University of Bath Institutional Review Action Plan – progress report October 2014

This action plan addresses the recommendations and affirmations made by the QAA Institutional Review Team following its Review of the University in May 2013. It also demonstrates how the University plans to capitalise on existing good practice highlighted by the Review Team in its report.

The full report is available to download at: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/Reports/Pages/IRENI_University_of_Bath_May_2013.aspx

**Abbreviations**

CSSU – Council/Senate/Students Union Committee  
DLTQC – Department Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee  
EDC – Equality and Diversity Committee  
EDN – Equality and Diversity Network  
FLTQC – Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee  
LAA – Link Academic Advisor  
PPC – Programme and Partner Committee  
SSLC – Staff / Student Liaison Committee  
ULTQC – University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS (to be fulfilled by July 2014)</th>
<th>ACTION AGREED OCTOBER 2013</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
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| 1.1 | To review the procedures for the induction of external examiners (paragraph 1.8). | By July 2014 to ensure consistency in the induction of external examiners, the University will:  
- develop and implement a central induction which all new external examiners will be invited to attend;  
- review current department induction arrangements and develop guidelines to support department induction;  
- revise the University’s Quality Assurance Code of Practice (QA12 External Examining (taught provision) to reflect the new induction arrangements.  
The effectiveness of induction arrangements are monitored through individual External Examiners’ reports and the summary of External Examiners’ reports presented annually to University Learning. | Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office | Taking into consideration the small number of External Examiners appointed each year and the difficulties of organising a central induction at a time to suit the majority it was decided that web-based support would have the greatest impact and make most effective use of existing resources. Web pages to support the induction and ongoing appointment of External Examiners have therefore been developed and were published in 2013/14. QA12 External Examining para 5.10 refers to these web pages. Department arrangements for the induction of External Examiners have been reviewed and guidance issued to support department induction. |
To strengthen the University’s oversight of the arrangements for sharing external examiners’ reports with students (paragraph 1.10).

By July 2014, to strengthen its oversight of the arrangements for sharing external examiners’ reports with students the University will:

- develop a central site on its VLE (overseen by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office), to which all staff and students will have access, where all external examiner reports and their responses will be posted;
- request that department SSLCs discuss external examiners’ reports and their responses at the same time as reviewing programme annual monitoring reports. The effectiveness of this discussion is to be considered as part of SSLC annual reports;
- revise its Quality Assurance Code of Practice (statement QA12 External Examining) to reflect these requirements.

This recommendation will also be taken into consideration in the Review of Representation to be conducted in 2013/14.
To ensure greater consistency in the involvement of the Learning Partnerships Office and link advisers in collaborative partner Staff/Student Liaison Committees (paragraph 2.15).

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<th>By July 2014, the University will:</th>
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<td>• update its policy (QA48 Staff / Student Liaison Committees) to include an expectation that Link Academic Advisors are members of partner college Staff Student Liaison Committees and that they attend, physically or by video conference, a minimum number of partner college SSLC meetings each year;</td>
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<td>• ensure that the Learning Partnerships Office continues its current practice of a) regularly reviewing all partner college SSLC minutes at its meetings with the respective partners and b) submitting partner college SSLC minutes for scrutiny by Department and Faculty/School Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees.</td>
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Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office

QA48 Annex A Operation of Staff / Student Liaison Committees sets out the requirement for Link Academic Advisors (LAAs) to be in attendance at SSLCs for franchised programmes delivered at partner colleges. A new role descriptor for the LAAs was issued at the beginning of 2013/14 which sets out the expectation that LAAs should attend (either in person or by Skype) a minimum of two SSLC meetings per year. Learning Partnerships Officers attend at least one SSLC per academic year usually when the LAA is not present.

All LAAs are part of their own DLTQC and comment on SSLC and other information along with the Programme and Partner Co-ordinators.

As before, all SSLC minutes are submitted to DLTQC, Faculty LTQC and Board of Studies for every programme. They are also formally discussed at the bi-annual Programme and Partner Committee (PPC) meetings where SSLCs are a standing item.

Programme and Partner Co-ordinators Chair these formally constituted meetings and check that all actions are completed in preparation for the submission of the SSLC annual report at the end of the year. All programmes within the institution are represented at the meetings in order to share good practice and allow senior management development and strategy for student engagement and also oversees engagement with the QAA’s HE Quality Code.
at the college to consider any institutional problems and report back to the University.
All PPC meeting minutes are submitted to committee.

**AFFIRMATIONS**

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<th>2</th>
<th>AFFIRMATIONS</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>The expansion in the utilisation of e-learning technologies, including the virtual learning environment (paragraph 2.9).</td>
<td>The University’s Internal Audit is currently reviewing the uptake of learning technologies across the University. Following this audit University Learning Teaching and Quality Committee will review its strategy and policy relating to the use of learning technologies and the VLE.</td>
<td>Internal Audit ULTQC Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office</td>
<td>The Internal Audit has highlighted a number of issues relating to the greater embedding of the use of learning technologies across the University. Strategic issues identified are being addressed via the Education Strategy operational plan. Two projects relating to the development of teaching and to the development of virtual learning spaces set the strategic direction for the next few years. ULTQC and the relevant project boards will receive updates and oversee developments on each of the projects. Monthly e-Learning Team meetings have expanded to include all staff across the University with a substantial e-learning remit to promote knowledge sharing and ensure greater co-ordination of developments across the University. A number of developmental activities have taken place since IR to ensure that the e-Learning Team are ready to deliver the type of support which is required in order to progress with the delivery of the Education Strategy.</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>The commitment to continue to improve campus accessibility for all students (paragraph 2.28).</td>
<td>The University is committed to continuing to improve campus accessibility and has the following measures in place to ensure the on-</td>
<td>Estates Equality and Diversity</td>
<td>The problem-reporting mechanism (gold button) was fully implemented in December 2013; its use to date was</td>
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going enhancement of this area of its provision:

- A problem-reporting mechanism will be open to all students with access needs by December 2013 to enable appropriate action to be taken promptly by Estates and reported back to the student. Monitoring data will be provided to the Disability Requirement Group and annually to the Equality and Diversity Committee.

- Meetings of the Disability Requirement Group, which explores access issues and recommends action, take place regularly. Its activities are reported on an annual basis to Equality and Diversity Committee via the Equality and Diversity Network to ensure maximum awareness and departmental and student input.

- An Access Audit is carried out approximately every five years.

| GOOD PRACTICE |
| GOOD PRACTICE IDENTIFIED IN THE REPORT | ACTION PROPOSED OCTOBER 2013 | RESPONSIBILITY | OCTOBER 2014 UPDATE ON ACTION TAKEN |
| 3 | The promotion of student engagement and the University's willingness to listen and respond to student views (paragraph 2.14) | Student engagement is a core principle in the University's management of quality. To demonstrate its continued commitment to the student voice, the University has scheduled a review of student representation in 2013/14. | Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office | A review of student representation and engagement was conducted in 2013/14, reporting to ULTQC in March 2014. This has resulted in the establishment of a new subcommittee responsible to University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee for matters relating to the future development and strategy for student engagement. QA48 Staff/Student Liaison Committees has been revised and retitled to encompass University policy on student engagement with a separate annex detailing the operation of Staff / Student Liaison Committees. Institutional KPIs have |
| 3.2 | The institution-wide commitment to placement provision and support (paragraph 2.44) | The University's continued commitment to placement provision and support is assured through its Careers and Employability Subcommittee (CES). CES reviews reports on placement activity in departments annually to assure and enhance its provision in this area. | Careers and Employability Subcommittee | A routine Internal Audit of placements took place in 2013/14. Following feedback from staff and students, the Personal Objectives and Learning Outcomes forms which undergraduate students on placement are expected to complete, have been updated. A central university placement handbook has been produced combining the SU placement handbook and the generic aspects of the department handbooks. |
| 3.3 | The systematic provision of accessible, reliable and up to date information for students, staff and the public (paragraph 3.1). | The Public Information Subcommittee is responsible (to University Learning Teaching and Quality Committee) for overseeing the University's information provision. Now in its second year, this committee will continue to enhance the University's provision in this area. | Public Information Subcommittee | The Public Information Subcommittee has considered a range of business during the year including use of Moodle for information provision, a review of programme handbooks, information for postgraduate students. The review of programme handbooks was reported to ULTQC in July 2014. Some recommendations from the review will be implemented in 2014/15. Some recommendations require further research to be conducted in 2014/15 prior to implementation in 2015/16. |
| 3.4 | The University's Quality Assurance Code of Practice as a living document which is well established, maintained under active review and widely used across the institution (paragraph 3.5). | The Quality Assurance Code of Practice is reviewed and updated annually according to a schedule agreed by University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee. | University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee | In 2013/14 major reviews took place of QA48 Staff / Student Liaison Committees, QA20 Collaborative Provision and QA37 Student Exchanges. Revisions to these statements, plus minor changes to other statements, were agreed at ULTQC in July 2014. Proposed development of the QA Code of Practice during 2014/15 will be agreed at ULTQC in September 2014. |

Professor Dame Glynis Breakwell  
Vice-Chancellor

Date 23 9 14