Quality Assurance Code of Practice

Student Engagement with Quality Assurance and Enhancement

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1. This QA statement sets out the principles on which the partnership between the Students’ Union¹ and the University jointly supports, facilitates and encourages student engagement in all aspects of quality enhancement and assurance to further improve the student learning experience.

1.2. All students registered for a programme of study leading to an award of the University of Bath including visiting students have the opportunity to engage in the quality enhancement and assurance of their programme of study including the opportunity to have their views represented by a Students’ Union, and either to stand for election as, or to perform the role of, a student representative at any level of the institution.

1.3. The structures underpinning student engagement in all aspects of quality enhancement and assurance may be varied for joint, licensed and validated programmes of study under the terms of an Institutional Agreement where a programme of study is delivered as a collaborative initiative with a partner institution.

1.4. The structures underpinning student engagement in all aspects of quality enhancement and assurance may be varied following consultation with LTEO for distance learning programmes of study and / or programmes of study delivered on a part-time basis.

1.5. The University and Students’ Union strongly supports student engagement with their whole university education experience but this statement refers to student engagement with quality enhancement and quality assurance of the learning and research experience.

1.6. Annex A contains full operational details for Staff Student Liaison Committees.

1.7. This QA statement should be read in conjunction with:

- University / Student Partnership Statement (U/SPS); http://www.bath.ac.uk/quality/documents/University-Student_Partnership_Statement.pdf
- University Ordinance 26 on Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs); http://www.bath.ac.uk/ordinances

¹ Students studying on licensed and validated programmes are not members of the University of Bath Students’ Union, therefore references to ‘Students’ Union’ in this QA Code of Practice statement refer to the Students’ Union of the partner organisation when the programme concerned is licensed or validated by the University of Bath.
1.8. Student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement of the student learning and research experience is embedded in across the QA statements but notably in:

- QA3 Approval of New Programmes of Study
- QA4 Amendments to Programmes of Study and Units and Approval of New Units
- QA7 Research Degrees (Section 18 Student Feedback and Liaison);
- QA13 Degree Scheme Reviews
- QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback (Section 11.1 Departmental Policies);
- QA20 Collaborative Provision
- QA33 Personal Tutoring
- QA51 Annual Monitoring of Units and Programmes;
- QA54 Good Practice Discussions

2. Principles and Overview

2.1. The University’s Education Strategy 2013/14 – 2015/16 outlines how the University and Students’ Union work together to deliver “Excellence in Education” for all students:

“The University is seeking to develop well rounded graduates who take responsibility for their own learning, and are supported in doing so; to enable students to identify and lead on changes and enhancements to their student experience; and to provide a wide range of opportunities to enable them to play an active role in the university and wider communities.” Education Strategy 2013/14 – 2015/16

2.2. A key principle underpinning the University’s approach to the improvement of the student learning experience, which is articulated as one of the five core elements in the quality management strategy, is the longstanding joint commitment, and culture of working in partnership, to listen to and act on the informed student voice. The informed student voice is heard and acted upon at all levels within the University both within its formal structures and through ongoing informal dialogue and communications between staff and students.

2.3. The University encourages students to take individual and collective responsibility for their learning and to participate fully in the life of the University. The University provides various forums including formal committee structures for dialogue between staff and students in the interests of mutual understanding, problem-solving and the enhancement of provision. The University and the Students’ Union encourages students to engage constructively with staff to identify aspects of good practice and also to identify those areas where there is scope for improvement, with the assurance that they will not be penalised for so doing.
3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. **The Vice-Chancellor and the Students’ Union** through their constructive partnership ensure that the informed student voice is engaged in the **Universities strategic decision-making**, ensuring that students are at the heart of the University’s approach.

3.2. **Deans and Associate Deans of Faculty / School** are responsible for leading and promoting student engagement in quality enhancement and assurance to all students within the Faculty / School. This includes the promotion of elections for student representative positions on committees within the Faculty / School including but not restricted to the Board of Studies, Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee, Research Students Committee, the Graduate School Committee and the Faculty-wide PGR Staff Student Liaison Committee. Deans and Associate Deans are responsible for the development of action plans in conjunction with students / SSLCs in response to student feedback including feedback received via surveys of the student cohort at the Faculty / School level.

3.3. **Heads of Department / Dean of School** are responsible for leading and promoting student engagement in quality enhancement and assurance to all students within the Department / School. This includes the promotion of elections for student representative positions on committees within the Department / School including but not restricted to the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee. Heads of Department / Dean of School are responsible for the development of action plans in conjunction with students / SSLCs in response to student feedback including feedback received via surveys of the student cohort at the Department / School level.

3.4. **Directors of Studies** are responsible for quality management on their programmes and as such their role is key to the success of student engagement with the quality assurance and enhancement of the student learning and research experience. New Directors of Studies are encouraged to attend the induction event each September and to participate in the regular meetings of the **Directors of Studies Forum**.

3.5. **The Students’ Union (The elected President, Education Officer together with the Representation and Research Manager)** is responsible for managing the online elections which provide elected students and officers to represent the student body at all levels of the institution. The Students’ Union, supported by LTEO, is responsible for the training, briefing and general support for student representatives.

3.6. **Elected student representatives** are responsible for obtaining the views and feedback from the cohort of student they represent, presenting these views to the committees and fora they attend and for feeding back outcomes of these decisions. Elected student representatives should attend meetings within both the Students’ Union and the University as outlined within their role description.

3.7. **The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office (LTEO)** is responsible for delivering training and briefings for academic and professional services staff; and for supporting the Students’ Union in delivering training and briefings for student representatives; and for providing advice to Faculties / Departments / School / LPO on good practice on Student Engagement including the operation of SSLCs.

3.8. **University Research Students Committee (URSC)** is responsible for considering an annual institutional overview of the themes reported through postgraduate research SSLCs and for recommending and monitoring appropriate action. URSC receives the results of surveys of postgraduate research students, for example the Postgraduate Research
Experience Survey and the Student Barometer, and agrees how the response to these results should be developed in conjunction with the representatives of the Students’ Union.

3.9. **University Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee (ULTQC)** is responsible for considering an annual institutional overview of the themes reported through taught programme SSLCs and for recommending and monitoring appropriate action. ULTQC receives the results of surveys of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, for example the National Student Survey, Programme Evaluation, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and the Student Barometer, and agrees how the response to these results should be developed in conjunction with the representatives of the Students’ Union.

3.10. **Student Engagement Sub-Committee of ULTQC (SES)** is responsible for the operation, future development and strategy for student engagement including in the area of quality enhancement and assurance, feedback and surveys to help fulfil the objectives within the Education Strategy.

3.11. **Student Experience Forum** is responsible for the monitoring and periodic review of the University / Student Partnership Statement.

3.12. **Council / Senate / Students’ Union Committee** is responsible for making recommendations to Council and Senate on any matters affecting the student experience and on any matters referred to it by Council, Senate or the Students’ Union.

3.13. **Equality and Diversity Committee** is responsible for monitoring the results of surveys and evaluations of the student population to ensure the student learning and research experience is similar regardless of protected characteristic as defined in the Equalities Act 2010.

4. **The relationship and nature of student engagement between the University, the Students’ Union and the student body**

4.1. The University and the Students’ Union have a longstanding commitment and culture of working in partnership to deliver the highest possible student learning and research experience through student engagement.

4.2. Student engagement is, in this context, the participation of students in quality enhancement and quality assurance processes which leads to the improvement in their student learning experience regardless of level and mode of study.

4.3. The University recognises that the Students’ Union is the representative voice of students at the University of Bath, and the University supports and resources the Students’ Union to enable their elected officers and representatives at all levels to articulate the informed student voice on matters of quality enhancement and quality assurance, alongside other matters not subject to this statement.

4.4. Elected Students’ Union Officers and student representatives are members of a range of University committees. The election processes for student members of all Statutory Bodies and Committees of the University are conducted by the Students’ Union. Students also provide feedback via unit and programme evaluation and a range of institutional, national and international surveys, and participate in a number of quality management processes, such as Degree Scheme Reviews and programme and unit approval and amendments. Student representatives and / or Students Union Officers are members of all committees of
the University where consultation and decisions are made about changes to the University’s quality management QA Code of Practice statements.

4.5. At the institutional level students are represented on Court, Council and Senate and many of their sub-committees including the Council / Senate / Students’ Union Committee, with Senate being the supreme academic authority of the University.

4.6. Faculty / School Boards of Studies, Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees, Research Studies Committees and Graduate School Committees all have elected student representatives as members.

4.7. Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees, Research Students Committees\(^2\) and Staff Student Liaison Committees, or equivalent, are one key area for student engagement within Departments/ School. Normally there must be at least one Staff Student Liaison Committee for each level of Study within a Department. \textit{Annex A contains full operational details for Staff Student Liaison Committees.}

4.8. Elected Students’ Union Officers and student representatives often also participate in a range of other formal committees, working groups, and forums beyond those listed here, and there is an agreed presumption that elected students are normally members of all University committees.

4.9. Academic Council is the Students’ Union’s regular forum for elected Academic Reps to share good practice across the institution, level of study and by Faculty / School. The University and the Students’ Union mutually benefit through the operation of Academic Council by which:

- New ideas concerning academic issues are generated;
- Academic Reps are consulted on Students’ Union and University policy developments for input across the committee system;
- Good practice between different programmes and departments are enhanced;
- Common academic and programme-related issues are identified and responded to;
- Enhancement to the student learning and research experience are developed.

4.10. Academic Executive Committee (Academic Exec) is the Students’ Unions forum which brings together the Education Officer, the Faculty / School Representatives and the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Senate Reps. Collectively Academic Exec oversees liaison with and the development of the Academic Rep system and for the formulation and delivery of a range of education campaigns across the University.

4.11. Through the University’s Teaching Development Fund individual or groups of students are encouraged to bid for projects to research, develop, enhance and share teaching and learning practices to support the student learning experience.

5. \textbf{Representative and Committee Structures}

5.1. The \textit{Students’ Union} coordinates the elections and provides briefings for student members for \textit{all Statutory Bodies and Committees} of the University which deal with quality management. At the \textit{institutional-level} these include but are not restricted to:

\footnote{School of Management only; there are no RSCs in departments.}
5.2. Student Engagement through the representative structure at the Faculty-level is through;

- Boards of Studies
- Graduate School Committees³
- Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee
- Research Students Committee

5.3. At the Department-level student representatives are members of both Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees and Staff Student Liaison Committees.

5.4. Faculties / School / Departments should work with the Students’ Union to promote and facilitate the online election process for all student members of University committees within their structures⁴.

5.5. Chairs and Secretaries of Statutory Bodies and Committees should review the scheduling of their committees to, where possible, better support the attendance of student members who have lectures and other academic commitments.

5.6. Students’ views on the effectiveness of their collective voice through SSLCs, committees and other fora are gathered on an annual basis through a range of surveys carried either by both the University and the Students’ Union. These results are monitored by the Students’ Union and the Student Engagement Sub-committee for opportunities to enhance the informed student voice, with the results disseminated to Directors of Studies, Chairs and Secretaries of committees with student members.

5.7. Departments should encourage their student Academic Reps to participate in The Bath Award http://www.bathstudent.com/bathaward as a way of recognising the achievement, and accrediting the skills, that students obtain from their elected role.

6. The Collection and Sharing of Information and Feedback

6.1. Collectively both the University and the Students’ Union proactively encourage students to engage fully in the range of quality management systems. Feedback is encouraged and gathered through evaluations and surveys, committee membership and additional ad hoc consultation events and focus groups. The partnership between the Students’ Union and the University agrees the format and content / composition of these evaluations and surveys through the Student Engagement Sub-committee.

6.2. The University participates in a range of external surveys to benchmark students opinions with similar institutions, the sector and internationally. The National Student Survey (NSS) provides feedback from final year undergraduates, with the Higher Education Academy’s Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Experience Surveys (PTES and PRES) providing an insight to the postgraduate community. Benchmarking of the academic, and

³ N/A for the School of Management
⁴ Department Reps on Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee are normally elected via Academic Reps on Staff Student Liaison Committees
wider, student experience globally is provided through participation in the i-graduate Student Barometer (SB).

6.3. Faculties / Schools / Department / LPO are provided with data from external surveys for the enhancement of the student learning experience.

6.4. Evaluation is conducted at the unit and programme level on all taught programmes.

6.5. All internal and external survey and evaluation data\textsuperscript{5} should be openly shared with the Students’ Union directly as well as through the University’s committee structure where Students’ Union Officer and student representatives are members. The development of action plans within department / school / faculties is based upon input and agreement of student representatives. The Students’ Union, supported by LTEO, provides briefing and analysis of internal and external survey and evaluation data for their members. These sources of information include:

- Unit and Programme Evaluation
- Survey data (NSS, PTES, PRES and SB)

6.6. Beyond survey and evaluation data the University shares all quality management information regarding the student learning and research experience with students and their representatives. These sources of information include:

- External Examiners’ Reports
- Degree Scheme Review Programme Evaluation Documents and Reports
- SSLC Annual Reports
- Annual Monitoring Reports

6.7. All levels of the institution have a responsibility to ‘close the feedback loop’ devising effective ways to communicate to the student cohort when and where their feedback has been acted upon, where change is not possible, and the reason why this has not happened.

6.8. The Students’ Union in conjunction with LTEO co-ordinate institutional-wide activities to highlight how in partnership the University and the Students’ Union work to enhance the student learning and research experience.

6.9. The views of the diverse student cohort provided through the results from surveys and evaluations is supported and enhanced through regular meetings between students and staff. This can range from meetings between Students’ Union Officers and members of the University Senior Management, Heads of Professional Services and other key academic and support staff to meetings between student Academic Reps and Unit Convenors, Supervisors and Directors of Studies.

7. **Training and ongoing supporting for Students and Staff**

7.1. The Students’ Union and the LTEO provide both student representatives and staff with access to training and ongoing support to equip them to fulfil their roles in student engagement with quality enhancement and assurance.

7.2. The Students’ Union, supported by the LTEO, review, update and enhance an online training course for student Academic Representatives on Moodle on an annual basis.

\textsuperscript{5} Open comments from Unit Evaluations are not normally shared with students or the Students’ Union.
7.3. The Students’ Union organises an annual Reps Conference, in partnership with the University including the LTEO, to provide training and development opportunities for Academic Reps. Departments and Faculties should encourage their student representatives to attend. The Students’ Union supports Academic Reps to attend, where appropriate, both regional and national networking and training events and conferences to support the sharing of good practice within the sector.

7.4. During the preparation for a Degree Scheme Review Directors of Studies should signpost the Academic Rep, or other student(s), chosen to sit on the Review Panel to the Students’ Union who, supported by the LTEO, can support and guide the student(s) through this key quality enhancement process. In addition to the one-to-one support and guidance through the process, the Students’ Union and LTEO provide online guidance to the student Review Panel member(s).

7.5. LTEO co-ordinates a staff-student shadowing scheme at the institutional–level to provide a unique opportunity for staff and students to understand more about the functioning of the University from the other’s perspective including in the area of quality assurance and enhancement of the student learning experience. For staff engaging in the shadowing process, the activity offers an insight into the student learning and research experience and an opportunity to better understand the issues, challenges and daily life of a student at Bath. For the student it is an opportunity to develop an insight into the management aspects of a large institution and to develop an understanding of the ‘behind the scenes’ activity in quality assurance and enhancement of the student learning experience within higher education.

7.6. LTEO provides induction and ongoing role-based support for academic staff to support their role in facilitating student engagement.

7.7. Probationary lecturers participate in The Bath Course in Enhancing Academic Practice which aims, amongst other things, to equip staff who teach to effectively support the student learning experience and student engagement.

7.8. Directors of Studies have general responsibility for quality management on their programmes and as such their role is key to the success of student engagement with the quality assurance and enhancement of the student learning and research experience. New Directors of Studies are encouraged to attend the induction event each September and to participate in the regular meetings of the Directors of Studies Forum.

7.9. Bespoke one-to-one support is also available from LTEO for academic staff to enhance their ability to facilitate, promote and develop student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement.

8. Measuring Impact and effectiveness of Student Engagement

8.1. Student engagement in quality enhancement and assurance leads both directly and indirectly to curriculum development.

8.2. SSLC Annual Reports serve as a useful summary of the impact and effectiveness of student engagement.

8.3. The Student Engagement Sub-committee monitors and reviews annually the effectiveness of student engagement with quality enhancement and assurance annually using key
performance indicators (KPIs). These KPIs are agreed by ULTQC, are generated by either the Students’ Union or LTEO, and include:

- Election participation (percentage of places filled in the first round of SSLC elections)
- Number of Academic Reps trained
- Survey of Academic Reps
- Survey response rates (NSS, PTES, PRES, SB, Unit and Programme Evaluation)
- Effectiveness of the informed student voice through an item or scale of items with various surveys including:
  - Programme Evaluation
  - National Student Survey (Additional Bank of Questions B6)
  - Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
  - Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
  - Student Barometer
- Percentage of Unit Monitoring Reports uploaded to Moodle, and the percentage of those uploaded with comments from the Unit Convenor
- Percentage of departmental action plans addressing the results of surveys of students which involved students and / or the SSLC in their development
- Number of academic staff and professional services staff who have received training and support in encouraging and supporting student engagement

8.4. These KPIs will be monitored by programme, department, and by level of study alongside those protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010 (where available) such as:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Fee Status
- Gender
- Mode of Study

8.5. The Student Engagement Sub-committee annually reviews the National Union of Students Student Rep system Benchmarking statement.

8.6. As part of the University and Students’ Union recognition of the benefit from researching good practice beyond our immediate peers and comparator group to identify models of engagement which would fit best our objectives, intended outcomes and impact.

8.7. In line with its terms of reference the Student Engagement Sub-committee is responsible for the future development and strategy for student engagement.

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<td>Students are involved in the interview process or in some cases as members of the interview panels for academic and senior professional services staff</td>
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9. Sources of Advice and Further Guidance

9.1. Further sources of advice and guidance include:
• Advice and Representation Centre, Students’ Union: 
  Academic Reps

• UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Chapter B5: Student Engagement: 
  http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/B5.pdf

• The Student Engagement Partnership: 
  http://tsep.org.uk/

• Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: 
  http://www.qaa.ac.uk/

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