

# Guidance Document: Quality Assurance and Enhancement (Taught Programmes)

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## Section 1: Introduction and How to Use the Guide

This Guide draws together in one document the University's quality assurance processes and procedures relating to taught programmes and provides comprehensive information to academic staff, professional services and students to enable the institution to comply with the expectations outlined in the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code.

The Guide is divided into three sections, as above.

Section 2 outlines the governance and committee structure of the University and the academic and professional staff with particular responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement procedures.

Section 3 reflects the chapters of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code relevant to taught programmes, with each section relating to a major quality assurance/enhancement theme. The section provides a summary of the Quality Code Expectations and a useful collection of links to our regulations, procedures and associated documents.

Note: The University's regulatory and procedural nomenclature has evolved over time and the intention is to standardise nomenclature. For the purposes of this Guide, the following applies:

Policy – statement of the University's position and/or intention (currently this includes Codes of Practice).

Regulations – define that which is allowable in accordance with the Policy

Operational Process – describes the means by which a Regulation is applied

Guidance – guidance is an explanatory document which does not have the force of a Regulation

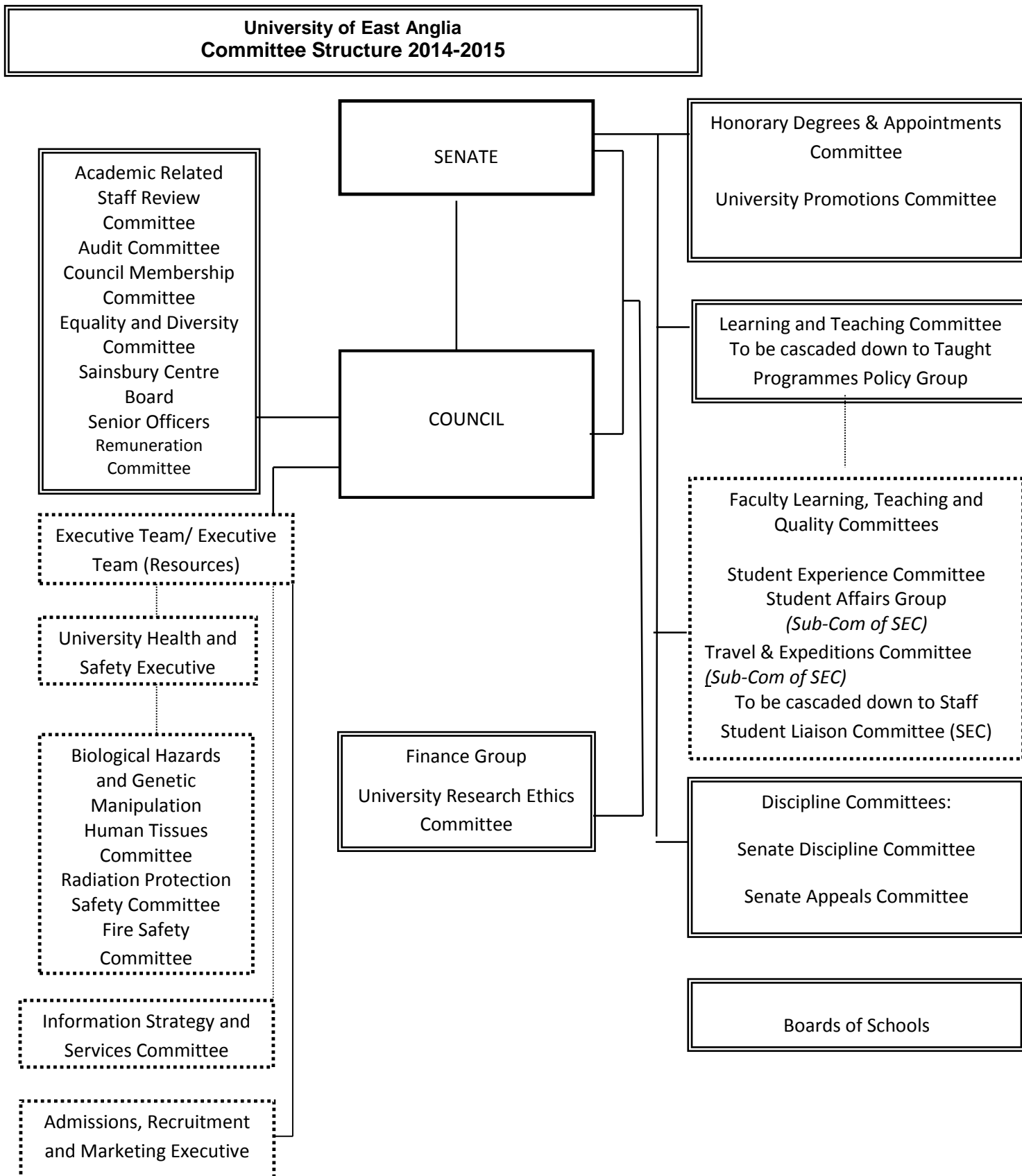
Procedure – this terminology is being phased out and is replaced by the appropriate term above.

Code of Practice – this terminology is being phased out.

## Section 2: Quality Assurance and Enhancement Governance

This section outlines the University's Committee structure and provides a brief explanation of the committees and staff roles with a responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement

### Committees and Advisory Groups:



## **Committees with a Responsibility for Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

### **Senate:**

Senate meets at least 3 times per year, is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and is the University's most senior academic committee, with responsibility for the assurance of the University's academic standards through a number of standing committees

### **Council:**

Council meets 6 times per year and has responsibility for a number of standing committees with delegated powers for particular areas

### **Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC):**

LTC reports to Senate and is chaired by the Academic Pro-Vice Chancellor and attended by student representatives. LTC is responsible for the approval and oversight of learning and teaching strategies, regulations and new courses and is accountable for the University's academic standards

### **Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (FLTQC):**

Each faculty has a FLTQC which meets around 6 times per year and has responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement procedures, for example new course proposals, consideration of external examiners' reports and approval of school responses and assessment, moderation and internal course monitoring. FLTQCs are chaired by Faculty Associate Deans and attended by student representatives and report to LTC.

### **Student Experience Committee (SEC):**

SEC is a sub-committee of LTC, chaired by the Academic Pro Vice-Chancellor and meets at least 3 times a year to consider all matters relating to the student experience, including student welfare, facilities and services. The Group considers reports from the Student Affairs Group, the Union of UEA Students and the National Students Survey. The Group makes recommendations for consideration by LTC.

### **Student Affairs Group (SAG):**

SAG is chaired by the Dean of Students and meets regularly to consider matters relating to student welfare, facilities and services. SAG reports to SEC.

### **School Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs):**

Each school has an SSLC or equivalent which meets at least once per semester to provide a forum for discussion of student-related matters, including the student experience and quality assurance procedures, for example module and course monitoring. Meetings are attended by student representatives and the Group reports to the School Board.

### **School boards:**

Each school has a school board which is chaired by the Head of School and reports to Senate. School boards meet at least twice per academic year and have responsibility for learning and teaching strategies, research and admissions within the school.

### **Taught Programmes Policy Group (TPPG):**

TPPG is an advisory group, chaired by the Academic Director of Taught Programmes. The Group provides a forum for 'bottom up' and 'top down' discussion around the development of policy, procedures and quality assurance initiatives in respect of taught programmes.

For further information about the University's committee structure, please see:

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/committee-office/uea-standing-orders-and-terms-of-reference#council>

## Staff Roles with Responsibility for Quality Assurance and Enhancement

### Academic Staff:

A brief description of the roles of the academic officers with responsibility for overseeing strategic development, the maintenance of academic standards and the student experience are provided below. Further information is available at the links provided.

**Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)** has responsibility for developing and maintaining excellence in learning and teaching, the student experience, innovation and creativity and oversight of admissions  
<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/learningteaching/Pro+Vice-Chancellor+Academic+job+description>

**Academic Director of Taught Programmes (ADTP)** has responsibility for the management and development of taught programmes, the student experience, the regulatory framework and the management of quality assurance and enhancement procedures  
<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/learningteaching/A1RoleofDirectorofTaughtProgrammes>

**Academic Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement (ADLTE)** has responsibility for the development of learning technologies to support the University's learning and teaching strategy and enhance the student experience  
<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/staff/newstaff/Job+Description+-+ADLTE>

**Academic Director of Partnerships** has responsibility for the development and review of partner regulatory frameworks, policies and procedures and for the oversight of the maintenance of academic standards of the University's collaborative provision  
<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/learningteaching/Academic+Director+of+Partnerships+Job+Description>

**Faculty Associate Deans** have responsibility for the development and enhancement of learning and teaching within faculties and the maintenance of academic standards and compliance with University quality assurance and enhancement procedures  
<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/learningteaching/A2RoleofAssociateFacultyDean>

**School Directors of Learning and Teaching** have responsibility for supporting the Head of School in the development and implementation of school learning and teaching strategies and for the maintenance of academic standards and compliance with University quality assurance and enhancement procedures  
<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/learningteaching/A3RoleofSchoolDirector>

**Course Directors** provide academic leadership of courses, with responsibility for the design and delivery of teaching and assessment, and for the review and update of courses in line with the University's quality assurance monitoring procedures  
<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/staff/newstaff/Course+Director+Role+Description+LTC+March+2013>

**Module Organisers** work with course directors to co-ordinate the delivery of module teaching and assessment, and are responsible for the review and update of modules in line with the University's quality assurance monitoring procedures

[http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/learningteaching/Role+Description+for+Module+Organiser+\(v103112014\)](http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/learningteaching/Role+Description+for+Module+Organiser+(v103112014))

#### **Professional Services Staff:**

##### **Registrar and Secretary**

The Registrar and Secretary is a member of the University Executive Team and has overall responsibility for all professional services activity

##### **Director of Learning and Teaching Services**

The Director of Learning and Teaching heads the Learning and Teaching Service, with responsibility for all administration relating to the learning and teaching of taught students, including quality assurance and enhancement procedures

##### **Heads of Learning and Teaching Services**

The Heads of Learning and Teaching have responsibility for supporting the University's learning and teaching strategy, policy and regulatory reviews and for managing the following three areas of the Service:

###### **Quality**

The Head of LTS (Quality) has responsibility for the management and development of quality assurance and enhancement procedures relating to taught students, and for liaison with external bodies, including the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and the Quality Assurance Agency

###### **Systems**

The Head of LTS (Systems) has responsibility for the management and development of University information systems to support teaching, learning and quality assurance and enhancement procedures

###### **Partnerships**

The Head of LTS (Partnerships) has responsibility for the management and development of the academic standards and quality assurance and enhancement procedures of the University's collaborative provision

##### **Learning and Teaching Quality Manager**

The LTS Quality Manager supports the development and implementation of quality assurance and enhancement procedures relating to taught students, including internal monitoring of modules and courses and the external examining system for awards

### **Section 3: Quality Assurance and Enhancement Procedures**

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the **Quality Code**) sets out the **Expectations** that all providers of UK higher education are required to meet. The Quality Code gives all higher education providers a shared starting point for setting, describing and assuring the academic standards of their higher education awards and programmes and the quality of the learning opportunities they provide. Providers use it to design their respective policies for maintaining academic standards and quality.

Further information on the Quality Code is available on the Quality Assurance Agency's website:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code>

## UEA Implementation of the UK Quality Code:

The University's approach to implementation of the UK Quality Code was to establish an Implementation Group, with representation from academic staff, professional services and the student community, for each chapter of the Code, led by a Chapter Champion, responsible for co-ordinating the work of the group.

Each group adopted the following model for implementing the chapter for which it was responsible:

- Mapping of the University's current regulations, policies and procedures against the Chapter Indicators
- Assessing current levels of compliance against the Expectation of the Chapter
- Reporting to LTC on compliance with the Chapter Expectation and an implementation plan to ensure full compliance and outlining enhancements, as appropriate

The University's academic and professional services staff have responsibility for assuring the academic standards of the University and its awards, by complying with its internal quality assurance procedures in order to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code. To facilitate this, the decision was taken in producing this Guide to compile a set of links to all the relevant regulations, policies and procedures organised around Parts A, B and C of the Quality Code. This Guide is provided to enable staff to access the documents under the relevant Chapter headings.

### Part A: Threshold Academic Standards

#### *Expectations – QAA Quality Code*

##### *Expectation A1*

*In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:*

*a) ensure that the requirements of The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland/The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland are met by:*

- *positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications*
- *ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications*
- *naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications*
- *awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes*

*b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics*

*c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework*

*d) consider and take account of relevant subject benchmark statements.*

##### *Expectation A2.1*

- *In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.*

### *Expectation A2.2*

*Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.*

### *Expectation A3.1*

*Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.*

### *Expectation A3.2*

*Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:*

- *the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment*
- *both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.*

### *Expectation A3.3*

*Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.*

### *Expectation A3.4*

*In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:*

- *UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved*
- *the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.*

The University ensures that threshold academic standards are achieved and maintained through the application of its learning and teaching governance structure. Learning and Teaching Committee, operating under delegated authority from Senate takes responsibility for ensuring that all our awards incorporate

The Learning and Teaching Committee, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic), is responsible to Senate for the identification and delivery of learning and teaching strategies and accountable to Senate for the academic standards, quality and enhancement of the academic programmes offered. Learning and Teaching Committee operates to ensure that UEA can assure itself and others of the standard of its awards and the quality of its academic programmes and has a sound basis on which to enhance its provision.

When designing and/or reviewing courses, it is important that the relevant Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) level descriptors and QAA Subject Benchmark Statements are given appropriate consideration and are clearly referenced in any associated documentation including programme specifications.

Links

[Learning and Teaching Committee Terms of Reference](#)

[Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee Terms of Reference](#)

[Programme Specification Template and Guidance Documents](#)

[QAA Subject Benchmark Statements Documents \(external link\)](#)

[QAA Guide to FHEQ levels \(external link\)](#)

## **Part B:**

### **B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval**

*Expectation – QAA Quality Code*

*Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes.*

The University's approach to course approval enables us to respond swiftly to business needs whilst ensuring robust quality assurance. If you are considering developing a new programme please ensure that you follow the guidance in the links below.

#### **Links**

[Course Proposal Procedure and Guidance](#)

[Full Course Proposal Form](#)

[Minor Changes Course Proposal Form](#)

### **B2: Admissions**

*Expectation – QAA Quality Code*

*Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.*

B2 – Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education

The University is committed to providing an admissions service which is both professional and fair, and which facilitates entry to the University for high quality candidates who will engage with and contribute to the intellectual and cultural vitality of the institution. The University seeks to undertake this action by identifying merit and potential and ensuring that its admissions process is fair and transparent to all regardless of background.

[Admissions Policy](#)

[Undergraduate courses](#)

[Postgraduate courses](#)

### **B3: Learning and Teaching**

*Expectation – QAA Quality Code*



*Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking*

The University's key commitments and aims for Learning and Teaching are expressed in the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The University is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and removing unnecessary barriers to engagement.

The University promotes and encourages personal and professional development and the sharing of best academic practice.

There are a number of broad areas that fall within the scope of this chapter of the Quality Code, many of which are covered elsewhere. The links within this section focus on the Learning and Teaching Strategy, academic staff development, equality of opportunity and academic support for students, and the learning environment.

Links

[Learning and Teaching Strategy](#)  
[University's Single Equality Action Plan](#)  
[PAL](#)  
[Peer Observation of Teaching](#)

[staff appraisal](#)

[Advising](#)

[CSED](#)  
[General Reg 13:](#)  
[Managing University Space](#)  
[See Student Charter:](#)  
[See Regulations on Student Conduct and Dealing with Harassment.](#)  
[Equal Opportunities information for staff:](#)  
[Equality and Diversity information for students:](#)  
[New students webpages including induction](#)  
[University taught students handbook](#)

[Corporate plan](#)

#### **B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement**

*Expectation – QAA Quality Code*

*Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.*

The University has a range of mechanisms that facilitate successful transitions and academic progression. A number of departments in the institution

The University provides academic, pastoral and other developmental support to all students, from application to graduation and beyond. This includes a well-specified programme of induction and ongoing academic support, access to specific support services and tailored careers and employability advice.

Links

[Advising system](#)

[Careers website](#)

[Dean of Students](#)

[LET team](#)

[Wellbeing and mental health service](#)

[Financial advice](#)

[Disability support](#)

[International Student support](#)

[SU Advice Centre](#)

[EC regulations](#)

[LTS page – concessions, intercalations and withdrawal](#)

[Regulation 13 and associated documents/attendance monitoring](#)

## **B5: Student Engagement in Quality Assurance**

*Expectation – QAA Quality Code*

*Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience*

We actively encourage our students' evaluation of and feedback about their own academic experience. The University also values the participation of students in the development, implementation and review of academic provision, regulations and processes.

There are a variety of fora at different levels in which students may express their views, both informal and formal. Formal arrangements for securing such evaluation and feedback are via the following mechanisms.

Links

**Individual Evaluation of [Modules](#) and [Courses](#) including 5-yearly course review**

[Membership of School Boards](#)

[Staff Student Liaison Committees](#)

[Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees](#)

[Student Experience Committee](#)

[Learning and Teaching Committee](#)

[Student Affairs Group](#)

[Student Experience Survey](#)

[Survey of the Advising System](#)

## **B6: Assessment**

*Expectation – QAA Quality Code*

*Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.*

Assessment strategies are designed at course level to enable students to achieve and demonstrate the full range of programme level outcomes including those specified by professional, regulatory and statutory bodies. Assessment may also include the accreditation of prior learning.

Students have opportunities to engage with a range of formative and summative assessments that reflect the diverse learning outcomes ranging from subject knowledge and understanding to transferable skills.

#### **Links**

[Indicators of 'graduateness' in learning and teaching strategy.](#)

[Award Regulations](#)

[Assessment Regulations](#)

[AP\(E\)L](#)

[Annual Assessment and moderation review](#)

[Senate marking scales](#)

[Regulation 17](#)

[Coursework submission](#)

[Programme Specifications](#)

[Moderation policy](#)

[Plagiarism and collusion](#)

[Guidelines on group work](#)

[Feedback guidance](#)

[Guidance on Formative assessment](#)

[CoP on Placements](#)

#### **B7: External Examining**

*Expectation – QAA Quality Code*

*Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.*

Our external examiner system ensures that:

- the academic standards for each award are at the appropriate level and that student performance is judged against this;
- assessment processes measure student achievement against intended learning outcomes and are fair and fairly operated;
- standards at UEA are comparable with those of other higher education institutions.

#### **Links**

[Award regulations](#)

[Code of Practice on EE](#)

[Guidance for EE](#)

## [Guidance for the consideration of external examiner reports](#)

### **B8: Monitoring and Review**

*Expectation – QAA Quality Code*

*Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review.*

The University operates a robust process of monitoring and review that comprises a risk-based annual review of modules, an annual review and update of all courses and a five-yearly panel-based Course Review which included external representation. The review process is informed at all stages by the student body through both student evaluations and representation.

Links

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/learningteaching>

### **B9 Academic Appeals and Complaints**

*Expectation – QAA Quality Code*

*Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.*

The University is always keen to resolve student concerns informally wherever possible; however we have comprehensive procedures in place to support students when an informal approach has not resolved the issue.

Link

[http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/appeals\\_complaints](http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/appeals_complaints)

### **B10: Managing HE Provision with Others**

*Expectation – QAA Quality Code*

*Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.*

This section refers to all aspects of delivery outside UEA, Collaborative provision, managed by the Partnerships Office, Placements, managed by the Learning and Teaching Service, Study Abroad managed by Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing, and postgraduate research managed by the Post-Graduate Research Office.

More information can be found as follows:

Partnerships

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/partnerships>

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/partnerships/policy-and-forms/PartnershipsHandbook>

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/partnerships/international/International+Handbook>

Study Abroad

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/study/study-abroad>

Placements

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/students/studying/placements>

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/documents/placements/CoPonPlacementLearning>

Postgraduate Research

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/postgraduate-research/>