Quality Assurance Code of Practice

Continuing Professional Development

1 Purpose and Scope

1.1 This statement sets out the principles and processes for the development, delivery and evaluation of credit-bearing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) units and programmes.

1.2 “Continuing professional development is the systematic maintenance and improvement of knowledge, skills and competence, and the enhancement of learning, undertaken by an individual throughout his or her working life” (Institute of Continuing Professional Development).

1.3 This statement needs to be read in the context of the QA Code of Practice as a whole and in particular with sections

- QA3 Approval of New Programmes of Study
- QA4 Amendments to Programmes of Study and Units and Approval of New Units
- QA6 Placement Learning, Work-based Learning and Study Abroad
- QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback
- QA20 Collaborative Provision
- QA45 AP(E)L

and of the New Framework for Assessment – Assessment Regulations – CPD: nfaar-cpd

2 Principles and Overview

2.1 CPD in common with all University provision is subject to the University’s Quality Assurance Code of Practice. This statement describes how those sections which are of particular relevance should be applied to CPD activity.

2.2 Credit-bearing CPD provision at the University of Bath falls into the following categories:
- existing UG and PG programmes offered on a unit by unit basis;
- stand-alone units which are developed in response to the needs of external organisations and/or specific markets.

2.3 In both cases, students may study individual units but can, at a later date, opt to use their credit to gain an award of the University (a generic or named award within the University’s framework for CPD activity, the Professional Development Scheme (PDS)). Students may also use credit obtained to seek exemption, via the APL process, from named awards that do not fall within the PDS (see section 14).

3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The CPD Support and Development Office (CPDO) is responsible for
• oversight of the operation of the University's PDS framework and any necessary amendments to it;
• quality assurance and enhancement of the PDS framework including annual monitoring and Degree Scheme Review;
• support on a University-wide basis for students and staff engaging in CPD activity;
• identification of students’ “home” department, monitoring student progress and identifying and advising on potential award registrations in consideration of a diverse student, liaising with specialist services as appropriate.

3.2 Departments are responsible for
• the learning, teaching and assessment on units delivered to CPD students;
• the student experience of those students for whom they are identified as the “home” department. All students are allocated a “home” department by the CPDO. Where students are taking single units they will be located in the relevant department. Where students are taking units from more than one department, or where a student chooses to work towards a named award, a ‘home’ department will be allocated to the student on the basis of the students’ main subject.

3.3 Boards of Studies are responsible for admission to named CPD awards, approval of learning contracts, examination, progression, processing assessment outcomes and are responsible to Senate for awards.

3.4 Department/School/Faculty and University level responsibilities for units and programmes are set down in the relevant sections of the Code of Practice; in particular approval of new units, programmes and award titles and changes to these (QA3 and QA4)
• annual monitoring of units and programmes (QA51)
• Degree Scheme Review (5-yearly review of programmes) (QA13).

4 The Professional Development Scheme (PDS)

4.1 The Professional Development Scheme ([http://www.bath.ac.uk/cpd/awards.html](http://www.bath.ac.uk/cpd/awards.html)) provides a generic framework for CPD activity. The PDS is based on the notion of a portfolio of individual units of study, each of which is stored according to level (i.e. Certificate, Intermediate, Honours or Masters).

4.2 Unlike other programmes, the students are not rolled forward automatically into the next academic year and their registration is therefore only active for the duration of the unit or units they are taking.

4.3 Although students can take stand-alone units within the PDS, the Scheme also encompasses a series of approved awards, based on the principles of credit accumulation and transfer. These are not limited by current programme or departmental boundaries and enable students to accumulate credit towards a qualification. The PDS awards are generic in nature rather than subject-specific.

4.4 Students can work towards one of the following awards, which are described in detail in the PDS Programme Specification:
• Certificate of Higher Education in Professional Development;
• Foundation Degree/Diploma of Higher Education in Professional Development;
• BA/BSc Honours Degree in Professional Development;
• Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Development;
• Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Development;
• Masters (MA/MSc) in Professional Development.
4.5 These are negotiated study routes which means that students are able to select units which are relevant to their professional needs.

4.6 The units may be already approved as part of an existing programme. Alternatively new units can be developed which are not part of existing programmes.

4.7 Students working towards one of these generic Professional Development awards are required to take a compulsory unit, *Integrated Professional Development*, located in the “home” department of the student and to agree a selection of optional units that will be recorded in a learning contract and approved by the relevant Faculty/School Board of Studies.

5 **The Integrated Professional Development Unit**

5.1 The Integrated Professional Development unit enables students to draw together and reflect on the content of the range of units they have taken. Although the learning objectives are generic in nature, the students’ submission will reflect the subject area of their home departments. The units are, therefore, the responsibility of the home department in each case. A named member of staff within the home department will be identified as unit convenor. Results are processed as in 19.3 below. Support and guidance for the integrating units and their operation by Departments is provided by the CPDO who are also responsible for developing appropriate resources and the adoption of a consistent marking scheme. The CPDO is responsible for promoting a consistent approach to the units across departments and provides an overview of the units in the Annual Report.

6 **Named Awards**

6.1 In addition to the Professional Development awards (3.4 above) the PDS framework encompasses a number of other named awards:

(a) bracketed awards, e.g. MSc Professional Development (Primary Care), which are part of the PDS but will be marketed as prescribed, rather than individually negotiated awards;

(b) full named awards, e.g. MSc Primary Care, which follow the general principles of the PDS and utilise NFAAR-CPD but are taken on a flexible unit-by-unit basis and have a discrete programme specification.

7 **Stand-alone Units**

7.1 Students taking units on a stand-alone basis, including those who may not yet have decided to aim for a Professional Development award, are attached to a holding programme.

8 **Approval of New Awards**

8.1 Proposals for new awards which will be marketed with a bracketed title, as in (a) above will need to follow the QA3 approval procedures but may not require a new programme specification, in which case a programme description will be added as an appendix to the existing PDS programme spec. Advice should be sought from the CPDO. In such cases, it is anticipated that the *Integrated Professional Development* unit will be included. Where this is not the case, a mapping exercise showing the academic coherence of the chosen units and how they meet the programme-level learning outcomes must be provided.

8.2 Proposals for new awards as described in (b) above will need to be approved in line with the existing University procedures (QA3) and will require a separate programme specification. In such cases, the *Integrated Professional Development* unit will not be compulsory.
9 Approval of New CPD Units

9.1 The detailed processes for approval of new units for all University taught provision are described in QA4. In summary, new credit-bearing units and changes to units are considered by the relevant Departmental and Faculty or School Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee. The Board of Studies bears responsibility for final approval although this may be delegated (see QA4).

9.2 Strategic approval should be given by the Faculty Executive for new stand-alone units on the basis of financial and market information, using the CPDO costing tool available for this purpose. The Faculty/School LTQC gives academic approval for such proposals.

9.3 Once approved by the Faculty/School LTQC, unit descriptions are forwarded to the Student Records and Examinations Office (SREO) for inclusion in the University’s central database of units. Where a new unit is to be counted towards one of the awards approved as part of the PDS, the CPDO is advised and will make arrangements with the SREO for the unit to be ‘attached’ to the appropriate award.

10 Amendments to Programmes and Units

10.1 All programme and unit amendments relating to taught provision should follow the process outlined in QA4.

10.2 Unit amendments will be considered by the Departmental and subsequently the Faculty or the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee.

10.3 Amendments to named awards, including those with bracketed titles, should be considered by the relevant Departmental and Faculty or the School Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee. Major changes require subsequent approval from the Programmes and Partnerships Approval Committee (PAPAC).

10.4 Due to its cross-institutional nature, amendments to the Professional Development Scheme should be considered by all Faculty/School LTQCs before being presented to PAPAC for approval.

11 Collaborative Provision

11.1 CPD units and programmes are often designed to meet the needs of specific employers or external organisations. For new collaborative proposals where employers/organisations will deliver the provision, whether programmes or individual units, the processes on approval of partnerships set down in QA20 (Collaborative Provision) should be followed. Guidance may be obtained from the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office.

12 Professional Accreditation

12.1 Where professional accreditation is sought for a CPD unit or programme, this should follow the process set down in QA8.

13 Recruitment, Selection and Admission of Students

13.1 QA22, Recruitment, Selection and Admission of Students, applies to all programmes of study leading to an award from the University of Bath. It does not apply to students on credit-bearing units which are not undertaken as part of a University award at the outset. However, the general principles outlined in QA22 should be followed, particularly in respect of ensuring that
• evidence is gathered to show that a student has every reasonable prospect of succeeding;
• the recruitment, selection and admissions processes are transparent, fair and consistent with University policies;
• potential students with additional needs are aware of the advice, guidance and support offered by the University.

13.2 Where students are admitted to stand-alone units, they will not have an automatic right to progress to an award. Should a student choose to apply to join a named award, they will be required to go through a further admissions process during which their suitability for the particular programme of study will be assessed.

14 Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning

14.1 All AP(E)L claims will be handled through the processes established by the home Faculty/School in line with QA45. Students may seek a maximum of 50% exemption from a PDS award.

14.2 Credit gained from units within the PDS can be used towards one of the named awards for up to six years after it has been gained (unless otherwise stated in the unit description). After this time, the APL process will be used to determine its currency and relevance for a particular award.

15 Induction and Access to Resources

15.1 As students may start at any point during the academic year, an on-line induction programme and student handbook will be made available by the CPDO via Moodle.

15.2 All those registered on CPD units and programmes are students of the University during the period of their registration and have full access to the facilities (e.g. Library, Learning Support etc).

16 Personal Tutoring

16.1 QA33, Personal Tutoring, applies to all taught programmes of study leading to an award from the University of Bath. It does not apply to students taking units which are not part of a University award at the outset. However, the general principles should be followed and support provided that is appropriate to individual circumstances. The CPDO may be consulted for advice on student support. Special consideration should be given to students taking more than one unit, especially where these are from more than one department.

16.2 Personal tutoring will be carried out on the basis of the principles expressed in QA33.

17 Work-Based Learning

17.1 The CPD Framework is designed to cater for students in employment and consideration should be given to QA6 on work-based learning when designing CPD programmes, with particular attention given to the following elements:
• the inclusion of employers, professional bodies and sector skills councils in the design and approval of the curriculum;
• ensuring, where appropriate, that the student has both the permission and support of their employer to undertake a unit/programme of study;
• ensuring, at the point of admission, that the student has appropriate learning opportunities in their place of work to complete the unit/programme;
ensuring that students have adequate learning opportunities during their assignment in order to achieve the learning outcomes;
ensuring that contingencies are in place should a student’s work situation change.

18 Distance Learning CPD

18.1 Where individual units are taught and supported on a distance learning basis, the principles and processes set down in QA41 will apply.

19 Assessment, Marking and Feedback

19.1 Marking, moderation, assessment and feedback to students should be carried out in accordance with QA16.

19.2 All Professional Development awards including bracketed titles are governed by the New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations for CPD (NFAAR-CPD) http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/nfa/index.htm.

19.3 Individual units of study are governed by the PDS Programme Regulations, which follow the principles of NFAAR-CPD. These units are also covered by QA35 (Assessment Procedures for Programmes not compliant with NFAAR).

19.3 Results for stand-alone CPD and Integrated Professional Development units will be considered by the Board of Examiners for Units in the owning Department. The recommendations on the former, where these do not form part of an award, will be passed to the relevant Board of Studies for approval. Where students opt to use the units towards a full named award with a discrete programme specification (6.1b above) e.g. MSc Primary Care, outcomes will be processed through the Board of Examiners for Programmes of the home department before being presented to the Board of Studies.

19.4 Procedures for handling examination and assessment offences are outlined in QA53.

20 External Examining

20.1 External examining of all taught units and programmes follows the processes set down in QA12. Where units are taken from existing programmes, the appointed External Examiner (EE) will be asked to consider the work submitted by CPD students for those units as part of the overall sample. For individual study units which are not part of existing awards, and Integrated Professional Development Units external examining arrangements will be managed by the owning Department. Departments will be asked to nominate candidates for approval by the Board of Studies. Where appropriate, individual study units will be added to the workload of existing examiners. Consideration should be given to appointing externals for groups of cognate units where appropriate.

21 The student Voice

21.1 All named awards within the PDS framework follow the principles set down in QA48. Staff Student Liaison Committees. QA48 covers communication between the University and the student body on all aspects of the student learning experience and specifically through Staff/Student Liaison Committees. Whilst it may not always be practical to offer a specific forum, which includes PDS awards or stand-alone units, appropriate mechanisms should be in place to enable the voice of CPD students to be heard (e.g. through use of on-line meetings FORA or questionnaires).
22 **Annual Monitoring of Units and Programmes**

22.1 Unit convenors of relevant units should be asked to identify any issues arising in evaluation which are of particular significance to or have been highlighted by CPD students; unit evaluation may be completed as an on-line exercise.

22.2 An Annual Report will be produced by the CPDO for presentation to ULTQC which will consider:
- all PDS awards and units;
- overview of the Integrated Professional Module;
- quality assurance matters;
- operational issues;
- examples of good practice;
- student feedback.

The CPDO will be responsible for gathering evidence from Departments including unit evaluations to inform the report.

23 **Degree Scheme Review**

23.1 The PDS will be subject to a Degree Scheme Review every five years, following the process set down in QA13 and managed by the CPDO. Bracketed titles e.g. MSc Professional Development (Primary Care), will be included, but those with separate programme specifications will be subject to their own DSR managed by the owning Department and Faculty or School.

24 **Monitoring and Review**

24.1 The quality processes and principles underpinning the development, delivery and evaluation of credit-bearing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes and units will be reviewed periodically by the University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee.
## Statement Details

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<td>Head, CPDO</td>
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