Royal Holloway Academic Quality and Policy Manual
Chapter 1: University Quality Assurance and Regulatory Framework
1. Table of Contents

1. Quality Assurance framework............................................................................................................. 3
2. External Framework ................................................................................................................................. 4
3. Academic Regulatory Framework .......................................................................................................... 5
4. Useful Links .......................................................................................................................................... 5
5. Appendix: External and Internal Quality Mechanisms ........................................................................ 6
1. Quality Assurance framework

The University's quality assurance framework is administered by the Academic Quality and Policy Office. The Educational Development team provides guidance on curriculum development and learning technology, and offers professional development activities for academic staff.

Royal Holloway's methods for guaranteeing the standards of its awards stem from three principles:

- external comparability within the University of London, and as measured against standards in similar UK universities and external benchmarks;
- internal consistency in the implementation of best practice and process;
- departmental and individual ownership with accountability to the University and overall responsibility at institutional level.

We seek consistency with external standards through:

- recourse to the professional expertise of our own staff as participants in the national and international development of their discipline and pedagogical developments in general;
- involvement of external specialists in validation and review activities, and the membership and duties of external examiners on boards of examiners;
- reflection on the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines (2015) and where relevant through accreditation by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;
- reflection on external review reports.

The Academic Board has overall responsibility for academic standards and the quality of educational provision but delegates the operation of some quality assurance mechanisms to the School Education Committees and the Assessment and Quality Assurance and Standards Committee. Each School is assisted by a Senior Academic Quality Manager, who provides a bank of expertise in relation to the regulatory framework of the University, and knowledge, gathered both formally and informally, of its application in specific departments.

We wish to embed quality within our routine processes and gain ownership at all levels of the institution. This means that we have a system premised on collegiality and trust. University systems are proactive at particular times where there is a greater likelihood of risk, such as with the validation of new courses. Otherwise, a rigorous collection and close monitoring of quantitative and qualitative information, alongside a periodic audit approach, is used to highlight any exceptions that require closer scrutiny. The overall aims of the quality assurance framework are:

- to provide transparent mechanisms through which the academic community can exercise collective responsibility for standards and the quality of education;
- to nurture an institutional culture of reflection, informed by reliable evidence and external reference points and expertise, in which best practice is shared with a view to enhancement;
- to promote equity for students in the consistency of practice across the University, by ensuring implementation of institutional policy and strategy.

The review and enhancement of provision in academic departments is a continual process carried out through activities such as peer observation of teaching and engagement with student feedback. The Annual Review provides an opportunity to consolidate and reflect upon the overall success of these
activities at a strategic point, when information on student progress and achievement becomes available.

2. External Framework

The Office for Students (OfS) regulates providers by requiring them to apply for inclusion on a register. Registration is contingent upon the provider satisfying a set of initial conditions of registration and being subject to a risk assessment to determine that they continue to satisfy these conditions. Pertinent to quality assurance are the conditions listed below that have been set for Section B: Quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students.

B1: The provider must ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high quality academic experience. A high quality academic experience includes but is not limited to ensuring that each higher education course:

- is up-to-date;
- provides educational challenge;
- is coherent;
- is effectively delivered; and
- requires students to develop relevant skills.

B2: The provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure:

- students registered on a higher education course receive resources and support to ensure:
  a. a high quality academic experience for those students; and
  b. those students succeeding in and beyond higher education;

and effective engagement with students to ensure:

- a. a high quality academic experience for those students; and
- b. those students succeed in and beyond higher education.

B3: The provider must deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers and/or enable further study.

B4: The provider must ensure that:

- students are assessed effectively;
- each assessment is valid and reliable;
- academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible;
- academic regulations are designed to ensure effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner that appropriately reflects the level and content of the course; and
- relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously.

B5: The provider must ensure that, in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, the provider (whether or not the provider is the awarding body):

- any standards set appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards; and
• awards are only granted to students whose knowledge and skills appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards.

B6: The provider must participate in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF).

As mentioned above the University in assuring the quality of its provision reflects on the expectations in relation to quality and standards as set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Assurance Agency), the European Standards and Guidelines and also by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies. The latter ensure that graduates meet relevant professional and sector requirements. A number of Royal Holloway courses have applied for and have been granted such accreditation.

However, there exists a number of other external bodies, which, though not having quality assurance responsibility, nevertheless form part of the external framework within which Higher Education provision is delivered and impact on the quality and standards of this provision. Cf. Appendix: External and Internal Quality Mechanisms.

• Office of the Independent Adjudicator for students in Higher Education (OIA), which considers student complaints and appeals about their academic and non-academic experience once the internal appeals processes of an institution have been exhausted;
• The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), which in March 2015 published consumer law advice for Higher Education Institutions to help them understand their responsibilities under consumer protection law with particular reference to the information provided to undergraduate students about courses of study and associated costs.

3. Academic Regulatory Framework

The Academic Regulatory framework which governs the awards made in the name of awards of the University of London, and those of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College is set out in the University’s academic regulations: https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/our-college-regulations/attendance-and-academic-regulations.aspx.

These are supplemented by a number of academic policies.

4. Useful Links

QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY

UK Quality Code for Higher Education

• Subject Benchmark statements

EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

COMPETITIONS AND MARKETS AUTHORITY

OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR
5. Appendix: External and Internal Quality Mechanisms
Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory bodies (PSRBs)
set rigorous standards for, and regulate standards of entry into particular professions so provide external confirmation of the quality and standard of provision. PSRBs may require revalidation of parts of the course as a condition of accreditation.

UK Quality Code
Revised code is based on 3 elements: Expectations; Practice (Core and Common) and Advice & Guidance.

Office for Students (OfS)
Regulates providers. Sets conditions of registration.

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)
Sets guidance on quality of published information for students on their courses of study.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)
Considers student appeals and complaints about provision once internal procedures have been exhausted. Outcomes of appeals/complaints may result in changes to processes and academic support.

(Re-)Validation
Of new courses and amendments to existing courses in line with requirements of UK Quality Code.

EXTERNAL INPUT AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL - EE REPORTS OR ON VALIDATION PANELS
STUDENT INPUT AT DEPT LEVEL THROUGH SSC OR DEPT. TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEES AND SCHOOL EDUCATION COMMITTEES

Academic Provision
Informed by the University Teaching and Learning Strategy and Teaching expectations.
Awards made in line with University academic regulations.

Enhancement activities

Teaching staff support
- Teaching Fellowship Scheme
- HEA Talent Scheme
- Training to all of those new to teaching
- University Teaching Prizes for innovative teaching practice
- Teaching Initiative Fund to support innovative practice
- Teaching related indicators in progression/promotion criteria
- TALIG
- Briefing sessions

Annual Review
Of UG, PGT, and PGR provision.
EXTERNAL INPUT VIA EE REPORT
STUDENT INPUT FROM:
+ MODULE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES
+ NSS, PRES, PTES
+ SEC
+ Student Voice Report

Periodic Departmental Review
Review of academic provision in a department may be held as a development activity to support the enhancement of provision if concerns are raised. EXTERNAL DISCIPLINE SPECIALISTS ON PANEL (MIN. 2)
STUDENT INPUT FROM:
+ ANNUAL REVIEW MECHANISMS AS ABOVE
+ MEETINGS WITH PANEL
+ FOCUS GROUPS
+ STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ON PANEL

Key
- External Regulatory bodies
- Internal Quality Assurance Processes
- Red = External Input
- Gold = Student Voice