

UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON

ACADEMIC BOARD

QAA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW ACTION PLAN – annual update 2014

The University's Institutional Review report was published on 21st June 2013.

In response to the recommendations an action plan was developed in partnership with student representatives (the Lead Student Reviewer and Vice President Academic Affairs), and approved by the Vice Chancellor as Chair of the Academic Board and published on the University website in September 2013.

In accordance with the requirements of the IRENI process, the University provides an annual update until all the actions are completed. This is the first annual update and, in line with the time frame provided, all recommendations have now been addressed.

The completed action plan has been reviewed by the Students' Union and approved by the Vice-Chancellor as Chair of the Academic Board.

Recommendation	Action progress
Academic Standards	
Rec 1	<p>Within one year of the publication of this report the University strengthen institutional-level oversight of academic standards through the consistent application of institutional policy in faculties and schools (paragraph 1.3.1).</p> <p>The Academic Board approved a new Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework (including academic governance structure) for the University from 1 August 2014. This development aims to meet the needs of the University in light of the new organisational structure and respond to a common theme in a number of the QAA Institutional Review recommendations around consistent and systematic implementation of University policy.</p> <p>One of the aims of the revised QAE framework is to '<i>achieve clarity of authority and institutional oversight of quality and standards through more consistent implementation of policies and process</i>'.</p> <p>The Framework includes the establishment of a new Sub-committee for Assessment which will have oversight of the implementation of assessment policy and academic regulations. It will also have oversight of training and development of academic and administrative staff in these areas.</p> <p>To support the responsibility of Schools to implement University policy, each School will establish a School Curriculum and Assessment Committee and number of University and School level academic and professional service roles with responsibility for the QAE framework will be developed.</p> <p>Action completed.</p> <p>However, this is a major area of work for which new structures and roles are being established and will continue to be overseen by the Academic Standards Committee and the Academic Board.</p>
Rec 2	<p>Within one year of the publication of this report the University introduce and systematically</p> <p>The University's new Policy for Managing the Recognition of Prior Learning was approved by Academic Board in June 2014. The Policy has been informed by the revised chapter B6 of the QAA Quality Code. The new policy includes:</p>

Recommendation		Action progress
	<p>implement at institutional level a policy for the accreditation of all prior learning and experience in such a way as to secure the credit value of all higher education awards (paragraph 1.4.2).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarification on the processes where credit is awarded through the recognition of prior learning, including stages, roles and responsibilities; • a standard University RPL application form and assessment/authorisation form; • regulations to secure the credit value of direct entry and top-up Bachelor (Hons) awards in line with the University's <i>Common Academic Framework</i>. <p>The implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Subcommittee for Assessment and Academic Standards Committee during 2014-15.</p> <p>Action completed</p>
<p>Rec 3</p>	<p>Within one year of the publication of this report the University take steps to ensure that its approval and monitoring procedures reflect the risks inherent in different forms of collaborative activity (paragraph 1.4.4).</p>	<p>Revised processes and committee structures for partner approval and review were approved by the Academic Board in June 2014 for implementation from September 2014.</p> <p>The proposals sought to address the recommendation in respect of institutional-level oversight of provision delivered in partnership, the requirements of the revised chapter B10 of the QAA Quality Code, and the effects of University reorganisation on the current structures. APC would report to the Academic Board and be responsible for the approval and review of all academic partnership activities and have a role in the academic health process (although all annual monitoring reports would go to ASC). APC would also report 'side-ways' to PPG and to ASC on areas of work relating to the oversight of academic standards and quality assurance. New terms of reference for APC were approved by Academic Board in June with membership to include University staff only and with all Schools represented.</p> <p>Action completed</p>
<p>Rec 4</p>	<p>Within one year of the publication of this report the University strengthen institutional-level procedures to ensure that it takes a consistent approach to periodic course review and to course and module modifications (paragraph 1.4.8).</p>	<p>The Academic Standards Committee approved revised policies for periodic review and changes to courses in February 2014 which incorporates the following points and address the recommendations to strengthen institution level procedures and consistency in periodic review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All types of course changes are now covered in the guidance with clarification as to whether changes are major or minor, who determines the type of change and the authority for approval of changes; • Periodic review panels now have the authority to recommend revalidation or withdrawal of a course. Courses are no longer in continuous approval; <p>In addition to these changes, ASC approved the piloting of a new process for periodic review which includes a greater emphasis on curriculum development, a further distinction between assurance of standards and enhancement, and a move to e-scrutiny for elements of the review.</p> <p>Action completed</p>

Recommendation		Action progress
Quality of Student Learning Opportunities		
Rec 5	By the start of the academic year 2013-2014 the University require all postgraduate research students with teaching responsibilities to be appropriately trained prior to commencing their duties (paragraph 2.10.3).	<p>In line with national good practice the University has introduced a requirement that PGR students complete appropriate preparatory training for undertaking teaching responsibilities.</p> <p>Since September 2013, all PGR students that are engaged in teaching activity and had not previously attended an equivalent elsewhere, have attended the 2 day or half-day teaching courses provided by the Centre for Learning and Teaching. The requirement for PGR students to undertake these workshops in advance of teaching has been formalised in the Brighton <i>Code of Practice for Research Degrees</i>, with the sessions now forming an element of the wider University Researcher Development Programme.</p> <p>Action completed</p>
Rec 6	By the start of the academic year 2013-2014 the University assure itself in advance that all partner institution staff teaching on courses leading to its awards are appropriately qualified for their role (paragraph 2.11.1).	<p>All CVs of staff teaching on UoB awards were reviewed by a sub-committee of ASC prior to the start of the 2013-14 academic year.</p> <p>A policy was developed during 2013-14 which was approved by ASC at its May 2014 meeting. This policy sets normal minimum standards for teaching and subject qualifications for staff teaching on Brighton-validated programmes at partner institutions, and sets out approval processes for new staff appointments by partners. New appointments are approved either by the Head of the School responsible for the oversight of quality and standards for that partner, or (for partner further education colleges) by a sub-committee of Academic Partnership Committee. Staffing and staff development will continue to be reviewed at programme validation, review and during partner review.</p> <p>Action completed</p>
Information about Higher Education		
Rec 7	By the start of the academic year 2013-2014 the University strengthen its oversight of partner institutions' published information to ensure its accuracy, currency and comprehensiveness (paragraph 3.2).	<p>A review was completed by the University's Marketing and Communications Office (MCO) and where information was found to be variable relevant partners contacted. An audit will be undertaken every 3-6 months by MCO.</p> <p>Action completed</p>

Affirmations		Action progress	Responsibility
Quality of Student Learning Opportunities			
Affir1	Agreeing and implementing standard module and course evaluation forms for all undergraduate students (paragraph 2.3.1).	The Student Engagement in Quality Policy (SEQP), developed in partnership with the SU, was approved by Academic Board in December 2013. The policy includes the implementation of a standard University wide module and course survey for which project funding is being sought.	

Affirmations		Action progress	Responsibility
Affir2	Improving the completion rate of postgraduate research students (paragraph 2.10.1).	<p>The Doctoral College Strategic Planning Review Report was received by Academic Board in December 2013. The report made a number of recommendations that addressed a variety of strategic and operational issues. Future key performance indicators would be developed, informed by the University's research strategy, based around student completion rates, applications and supervisor training and support.</p> <p>The report considered PGR training for learning and teaching and concluded that all research students who engage in teaching should be equipped to do so through a formal teaching qualification. It was recommended that all research students engaged in teaching obtain a formal qualification, delivered by the CLT, with completion monitored by the relevant employing academic School.</p> <p>The review report also recommended the development of an integrated framework for research degrees. The Brighton Doctoral Framework was approved by the Academic Board in June 2014. The framework provides an integrated taught and research model, designed to enhance completion rates by addressing in the first year any research training requirements essential to the successful and timely completion of the doctorate. While being a 4 year programme in maximum, swifter completion is possible depending on the previous experience, academic profile and progression of candidates.</p>	
Affir3	Increasing student engagement with the student charter (paragraph 2.14).	<p>A review of the Student Charter and the Student Handbook was considered at the Student Experience Committee in January 2014 with recommendations for a change in emphasis in both documents.</p> <p>An update on developments will be provided to the Academic Standards Committee in the autumn 2014 which will allow time for further consultation before a final draft is completed for the Academic Board in December 2014.</p>	
Enhancement of Student Learning Opportunities			
Affir 4	Embedding enhancement in quality assurance processes, particularly annual health checks and periodic review, and towards taking a more systematic approach to disseminating good practice (paragraph 4.1).	<p>The University is introducing a revised Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Framework which aims to enable the development, delivery and enhancement of the University's taught provision through more streamlined, responsive and efficient processes.</p> <p>A revised Periodic Review process will be introduced which seeks to provide a structured opportunity to identify and disseminate enhancement and good practice in courses.</p> <p>The Academic Health process will be reviewed as agreed by ASC in February 2014 and will re-consider the aim the process at module, course and School level. The review will consider the development of a template for module, course and School reports to ensure a consistent approach and support the dissemination of good practice.</p>	