can be found on the ARCS [collaborative provision webpage](#):

- Collaborative approval table and flowchart
- Due Diligence Checklist
- Risk Assessment Form
- Template for Review of Activity prior to renewing or extending agreement
- Stage 1 Partnership Proposal Form
- Stage 1 Partnership & Programme Proposal Form (taught single, joint/dual programmes)
- Stage 2 Academic Proposal Form (Articulation Agreements)
- Memoranda Templates

7.4 Principles

The following key principles will underpin all partnership activity:

- Academic reputation: Collaboration involving QMUL should be with institutions of good academic standing. Advice on the academic standing of a prospective partner is available from the International Partnerships Office for international partners and from ARCS for partners within the UK. Any new partnership should contribute to and enhance the reputation of QMUL as well as of the school/institute sponsoring it.

- Academic standards and awards: QMUL retains responsibility for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name, and is responsible for ensuring that the academic standards of its awards meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The academic standards of awards developed and delivered through partnership arrangements will be equivalent to those delivered by QMUL and will be compatible with any relevant UK benchmarking information.
- Quality assurance: QMUL's quality assurance procedures for collaborative activities follow the procedures set out in this Handbook. Specific quality assurance procedures required to support a collaborative arrangement should be set out in the agreement and should be approved at the relevant stage in the procedure.
- Assessment of risk: Prior to submitting any new collaborative proposal, an assessment of possible risks should be undertaken in respect of both the partner and the proposed activity. This should be done using the Due Diligence Checklist in all cases and in some cases the Risk Assessment Form.
- Financial sustainability: All partnership activities should be financially sustainable, and should be fully costed to give an indication of likely direct or indirect costs to the school/institute. The financial arrangements and responsibilities will be detailed in a written agreement between QMUL and the partner.
- Consistency with QMUL Strategic Plan and International Strategy: Schools/institutes are encouraged to develop international links and to undertake international collaborative work. Any agreement with an overseas partner institution should be coherent with, and support the aims set out in the QMUL [International Strategy](#). It should also be coherent with the strategic plans of the academic units concerned.
- Legal framework: The responsibilities and obligations of QMUL and the partner institutions will be set out in the Memoranda of Agreement and, for more substantial arrangements, in legally binding contracts.
- Programme management: For any partnership leading to an award, QMUL's management of the programme or module will operate in the same way as internal provision with formal approval and review through the programme and module approval and review processes:
 - Admissions: The arrangements for admission to the collaborative programme are managed in accordance with QMUL's normal recruitment and admissions policy. Any specific admissions requirements are set out in the collaborative agreement and are articulated to students as part of the admissions process.
 - Assessment: Assessment processes and procedures of partner institutions should be consistent with the QMUL's academic regulations and with the Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework. Special assessment arrangements will be specified in the Memorandum of Agreement.

7.5 Process and procedures

Approval of any new collaborative provision is in **one or two stages** depending on the nature of the proposal as illustrated in the [Collaborative Approval Table](#).

Stage 1 partnership approval: all new collaborative proposals need the strategic approval of the Educational Partnerships Board (EPB) and should pass through stage 1 for initial approval of the partnership. EPB will consider the aims and objectives of the proposed partnership, its financial implications and will assess in detail the good standing of the proposed partner institution through due diligence and risk assessment processes. Stage 1 Proposals need Faculty Executive approval prior to submission to EPB.

Stage 1 approval must be obtained prior to schools/institutes committing to ANY form of agreement with an external party (including Memoranda of Understanding), or entering into any financial obligation related to the collaboration.

Stage 2 approval: Taught Programmes Board (TPB) will consider in detail the academic case for certain types of collaboration as indicated in section 7.8. Stage 2 can only commence once stage 1 is completed. Consult the Academic Secretariat and/or the Partnership Office for further advice on this aspect.

- Further details are provided in the QMUL Collaborative Framework and Guidance documents.
- Educational Partnerships Board meeting dates and deadlines for paper submission can be found on the [EPB webpage](#).

7.6 Initial development of proposals

Initiation may come from the school/institute, QMUL or from the proposed partner. At the initial stage, a series of discussions will typically take place internally between school/institute staff, and between the school/institute and the potential partner in order to explore the possibility of any proposal. These discussions are an opportunity to ensure that the proposed partner is of an appropriate academic standing and to identify any possible risks as well as benefits.

Schools and institutes are encouraged to discuss collaborative proposals with the Academic Secretariat and the International Partnership Office (IPO) in the developmental phase.

Ideally, the development process should start at least 12 months before the first delivery of a programme. Proposers should take due consideration of the timescales and deadlines for developing a new programme of study, which can be found in Chapter 4 on Programme and Module development.

The following reference points should be used when developing the proposal:

- [UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Chapter 10: Management of collaborative arrangements](#);
- [Queen Mary Collaborative Provision Framework](#)
- [QMUL Academic Credit Framework](#);
- [QMUL Strategic Plan](#)
- [QMUL International Strategy](#)
- [School/Institute plans \(including international marketing plans\)](#)

Before any significant work is undertaken, staff should secure strategic approval from their head of school/institute. Plans to develop new partnerships should usually be identified in the context of the Planning and Accountability Review (PAR).

7.7 Stage one approval of a new partnership activity

7.7.1 Stage 1 Partnership Proposal Form

This form should be used for the following types of collaborative activities:

- Co-operation agreement (MOU);
- Articulation agreement;
- Study Abroad and Exchange programmes
- Erasmus+ Agreements

7.7.2 Stage 1 Partnership and Programme Proposal (taught joint/dual programmes) Form

This form combines the requirements for Stage 1 Partnership Proposal with Part 1 Programme Proposal and should be used for seeking approval of new taught single, joint/dual programmes to be delivered with a new external party.

7.7.3 Key points to consider

The taught joint award programme is generally the most complex form of collaborative provision. The following elements need to be taken into consideration:

- QMUL is responsible for evaluating the provision and quality assurance arrangements at the partner institution (including, inter alia, curriculum monitoring, external examining, double marking);
- Marks and academic credit achieved at the partner institution will normally contribute to the algorithm for the QMUL award. QMUL is therefore responsible for ensuring the equivalence of marks and credit that will be taken into account;
- Joint programme regulations are often required;
- The quality assurance processes to be followed will be articulated in the Memorandum of Agreement;
- The partner institution must have the authority in their degree awarding powers to award a joint degree with another university.

In the case of dual award programmes, separate degree certificates are normally issued from each institution. Further advice should be sought from the Academic Secretariat. Please note that QMUL does not currently enter into joint award initiatives with institutions outside the UK.

7.7.4 Due Diligence Checklist and Risk Assessment Form

Both Stage 1 Partnership Proposal and Stage 1 Partnership and Programme Proposal forms must be accompanied by supplementary information on the proposed partner(s) using the Due Diligence Checklist and a Risk Assessment Form where required. The purpose of 'due diligence' is to attempt to manage any risk that might arise in relation to working in collaboration with another institution.

In the case of a high risk result, schools/institutes should seek further advice from the International Office and ARCS and provide any relevant supplementary documentation to strengthen the case.

Both the Due Diligence Checklist and the Risk Assessment Form will be scrutinised by the Educational Partnerships Board who will assess if the prospective partner is of good standing and has the capacity to fulfil its designated role in the arrangement.

7.7.5 Submission of Stage 1 Proposals

The completed Stage 1 Partnership Proposal or Stage 1 Partnership and Programme Proposal forms together with the Due Diligence Check-list and Risk Assessment should be submitted to the Academic Secretariat who will scrutinise the documentation and will arrange for consideration by Educational Partnerships Board (EPB). Stage 1 Partnership and Programme Proposals need Faculty Executive approval prior to submission to EPB.

Following EPB approval, a general Memorandum of Understanding between the two partners can be drafted and sent to ARCS who will arrange for signature by the Principal.

Once a programme has passed Stage 1 Partnership and Programme approval the Educational Partnerships Board (EPB) will indicate when it can be marketed. In order to publicise a new programme the School/Institute administering the programme (through the programme proposer) should liaise directly with Marketing and Communications to ensure that all the necessary information required to market the programme is provided.

Where the proposal does not need to go through a second approval stage (normally non-award initiatives), the Memorandum of Agreement with detailed arrangements must still be prepared with advice from the Academic Secretariat and International Partnerships Office before the collaborative activity can proceed. The Agreement needs to be approved by EPB.

7.8. Stage two approval for academic programmes

7.8.1 Stage 2 academic approval

For Taught Single, Joint or Dual awards agreements the relevant Part 2 Programme proposal documentation should be submitted to the Taught Programmes Board (TPB). All the details regarding academic approval arrangements can be found on the Programme development web page, summarised in Chapter 4 of the Quality Handbook.

Once a programme has passed Part 2 approval offers to applicants cannot be made until the Memorandum of Agreement has been approved by the Educational Partnerships Board (EPB). The Academic Secretariat will arrange for consideration of the Memorandum of Agreement by EPB.

7.8.2 Stage 2 Academic Proposal Form (Articulation Agreements).

This is used to seek academic approval to establish an articulation agreement with an external partner. Prior to submitting Stage 2 proposals, plans to introduce articulation/progression agreements with new partners should be identified in the context of the Planning and Accountability Review (PAR).

- In the case of articulation agreements it is important to undertake rigorous academic scrutiny of the partners' programme because students are using advanced standing to count towards the QMUL award. Evidence of mapping the Partner's programme to the corresponding QMUL programme(s) should be submitted in a separate annex.

7.8.3 Submission of stage 2 proposals

The completed forms and a draft Memorandum of Agreement should be submitted to Academic Secretariat who will arrange for the consideration of the proposal at Taught Programmes Board (TPB):

It is recommended that the provision is approved at least 6 months in advance of the admission of students to the programme. Part 2 programme proposals need to be submitted to the **25th February 2015** meeting to meet the UCAS deadline for making offers and internal deadlines for data collection and timetabling.

7.9 Research agreements

Research agreements with external partners which might arise from strategic alliances with other universities and research organisations, both home and overseas, will follow a similar approval process. The proposal needs to be signed off by the relevant Head of School by the Faculty Dean for Research.

7.10. Agreement documents

7.10.1 Memorandum of Understanding

Typically, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be signed with the partner institution after Stage 1 approval for the development of the partnership has been granted. QMUL has a standard MOU template used to confirm the relationship between QMUL and the partner at the highest level, to provide an umbrella agreement under which more specific agreements may be developed. It is strongly recommended that an MOU is signed where there is a likelihood of a mutually beneficial form of cooperation. The MOU is not legally binding; it is a statement of intent which sets forth the general basis upon which the Parties wish to proceed. Not all collaborative arrangements are required to develop MOUs.

7.10.2 Memorandum of Agreement

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or a Contract will be signed following approval of the developed provision. This agreement will detail the respective responsibilities, roles and obligations of the parties. The expectation is that a Memorandum of Agreement is fully signed before the collaborative programme commences. The Contract is a legally binding document setting out the rights and obligations of the parties and detailing the collaborative

arrangements which will normally vary depending on the type of Agreement. Typically a Memorandum of Agreement is valid for 5 years.

The detailed Memorandum of Agreement or the Contract are considered by EPB following approval of the Part 2 Programme Proposal by Taught Programmes Board. Legal advice may be sought in relation to particular contracts.

When drafting Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Agreement, please consult the Academic Secretariat and the Partnership Office who can advise on the right agreement model to be used.

7.11 Management of collaborative programmes

All collaborative programmes are subject to QMUL's Quality Framework: programme development and approval; external examining; annual programme review; periodic review; student module evaluation; student representation and feedback through Student Staff Liaison Committees. Quality assurance arrangements specific to an agreement will be stipulated in the Memorandum of Agreement.

7.11.1 External Examiners

To ensure continuity, the same external examiner will be appointed to programmes that are delivered both internally and externally where this applies. External examiners will be appointed by QMUL where QMUL is the awarding institution. Where a programme leads to a joint award, partners must also appoint an external examiner, so the appointment must satisfy the criteria of both institutions. Where a programme leads to a dual award QMUL will appoint an external examiner(s) for the QMUL award. The partner may, or may not appoint an external examiner depending on the regulations for their award. However, it is strongly recommended that where this is the case, partners are encouraged to adopt a similar external approach to ensuring standards and that this is reflected in the Memorandum of Agreement.

7.11.2 Programme publicity

All publicity for the proposed programme should be agreed with QMUL prior to publication. In particular the use of the QMUL logo must be agreed as specified in the Memorandum of Agreement.

7.11.3 Student handbook

The student handbook will ensure that the requirements of the programme are clear to students including transparent information concerning the respective responsibilities of QMUL and the partner. Students will also have clear information about the nature of QMUL's relationship with the partner institution, and which institution is responsible for the delivery of particular learning outcomes. The complaints and appeals procedure and the responsibilities of each partner in them will be clearly delineated.

7.11.4 Student Staff Liaison Committees

ARCS compiles an annual summary of issues raised at SSLCs for Senate. The annual summary report will include a separate section looking at the minutes of collaborative programmes.

7.11.5 Review and renewal of existing Agreements

During the academic year prior to the expiry of the collaborative agreement, there will be a review of the collaborative arrangement that will lead to a decision on whether to re-approve the arrangement for a further term, or to withdraw from the provision. The Academic Secretariat will contact the QMUL Academic Lead of the collaboration to initiate the review process. ARCS will coordinate a meeting of key stakeholders to decide on the process for renewal, which will consider such things as a review of the provision, a due diligence report and a potential panel visit to the partner institution.

The academic co-ordinator of the collaborative arrangement will complete a Review of Activity/Renewal form six months before the Memorandum of Understanding and related agreements are due to expire. For articulation agreements, a new mapping of the partner's programme to the corresponding QMUL programme must be submitted to Taught Programmes Board.

The renewal request will be submitted to EPB for approval and will have to be agreed by the Faculty VP.

7.11.6 Annual Monitoring

The effective monitoring and review of collaborative arrangements are central to QMUL's assurance of the academic standards of its collaborative provision. The School/Institute/Faculty monitors the quality and standards of provision in accordance with the procedures set out in the QMUL Quality Handbook. The QMUL Senate has an institutional overview of the monitoring processes and this is delegated to Educational Partnerships Board

In order that QMUL is able to discharge its responsibilities appropriately with respect to Annual Programme Review (APR), medium and large-scale collaborative programmes - defined as programmes with twenty or more registered students - undergo programme based annual monitoring. These programmes complete a Taught Programmes Action Plan (TPAP) in line with QMUL's APR procedure, which should be updated on an on-going basis and inform discussion at an annual APR meeting. This shall be linked to the relevant school/institute TPAP. All other types of collaborative provision, including small-scale programmes, exchanges, articulations, visiting associate students, and placement learning are monitored through the schools'/institutes' TPAPs.

7.11.7 Periodic Review

The Periodic Review process encompasses small-scale collaborative provision during the review of all aspects of an academic unit. Therefore, the majority of collaborative programmes are considered within the overall provision for a given academic school/institute at QMUL. In recognition of the potential increased levels of risk to academic standards and quality, medium and large-scale collaborative programmes (as defined above) and programmes distinct from other school/institute structures will undergo a discrete programme, or group of programmes, Periodic Review process in line with the cycle of reviews (every six years).

There is provision for additional support and review if problems are highlighted through the Annual Programme Review or Periodic Review. If there is cause for concern or special review, a review 'panel' may be convened to consider areas of concern and monitor their resolution.

7.11.8 Withdrawal from collaborative arrangements

The Academic Secretariat must be notified immediately of any intention to withdraw from a collaborative arrangement, or of the receipt of a termination notice from a partner institution. Educational Partnerships Board and Senate (or delegated authorities) will be notified at this stage.

A decision to withdraw from, or not renew, a collaborative arrangement must be communicated promptly between QMUL and the partner institution, to allow sufficient time for termination arrangements to be discussed and agreed in an exit agreement. QMUL reserves the right to terminate a collaborative arrangement if it considers that there are risks to its academic standards and quality.

The exit agreement will set out the respective responsibilities of QMUL and the partner institution(s) for the period of time that will allow all eligible students to complete the collaborative programme.

Careful management of the termination process is necessary to protect the academic standards and quality of the collaborative provision during the termination period and also mitigate reputational risks to QMUL

7.11.9 Register of Collaborative Provision

The QMUL Register of Collaborative Provision is updated following the approval and signature of the written agreement. The Register of Collaborative Provision is an up-to-date and authoritative record of QMUL's collaborative partnerships, and a listing of the collaborative programmes operating through those partnerships that lead to a QMUL award.

The Register of Collaborative Provision will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Educational Partnerships Board, so that it maintains an oversight of the scale and scope of QMUL's collaborations.

7.11.10 Contacts

For information on the general collaborative approval process and partnership approval, please contact:

[Raluca Vasiliu-Mclver](#), Collaborative Provision Officer;

[Harriet Howse](#) in the International Partnership Office;

[Wiebke Leugers](#) in the International Office for Erasmus+ Exchanges;

[Mary Childs](#), Assistant Academic Registrar, Academic Standards & Quality, for Professional Doctorates.

8. Student-Staff Liaison Committees

There are no substantive changes to this chapter.

8.1 Purpose

The purpose of student-staff committees is to ensure that there is an effective channel for formal communication between students and staff in each school or institute, through which students can reflect and give feedback on their programme of study as an integral part of QMUL's systems and procedures for assuring academic standards and enhancing the student learning experience.

8.2 Scope

This procedure covers all students, part time and full time, undergraduate and postgraduate, taught and research. It does not cover non-award-bearing continuing education.

8.3 Associated documents

Associated documents can be accessed from the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat (ARCS) web page:

<http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/student-feedback/index.html>

- Agenda template
- Minutes and action plan template
- Annual end of year report template

Students can also access comprehensive information, guidance and advice about the course representative system on the Students' Union web page at <http://www.qmsu.org/coursereprs>. The Students' Union will provide newly appointed reps with a comprehensive handbook and training session at the start of the academic year.

8.4 Terms of reference

The Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) is constitutionally advisory to the Head of School/Institute or, in the case of the MBBS to the Dean (Education) and in the case of the BDS to the Head of the Institute of Dentistry.

SSLCs should have a clear remit. Senate recommends the following Terms of Reference:

To consider and discuss matters relating to:

- The content and organisation of programmes of study and any proposed changes;
- The provision of academic facilities and general School/Institute/Queen Mary facilities;
- School/Institute social activities;
- Provision for student welfare including the operation of the personal tutor system;
- Arrangements for induction and study skills provision;
- Local monitoring of academic standards through, for example, consideration of the School's Taught Programmes Action Plan (TPAP) for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, and discussion of student commentary (see: <https://webapps.is.qmul.ac.uk/apr/>), external examiners' reports, first destination statistics and results of student evaluation questionnaires;

- Initial consideration of the commendations and recommendations of Periodic Review reports, followed by regular reports on action taken in response.
- Any other matters on which the SSLC wishes to express a view.

Where detailed discussion of the teaching of a particular module takes place, some SSLCs choose to exclude the identity of the teacher concerned from the minutes.

8.5 Membership

8.5.1 Student representation

There should be a majority of student members. QMUL recommends that the minimum student representation on an SSLC should be as follows:

8.5.1.1 Non-medical

- at least one, and normally two, undergraduate students from each year; two should be the norm for any school with an intake of more than 20 undergraduates per year;
- at least one postgraduate taught student, where applicable, per programme;
- at least one postgraduate research student, where applicable;
- where there are distinct academic groupings within a school, e.g. Environmental Sciences in Geography, provision should be made to ensure that they are represented;
- Joint honours students should be represented within their host School through one of the following mechanisms:
 - A dedicated course representative for each year of every Joint Honours programme with more than 10 students enrolled;
 - One dedicated Joint Honours course representative for each year in Schools with small joint honours provision;
 - Representatives organised by subject area where there is a large amount of joint honours activity within the School (e.g. within SLLF).

Additionally, Joint Honours representatives should be invited to meetings of the SSLC in their partner School or to give their feedback via email.

8.5.1.2 School of Medicine and Dentistry

SSLCs are organised for undergraduate medicine (including intercalated programmes) and for undergraduate dentistry (including intercalated programmes). Separate SSLCs operate for postgraduate provision administered by, and located in, SMD Institutes.

- undergraduate SSLCS will have at least one, and normally two, student representatives from each year of a programme;
- postgraduate SSLCs will have at least one postgraduate taught student per programme;
- postgraduate SSLCs will have at least one postgraduate research student where

appropriate.

Institutes may also organise separate PGT and PGR SSLCs.

An SSLC can determine whether its meetings should be open to all those wishing to attend.

8.5.2 Staff membership

The Head of School / Institute or nominee should be a member, and the Senior Tutor (or equivalent) should be an ex-officio member; the membership of other staff should be a matter for each school/programme area to establish, e.g. via a staff meeting or, in some areas, via nomination by the students. Some SSLCs may agree that members of academic support services, e.g. a Library representative can attend all or specific meetings.

8.5.3 Chair of the SSLC

It is for each SSLC to determine who should chair the committee. Consideration should be given to electing a student member as co-Chair. The Students' Union can give student representatives training to enable them to fulfil this role.

8.5.4 Secretary

It is for each SSLC to determine who should act as secretary to the committee. Formal minutes and action plan are required for each SSLC meeting. The action plan should be used to record progress towards addressing issues raised. It should be circulated with the minutes at the following meeting and publicised to all students, for example through the School/Institute OLE.

8.6 Election of student members

Student members of an SSLC should be elected by the particular student constituency. Elections are organised by the Students Union; more information can be provided by the Students' Union's Education Zone Co-ordinator.

8.7 Briefing of student members

For SSLCs to be effective their role must be made known and their members must feel able to participate fully in meetings. The Head of School or delegated person should ensure that student representatives are provided with written and oral briefings; these briefings could involve participation by experienced student representatives. Details of the SSLC, including a description of the student representatives' role, should be included in locally produced student handbooks and reference should be made to the SSLC during student induction.

Training is also organised by the Students' Union; more information can be provided by the Students' Union's Education Zone Co-ordinator.

8.8 Organisation of meetings

8.8.1 Frequency and timing of meetings

SSLCs should meet at least once each semester with provision for further meetings if requested by members. Some SSLCs arrange their meetings to take place over a buffet lunch in order to encourage attendance and this practice, where possible, is commended.

Dates of meetings should be agreed by the SSLC and publicised widely in advance – normally by the Head of School and/or the Secretary to the SSLC.

8.8.2 Agendas

An agenda should be distributed by the Secretary to all members in advance of the meeting and displayed to all staff and students, e.g. via the School notice board or web pages. Agenda and minutes/action plan templates can be found on the ARCS web page:

<http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/student-feedback/index.html>

8.8.3 Canvassing student opinion

Elected student representatives should be given the opportunity to address their colleagues at the beginning or end of a teaching session, both to elicit their opinions prior to a meeting of the Committee, and to report back on the outcome.

Schools / Institutes should support student representatives to contact their student body via email. The preferred method is to set up a mailing list by year of study. This allows representatives to communicate with students whilst keeping individual email addresses confidential.

8.9 Follow-up

The Chair should submit oral and written reports of the SSLC to the school staff meeting or, in the SMD, to the appropriate Committee, so that the SSLC's recommendations can be acted upon promptly.

The minutes of SSLC meetings are not deemed to be confidential. However where sensitive or confidential information need to be recorded these specific items may be marked as confidential. In this case a non-confidential version of the minutes of the meeting should be published.

The SSLC Secretary should display minutes and the action plan of an SSLC meeting on school notice boards, on the OLE, on the School / Institute website or the minutes could be emailed to all students together with a record of the formal response to the SSLC's recommendations. Responses to issues raised by students may also be displayed on a dedicated "you said ... we did" web page. Faculty Deans for Taught Programmes will also monitor issues arising from SSLCs and their resolution, reporting back as necessary to the regular open sessions that they hold with students from their faculty.

The SSLC Secretary should send copies of SSLC minutes and action plan to the ARCS within four weeks of the meeting date, so that their overall functioning can be monitored and examples of good practice identified. Minutes should also be copied to the President of the Students' Union, or in the SMD to the President of the Students' Union.

At the end of the academic year each SSLC should produce a short annual report of its work. This should highlight the key topics discussed over the year along with the actions taken and any unresolved issues. The purpose of the report is to encourage greater reflection by the SSLC of its own effectiveness and to share good practice with the rest of Queen Mary.

The Students' Union will produce an annual report providing an overview of the issues raised by course representatives in the previous year, examples of good practice, and track trends. This will be considered at the University and Faculty advisory groups with responsibility for Teaching, Learning and the student experience. Following this, ARCS in conjunction with the Students' Union, will produce a summary report of key issues and examples of good practice for consideration at Senate.

9. Student module evaluation scheme

There are no substantive changes to this chapter.

9.1 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all students are invited to give feedback on every module they take at Queen Mary via an anonymous module evaluation questionnaire, and that such feedback is collated and used systematically to assure and enhance the quality of QMUL's taught provision.

The questionnaire will cover teaching and assessment, academic support, resource allocation and module organisation, with students also encouraged to give feedback on how the module could be improved.

9.2 Scope

It is intended that this procedure covers all Queen Mary undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, including collaborative or distance learning programmes. It does not cover research degrees or non-award bearing continuing education.

9.3 Process

Heads of School/Institute should ensure that anonymous module evaluation takes place for all taught provision within their school/institute, and that it is operated in a consistent and transparent way. Heads should nominate a specific member of academic staff to co-ordinate and administer the process, for example the Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee, or of the Student Staff Liaison Committee.

9.4 The Scheme

In 2011 -12 Queen Mary rolled out a new, centrally administered system for anonymous module evaluation for undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules. QMUL, to ensure high completion rates, decided to use EvaSys Education (an internet based survey management system) and operate a paper questionnaire that is optically read for fast data collection and processing. The questionnaire also provides space for students to give comments. Reports are generated for schools/institutes after processing so that results and free-text responses can be evaluated.

The QMUL questionnaire comprises seven core statements, marked on a five-point Likert scale and three open text questions, which all students are asked to answer. Schools/institutes can request additional statement/questions to be included as long as the questionnaire does not exceed two A4 sides.

QMUL has adopted to use a five-point Likert scale because it is used in the NSS, and hence will give some limited comparison with NSS data. Also, staff should have some experience in gauging the meaning of scores on a five point scale.

9.4.1 Administering paper questionnaires

The forms for module evaluation should be administered to students in weeks 6-12 of the semester or other agreed times where modules run outside the two standard semesters.

Students should be allowed reasonable time to complete questionnaires at the end of timetabled sessions. Staff teaching modules should give students information about the value of the exercise, give guidance on how to correctly complete the form and reassure students that the process is anonymous. Staff should then leave and a student volunteer or volunteers should give a questionnaire to everyone in the class and collect them at the end. The student volunteer(s) should then seal the questionnaires in an envelope provided by the School for the purpose and then deliver them immediately to the school/institute office.

9.4.2 Online module evaluation

While a paper-based system of module evaluation is preferred because of its good return rates, the nature of some provision means that it may need to be operated using online surveys. This may include collaborative provision, distance learning modules, and postgraduate project and dissertation modules. The Queen Mary scheme offers an online survey system to Schools/Institutes with this kind of provision.

There may be good reasons why not all schools/institutes/disciplines can or should use the centrally-administered QMUL evaluation scheme, for example some schools have their own on-line systems with good return rates. Where such a case can be made and data reliably collected, then the school or institute should provide data for the seven core Queen Mary evaluation questions and in a comparable format to that collected through the QMUL scheme, i.e. using the 5 point Likert scale. Only schools and institutes who are able to provide data in this form will be able to opt out of the central system.

Schools/institutes/disciplines using online module evaluation should ensure that their systems guarantee genuine anonymity for respondents. If students are asked to take the survey in a timetabled session then staff teaching the session should give students information about the value of the exercise, give guidance on how to log on to the questionnaire and should reassure students that the process is anonymous, before leaving so that students can complete the survey confidentially.

9.5 Informal feedback questionnaires

Several schools/institutes/disciplines run mid-semester informal module evaluation questionnaires in order that the current cohort can benefit from immediate action taken in response. Schools and institutes are encouraged to continue this good practice.

9.6 Evaluation and consideration of the data

Module evaluation data should be made widely available to students in each school/institute/discipline. Summaries of module evaluation data should be made available on websites and discussed with students at Student-Staff Liaison Committees. Verbatim free-text comments should not be shared with students unless the school / institute has 'cleaned' the comments to remove any remarks that could identify any individual, whether student or staff. Schools and Institutes should ensure that students are kept informed of the actions taken and outcomes achieved where problematic issues have been identified. When feeding back to students it is good practice to use the approach of 'you said we did'.

After the SSLC has considered it, module evaluation data should then be seen by Teaching and Learning Committees, together with any comments from the SSLC. Any issues identified as needing more consideration should be forwarded to School/Institute Boards for further consideration.

Within faculties the Dean for Taught Programmes (or equivalent) is responsible for monitoring module evaluation and its operation across all schools/institutes, and will also consider summary data for all module evaluation within the faculty. For the purposes of monitoring across the institution, summary data will be provided in the School's annual programme review, and will be considered in the annual summary report on the annual programme review process written by the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat.

Further information can be found in the guidelines for the use of module data document on the ARCS web site:

<http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/quality/student-feedback/student-module-evaluation/index.html>