

QUALITY ASSURANCE CODE OF PRACTICE: APPROACH TO CODE DEVELOPMENT

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. TYPES OF REVISION	1
3. REVISION PROCESS	2
4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	3
5. MONITORING AND REVIEW	3

1. INTRODUCTION

The University's Quality Assurance Code of Practice (QA CoP) is a constantly evolving document. Good practice requires a regular review of policies and procedures. Rigorous attention is also paid to updated advice offered through the [UK Quality Code](#) published by the Quality Assurance Agency. The QA CoP is reviewed regularly and some statements are substantially revised to ensure a continual process of reflection and enhancement. This document sets out the University's approach to its development, as established through custom and practice.

This document sets out a number of measures which have been agreed to ensure that the QA CoP continues to engage appropriately with equalities and diversity considerations and that consultation with a range of stakeholders over development takes place. The appendix sets out a checklist of generic issues, such as potential impact upon part-time students or distance learners and legislative considerations such as data protection or equalities legislation which may need to be taken into account and gives references to sources of support available to help members of staff working in this context.

The aim is to make the Code applicable comprehensively across the institution and QA statements aim to reinforce the University's commitment to a diverse student body.

2. TYPES OF REVISION

Revisions to the QA CoP statements occur in different ways, although may be broadly grouped as follows:

2.1 Generic changes

Generic changes concern the updating of statements with new University terminology, changes in organisational structures or titles, or incorporating the consequences of other broad changes already approved by senior committees including Senate.

2.2 Incremental changes

Incremental procedural and substantive changes are typically proposed on an *ad hoc* basis

to address issues that have emerged, or to take forward enhancement opportunities which have been identified, through operation of the University's routine quality management processes. These changes, alongside generic changes (see 2.1 above), make a significant contribution to ensuring that the statements remain relevant, accurate and current on an ongoing basis.

2.3 Major reviews

Major reviews, which may take 1-2 years, will normally result in the major rewrite of a statement, or the creation of a new one, and require the approval of key principles by Senate. Such reviews will often be driven by University strategic priorities, and/or national developments.

3. REVISION PROCESS

Revision processes typically take the following formats (although there may be some adaptation on a case by case basis):

3.1 Generic changes

Step 1: A member of the Academic Registry reviews each statement and revises it with the generic amendments.

Step 2: Final versions presented to Education, Quality and Standards Committee (EQSC) for approval.

3.2 Incremental changes

Step 1: The relevant professional service i.e. the professional service that is the 'technical specialist' for the statement prepares a revised version of the statement, incorporating the proposed amendments, and an accompanying rationale.

Step 2: Proposal documentation presented to EQSC for approval.

However, where proposed changes are of a significant nature it may be considered appropriate to include further stages in the process, similar to a major review, such as consultation of Faculty/School LTQCs. Academic Registry advises on this.

3.3 Major review

Step 1: With the agreement of EQSC, the relevant professional service or working group (or equivalent) undertakes research and appropriate consultation including consultation with:

- relevant academic and professional services staff affected by the processes in the statement;
- formally recognised student representatives (sabbatical officers, SSLCs or their members);
- Disability Service and staff from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Step 2: The relevant professional service formulates proposals, prepares a revised version of the statement, and an accompanying rationale paper, based on the outcomes of step 1.

Step 3: Formal presentations of draft proposals to Faculty/School LTQCs. At the same

time, the proposals are published on the Academic Registry web site for open consultation¹.

Step 4: Final proposals are formulated by the relevant professional service in the light of the feedback received at Stage 3. This will include a final proposed revised version of the statement and accompanying rationale paper

Step 5: Final proposal documentation presented to EQSC for approval.

3.4 Senate involvement

Where it is proposed that a new statement should be developed, or where proposed revisions to an existing statement involve key matters of principle, Senate approval is also required. In most instances it is advisable to seek Senate's approval to the changes in principle at an early stage, and Senate's consent for the final details to be approved on Senate's behalf by University LTQC.

3.5 Development checklist

To support the QA CoP development process, a checklist has been developed which staff may use as a reference point as appropriate (see Appendix).

3.6 Timing

Amendments to the QA CoP may take place with immediate effect, or from August in the following academic year.

4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

A range of measures have been agreed to ensure that development of the QA CoP continues to appropriately engage with equalities and diversity issues (see *Quality Assurance Code of Practice Equalities Impact Assessment* approved by the Equality Scheme Project Management Group in October 2011):

- inclusion in the QA CoP checklist (see 3.5 above and the Appendix), of a list of all the equality groups whose perspectives need to be borne in mind when reviewing a statement and changing processes. Also a reminder of the forms of indirect discrimination that can occur together with links to explanatory documents and information from university web pages, and other sources;
- required consultations with the Disability Service and Equality and Diversity staff on proposed changes, for their opinion on whether students from the protected groups could be particularly affected by the processes in that particular Statement. And where they so advise, Academic Registry to bring those issues to the attention of student representatives for further consideration and comment;
- Academic Registry to ask the Students' Union to confirm periodically, the extent and quality of the training they offer incoming student representatives on committees at all levels, aimed at enabling them to recognise the potential impact of QA Statements and to any subsequent changes proposed;
- Academic Registry to request periodically Associate Deans or equivalent senior staff to encourage Staff Student Liaison Committees and Directors of Studies to report issues or incidences indicating differential or partial operation of any QA CoP statement to the detriment of students by virtue of their gender, race or known disability status, with reporting to faculty-level Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee and/or the appropriate professional services department (eg Student Services), and the Students' Union Community Officer, as relevant;
- an open webpage form of consultation accessible by all students and staff for them to respond to proposed changes to Statements.

¹ Very exceptionally, there may be two rounds of consultation of Faculty/School LTQCs, typically where feedback from the first round of consultations stimulates considerable re-development of the initial proposals.

Statement Details		
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	<i>Education Quality and Standards Committee (EQSC)</i>	1 Nov 2021 minute 148
Related Documentation:	External QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Internal Statement of Equality Objectives	
Author:	Academic Registry	

APPENDIX - QA CoP DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Who has been consulted on the content/operation of this QA statement? (eg student involvement.) What form did the consultation take?

Have the pedagogical principles underpinning the processes been articulated?

Has the location of responsibilities been indicated clearly?

What measures are in place to ensure that people are equipped to fulfil the roles assigned to them? (eg training, sources of advice/guidance.)

Have the relevant standards been taken into account e.g. [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)

How does Bath practice compare with peer institutions?

How would this statement be applied to distance learners? Students in partner colleges? Part-time students? CPD students? Online course students? Apprentices?

What examples of good practice could be included?

How does this statement relate to other parts of the QA CoP? To Ordinances and Regulations? What cross-references are needed?

Who owns the records generated by the processes outlined in the statement? How long should they be kept? What is the advice from [University Records Manager](#)?

Are there any Freedom of Information issues relating to the content of this statement? (ie should we be working on the assumption that data resulting from this QA statement may need at some point to be in the public domain?) <https://www.bath.ac.uk/teams/freedom-of-information/>.

Are there any Data Protection issues relating to the content of this statement? (ie does this QA statement involve keeping personal data?) <https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/data-protection-guidance/>

How can awareness of this QA statement be raised? (eg dissemination, use of staff/student focused introductory pages)

Equality Issues: Which of the protected characteristics groups² may be affected by proposed changes?

Have issues in relation to both students and staff been thought about?

How does this statement relate to the University's positive duty to promote race, gender and disability equality in particular?

Are there any other equalities issues relating to the content of this statement? Consider any potential for indirect discrimination.

All draft statements should be sent to the Disability Service for their comments on any potential disadvantage for disabled students. Consider the [QAA UK Quality Code: Advice and Guidance: Enabling Student Achievement](#).

Sources of advice/guidance:

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/teams/equality-and-diversity/><https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/protected-groups/>

See particular advice from the [Equalities Challenge Unit](#) in relation to each group in Education.

² The groups are gender, transgender, race, disability, age, religion & belief, sexual orientation, marriage & civil partnerships, pregnancy & maternity