

Validation & Audit Standing Panel

Annual Conference

Wednesday 11th September 2013,

9.00am-1.00pm

Faculty of Health and Social Care,
Ormskirk Campus

Edge Hill University

Programme

9:00am – 9:30am	Registration and refreshments	FoH&SC Foyer
9:30am – 9:40am	Welcome and conference programme - <i>Professor Ian Robinson, Dean of Quality Enhancement and Chair of VASP</i>	Lecture Theatre H3
9:40am – 10:00am	VASP Annual Report 2012/13 - <i>Tony Turjansky, Head of Academic Quality</i>	Lecture Theatre H3
10:00am – 11:00am	Annual quality update - Professor Ian Robinson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'UK Quality Code for Higher Education' (QAA) • 4-year degrees • Alternative (exit) awards 	Lecture Theatre H3
11:00am – 11:30am	Refreshments & "VASP Annual Awards"	FoH&SC Foyer
11:30am - 12:30pm	Breakout sessions <i>See overleaf</i>	Seminar rooms H240, H241, H242, H243
12:35pm - 1:00pm	Plenary: Feedback from breakout groups	Lecture Theatre H3
1:00pm	CLOSE	

Breakout sessions

There will be one breakout slot during the conference (at 11.30am-12.30pm).

Chair's Workshop

Room H240

Facilitator:
Professor Ian
Robinson

VASP chairs are expected to demonstrate knowledge and experience of national quality assurance agendas and benchmarks. This session will provide an opportunity for chairs to discuss the implications of the new UK Quality Code for Higher Education and consider how Edge Hill might support them in maintaining their 'sector currency'.

Other Members:

Room H241

Facilitator:
Tony
Turjansky

Room H242

Facilitator:
Brian
Smith

Room H243

Facilitator:
John
Bostock

**'Student Engagement in
Quality Processes'**

Chapter B5 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education contains the mandatory Expectation that "Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience". This breakout group will consider what evidence is needed is by validation and review panels to be satisfied that course teams involve their students routinely in the design, monitoring and review of programmes.

**'Quality Assurance of
Online Programmes'**

An increasing number of modules and programmes are being validated for delivery in blended and distance learning modes. This breakout group will consider how Edge Hill's 'Framework for Quality Assurance of Technology Enhanced Learning' can be used by panels to explore how course teams maintain the quality and standards of programmes delivered wholly or partly online.

**'Managing Induction and
Transitions'**

Indicator 5 of UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B4 states that "higher education providers put in place policies, practices and systems that facilitate successful transitions and academic progression". This breakout group will consider how course teams will be expected to demonstrate engagement with Edge Hill's new 'Guide to Effective Academic Induction' at validation and periodic review.

Conference packs

- Conference Programme
- Attendance list incl. breakout allocations
- PowerPoint presentations
- ‘EHU Guide to Effective Academic Induction’
- ‘EHU Framework for Quality Assurance of Technology Enhanced Learning’
- VASP Annual Report 2012/13 (Draft)
- VASP Staff Development for 2013/14
- Evaluation form (**please return to AQDU**)

VASP Annual Report 2012/13

Tony Turjansky

Head of Academic Quality,

Academic Quality and Development Unit

Report structure

- Validations (including collaborative), periodic reviews and internal audits in 2012/13
- Topics/issues, recommendations and citations therefrom
- Matters likely to impact VASP in 2013/14

VASP activity in 2012/13

- (As at June 2013) 116 trained VASP members, including 20 chairs
- 52 validations, including collaborative provision
- More major modifications to existing programmes (just under a third of all validations)
- 5 new Masters by Research (M. Res) awards
- Major re-validation of nursing and social work involving 3 PSRBs, and around a dozen employers and service users represented at other events

VASP activity in 2012/13 (contd)

- Block validation of alternative (exit) awards and (in FAS) 4-year sandwich and 'year abroad' undergraduate degrees
- 3 periodic reviews
- 1 internal audit
- External panel members drawn from 33 HEIs, just over half from outside the north west
- 25 PGCTHE observers
- Annual Conference + 5 staff workshops

Topics from validation

Curriculum development and design:

- Awards (levels and titles) including alternative exit awards
- Rationale and market for new programmes including prospects for graduate employment
- Engagement with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and subject benchmark statements (QAA), professional standards and EHU's UG & PGT Frameworks
- **Consultation with current students (BREAKOUT)** and, where appropriate, employers and service users
- Programme structures:
 - Programme Learning Outcomes
 - Modules: combinations, core/compulsory/electives, learning outcomes
 - Delivery patterns, including blended programmes
 - Balance of research training and subject knowledge in M.Res programmes

Topics from validation (contd)

Teaching and learning:

- Number/balance of taught contact hours with guided independent study
- TEL and the role of the VLE in supporting learning (at University 'baseline' and beyond) - BREAKOUT
- Management, support and monitoring of practice learning and Work-Based Learning (placements)

Assessment:

- Alignment of new programmes with EHU's assessment regulations
- Justification for opt-out from 'in-module condonement' (aggregated pass mark) where all assessment elements must be passed
- Assessment strategy and arrangements for internal moderation

Topics from validation (contd)

Assessment (contd):

- Equivalence of assessment volume/load across modules of the same programme at the same level
- Multiple testing of module learning outcomes
- Scheduling of assessment submission dates across modules (to prevent 'bunching')
- Opportunities for formative assessment and feedback

Recruitment and admissions:

- Programme entry requirements (including IELTS)
- Proposed minimum and maximum intakes (in the context of staffing and resources)

Topics from validation (contd)

Student support:

- Student induction, peer mentoring, development of 'cohort identity'
- Personal tutor system including JH programmes, and supervision arrangements for M.Res
- Personal Development Planning (across all 3 years of an UG degree)
- Support for academic writing, study skills, research skills (for L6)
- Support for students on distance and blended learning programmes
- **Managing 'transitions' (BREAKOUT)**, including Level 5 at partner colleges to Level 6 at Ormskirk
- Academic and pastoral support for international students

Course organisation and management:

- Programme management, including arrangements for Integrated programmes
- Liaison tutor and internal verifier arrangements for CP

Topics from validation (contd)

Staffing and resources:

- Staff capacity, qualifications and experience (Associate Tutors, collaborative partners, M.Res supervisors)
- Support for research and scholarly activity (with particular reference to partners)
- Staff development and technical support for TEL (VLE)
- Module reading lists and other course-specific resources
- Central learning resources and support services of partner organisations

Student representation and QM:

- Arrangements for programme boards and student-staff consultative fora
- Engagement of part-time and distance learning students in consultative processes.

Foci of periodic review

- Curriculum development strategy, including overseas CP and international recruitment
- Student recruitment (*data*)
- Student retention and progression (*data*) including first-time pass rates and final degree classifications
- National Student Survey and graduate employability (*data*)
- QA of teaching: module evaluation, external examiner reports, teaching observation
- Student-Staff Ratios and departmental research agendas/profiles (REF)
- Availability and appropriateness of teaching accommodation including specialist teaching facilities
- Sufficiency and appropriateness of staff accommodation
- Student engagement with course consultative processes

Recommendations and citations

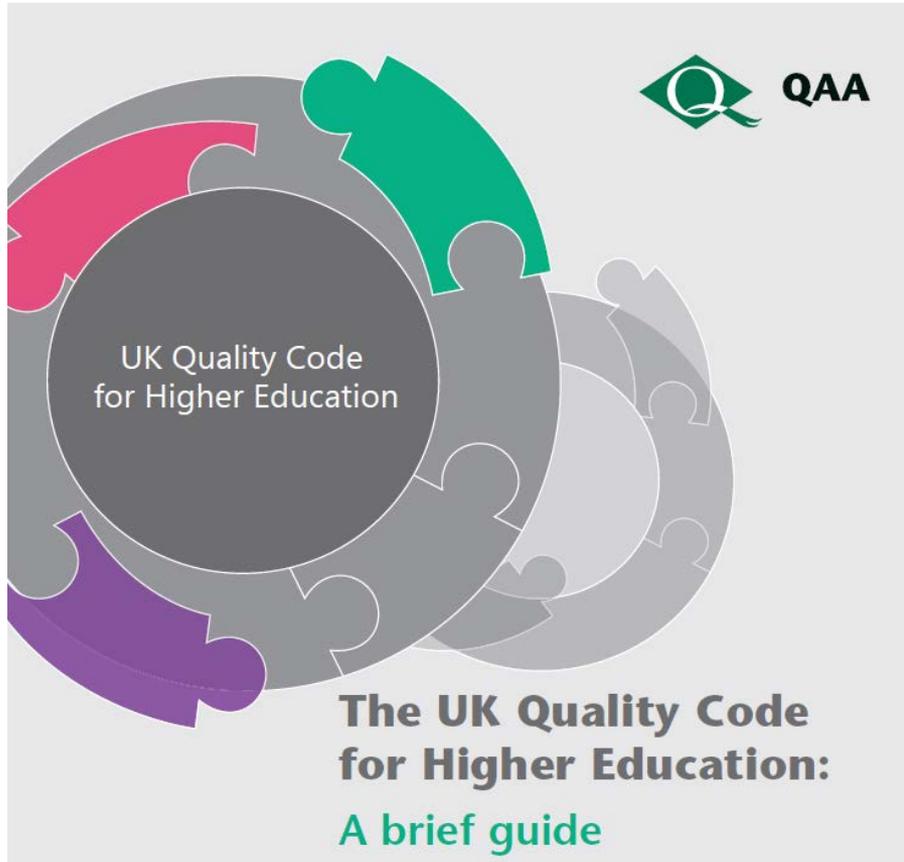
(Recommendations):

- Staffing and resources
- Graduation for overseas students
- The role of the 'external consultant' to validation teams
- Guidance on alternative (exit) awards
- Supporting documentation for partner (re-)approval

(Citations):

- Responding to markets and national drivers
- Alignment of PSRB requirements with academic curricula
- Engagement with employers, service users and/or students in programme design and delivery

Looking forward



- Continuing emphasis on quality enhancement and working in partnership with students (UK Quality Code for HE)
- VASP training for panel members and chairs will address these
- *Comments on draft VASP report to TT by 20th September, please*

Annual Quality Update

September 2013

Professor Ian Robinson

*Dean of Quality Enhancement and
Chair of VASP*

THANK YOU

For all you have done last year

National Headlines

2012-13 has continued the high rate of change in the 'national scene'

- **Institutional Review largely found HEIs meeting UK expectations**
 - Several commendations in quality of learning
 - One failure in enhancement
 - One cause for concern upheld re lack of monitoring of collaborative provision
- **Approval of a new 'tranche' of Universities**
 - BPP University; Regents University; Arts University Bournemouth; Bishop Grosseteste University; Harper Adams University; Leeds Trinity University; Newman University; Norwich University of the Arts; Royal Agricultural University; University College Birmingham; University of Falmouth; University of St. Mark & St. John
 - University of Law (Companies' House)
- **Updated or new Subject Benchmark Statements**
 - Criminology (draft)
 - Counselling and psychotherapy
 - Forensic science
- **All existing forms of review replaced by HER (Higher Education Review)**
 - An evolution of Institutional Review but with a greater 'risk-based' focus
- **New QAA Guidance for HE Providers**
 - Drawn from audit and review reports
 - Also commissioned additional bespoke research
- **New chapters of UK Quality Code for HE**

Higher Education Review (HER)

- QAA (Government) Institutional Reviews (every six years) lead to formal judgements regarding:
 - **Setting and maintenance of threshold academic standards** (meet/ requires improvement/ not meet)
 - **Quality of student learning opportunities** (commended/ meet/ requires improvement/ not meet)
 - **Enhancement** (commended/ meet/ requires improvement/ not meet)
 - **Published information** (commended/ meet/ requires improvement/ not meet)
- Corrective action is required and QAA follows up unsatisfactory aspects with additional reviews
- A second unsatisfactory review would lead to HEFCE initiating external remedial action
- A University **could** be closed down within six years.

Higher Education Review (HER)

- Will operate from 2014
- EHU's next review is 2016/17
- Two-stage process:
 - Initial Review
 - determines form and intensity of the review visit
 - Review Visit
 - formulates judgements
 - highlights areas of good practice
 - affirms progress in areas already identified for development
 - encourages future improvements
 - explores national annual thematic agenda

Higher Education Review (HER)

- Desk-based review evaluates:
 - public information on the University
 - NSS results
 - Employability data (DLHE)
 - University's self-evaluation
 - SU's written submission
 - Professional & regulatory body reports
 - Ofsted
 - Accreditation visits
- Based on perceived risk, determines size of review team, length of Review Visit and sets main review agenda

HER - The Review Visit

- Review team comprises peer UK academics and service heads, a student member and a QAA Assistant Director
- Visits the University for between one day and a full week
 - University is tested against the requirements in the UK Quality Code for HE
 - Meetings with staff, students and potentially employers & alumni
 - Consideration being given to seeking individual written contributions from students
 - Thematic element (varies each year)
- Published Report
 - Opportunity for differentiated judgements on collaborative partnerships
- University action plan (formulated in partnership with the SU)
- Follow-up review visit if there are failing outcomes
- Subsequent review interval will be reduced following failed outcome or an upheld 'cause for concern' investigation
- Appeal process now exists.

QAA Guidance for HE Providers & Students

- Guidance on (one for students and one for staff on each topic):
 - Information on staff teaching qualifications
 - Information on class size
 - Information on workload
 - Information on how you can comment on your course
- Guidance on scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff
- Streamlined RPL (Scotland)
- Enterprise and entrepreneurship
- How should we best use these publications?

UK Quality Code for HE

Part A: Setting and maintaining threshold academic standards

A1: The national level

A2: The subject and qualification level

A3: The programme level

A4: Approval and review

A5: Externality

A6: Assessment of achievement of learning outcomes

Part C: Information about higher education provision

Information for the public about the HE provider

Information for prospective students

Information for current students

Information for students on completion of their studies

Information for those with responsibility for academic standards and quality

Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality

B1: Programme design and approval

B2: Admissions

B3: Learning and teaching

B4: Student support

B5: Student engagement

B6: Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning

B7: External examining

B8: Programme monitoring and review

B9: Complaints and appeals

B10: Managing HE provision with others

B11: Research degrees

UK Quality Code for HE

- **Newly published last year:**
 - B3: Learning and teaching (Sep 12)
 - B4: Enabling student development and achievement (Mar 13)
 - B9: Academic appeals and student complaints (Apr 13)
 - B10: Managing higher education provision with others (Dec 12)
- **Awaiting publication of:**
 - Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards (Oct 13)
 - B1: Programme design and approval (Oct 13)
 - B2: Recruitment and admission to HE (Oct 13)
 - B6: Assessment of students and recognition of prior learning (Oct 13)
 - B8: Programme monitoring and review (Oct 13)

And 'at home'

- FAS Four year degrees
- Alternative (Exit) awards
- MRes/ Professional Doctorates
- Programme Specifications/ E-Val

FAS: Four-year degrees

- All FAS bachelors degrees may now offer either 'sandwich' or 'study abroad' years
- A common framework for these has been approved
- New awards will be able to 'opt in' to either or both
- The 'year out' contains credit bearing modules, and will contribute to classification
- VASP panels will not be able to alter the arrangements for these elements of new programmes

Alternative (Exit) Awards

- All University degrees have now had CertHE and DipHE alternative (exit) awards added by 'block validation'
- In future, at validation, DipHE alternative awards should be 'titled', and panels will need to ensure that the title is appropriate
- CertHE awards will not normally be 'titled', but if panels are convinced that a proposed title is both appropriate and justified, a title may be given.

MRes/ Professional Doctorates

- We have now approved perhaps ten Masters by Research (MRes) programmes
 - MRes Framework
- Aim to generate greater student interest in research degrees
- Some confusion in panels:
 - Although a research degree it is administered and owned by faculties like any taught masters
 - It comprises 60 taught credits and a 120 credit research module
 - Research modules are assessed by dissertation and viva (arranged by the faculty, and including an external examiner)
 - Module boards in faculties, and award board in the Graduate School.
- We now have a Professional Doctorate Framework
 - Doctoral programme, 1/3 taught modules; 2/3 doctoral research
 - Programme proposals will be considered by a VASP panel
 - Panel members will have to be active researchers/ doctoral supervisors

Programme Specifications/ E-Val

- Will have seen the new submission templates with the Programme Spec created using EVal
- The Programme Specs and Module Specs are maintained on EVal, and are the University's 'DCD' master copy. The archive is electronic, not paper, and FQOs can arrange access for those who need it
- Other documents are **not** retained
- EVal continues to evolve, but is reaching 'stability'.

Any Questions?

THANK YOU AGAIN

For all you have done last year

and

All you will do this next year

VASP Chairs' Breakout

Professor Ian Robinson

Dean of Quality Enhancement
Director of the Graduate School

Agenda

- Welcome/ introductions
- Role of the Chair (reprise)
- National agenda
- Validation
- Major modifications
- Periodic review
- Thematic review
- Extraordinary audit
- Collaborative provision

Role of the Chair

- (In consultation with the Secretary) To manage the validation/review event: preliminary meeting, agenda-setting, plenary discussion, conclusions and feedback
- To approve the Secretary's report
- (for validations) To sign off on meeting any conditions set
- More guidance from www.edgehill.ac.uk/aqdu:
 - Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4
 - *'Preparing for Programme Approval'*
 - *'Preparing for Periodic Review'*

National agenda

Partnership with students

- Quality Code emphasises ‘partnership with students’ throughout
- How can we test this in validation wrt:
 - Transition arrangements
 - Teaching and learning
 - Assessment
 - Employability?
- How can we bring this to panel members’ attention?

NSS

- Continued weaker performances on
 - Course organisation
 - Feedback to students
- How can we bring scrutiny to bear?

Validation (VASP)

- Aspects for scrutiny:
 - Confirm external contribution during programme design
- Submission document now based on eVal Programme Specification
 - Additional template (Variant Part B) still in use to provide detail for the validation, but has no use thereafter
- Validation confers indefinite approval, subject to successful periodic review
- Validation reports to AQSC, and summary/recommendations to LTC for final approval.

Major modifications (VASP)

- Should really only focus on the aspects being changed
- Should not need to be unduly protracted
- External panel input comes from the current external examiner in the form of a written statement
- For 'simple' validations (Secretary's recommendation), correspondence may be the preferred option:
 - Email circulation
 - Chair invites comments
 - Email discussion with team
 - Conclusions
 - Report
 - Can be complex, and best retained for very simple cases!

Periodic review (VASP)

- Successful periodic review to confer continuing approval of all current awards (replaces 're-validation' unless the Faculty specifically requests it)
- Periodic review cycle becomes 5-yearly
- Student membership
- 'in partnership with students'
- Programme modification process enables curricula to be refreshed between periodic reviews
 - Changes reflected in the Programme Specification
- DVC wishes to move to using PVC Deans as periodic Review Chairs
 - Not always possible!
- Reports to LTC for consideration

Thematic Review

- The record of DVC (Academic)'s departmental Autumn Monitoring meetings are the departmental AMRs
- Departments still expected to conduct module and programme reviews internally
 - Standard module questionnaires to be developed
- Programme reviews still to be considered at programme board
- Consolidated lessons identified from AMRs are likely to lead to thematic enquiries
- **Format varies, but typically several days spread over several months**

Extraordinary Audit

- Deployed as required to address emerging issues
- Troubleshooting to identify academically secure solutions

Collaborative Provision

CP Categories

- Two new categories and re-definition of categories A-F:
 - Cat A – Placements (Faculty)
 - Cat B – Outreach learning venues (Faculty>APC)
 - Cat C – Outreach supported learning centres (Faculty>APC)
 - **Cat D - Accreditation of employer-provided training (Faculty>APC>VASP)**
 - **Cat E – Articulation routes (Faculty>APC>VASP)**
 - **Cat F – Validation and franchise (Faculty>APC>VASP)**
- For overseas approvals, APC generally insists on VASP approval

CP Approval

- Legal, financial and academic ‘due diligence’
- The first two are ‘executive’ responsibilities, the third ‘deliberative’
- Three-stage deliberative process:
 - Partner approval (also informed by legal due diligence)
 - Programme approval (not required if programme already exists)
 - Delivery approval
- Events may be conflated into a single meeting
- Proposals increasingly complex (eg multiple types of provision in a single partner)
- Approval events are rarely alike
- For overseas approvals, APC generally insists on a VASP approval event

Category E

- **Articulation:** a programme of another provider is approved as an entry route to one of Edge Hill's own awards
- Already being used in overseas collaborations, e.g. FYIT Singapore Diploma approved as an articulation route to Level 6 of the BSc Business and Management
- Edge Hill not* responsible for partner's learning opportunities but will monitor curriculum and standards of the articulation route to protect against 'drift'

* But we are awaiting a national sense of what QAA's new 'ultimate' responsibility means

Overseas validations

- University now seeking 'rich' (ie large, multiple-relationships) partnerships
- Expect one or two of these events every year from now on
- VASP Chairs and panel members will be required (may involve freeing up a whole week in diaries)
- Chairs to be trained up for overseas duty on a rolling basis: first outing as 'ordinary' panel member, second outing as Chair
- Guidance for panels in '*A Guide to the Approval of Collaborative Provision*' (Collaborative Provision intranet)

Summary

- National agenda
- Validation
- Major modifications
- Periodic review
- Thematic review
- Extraordinary audit
- Collaborative provision

Questions?

‘Student Engagement in Quality Processes’

Tony Turjansky

Head of Academic Quality,

Academic Quality and Development Unit

‘Working in partnership’

The new UK Quality Code for HE is permeated with references to partnership with students, e.g.:

(UKQCHE Chapter B1 Programme design and approval)

- “Higher education providers **engage students in programme design and approval processes...** When new programmes are designed and developed, feedback on generic elements of the programme such as personal development planning is sought from students, as well as feedback from students studying in cognate subject areas.”

(Chapter B3 Learning and teaching)

- “A **partnership between staff and students** can empower students to develop further as active and independent learners who recognise and take responsibility for their own learning... A key characteristic of UK higher education is the emphasis placed on **students to engage in independent learning, working in partnership with staff.**”

‘Working in partnership’ (contd)

(Chapter B4 Enabling student development and achievement)

- “The systems which enable students' academic progression are implemented through a **partnership between students and staff in both professional services and academic departments...** Professional services, academic departments and any student representative bodies **work in partnership with students** to achieve a seamless approach from the student perspective.”

(Chapter B5 Student engagement)

- “Higher education providers take deliberate steps to **engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience...** By working together to a common agreed purpose, steps can be taken that lead to enhancements for all concerned. The terms reflect a mature relationship based on mutual respect between students and staff.”

(Chapter B8 Programme monitoring and review)

- “Higher education providers **engage students in programme monitoring and review** processes.”

Implications of the Code

- Partnership with students is expected at every stage of the programme life-cycle, from programme development through delivery and support to monitoring and review
- Course teams must evidence this, and VASP panels consider it, in validations and periodic reviews
- **Programme design and approval:**
 - Is exposing initial proposals (ADCs) for new programmes to student reps at programme boards sufficient? Could/should students be more actively involved at the design stage?
 - Should VASP include student panel members at validation (this already happens for periodic review)?

Implications (contd)

- **Learning and teaching:**
 - Do submission documents evidence sufficiently how staff work with students to develop independent learning?
- **Enabling student development and achievement:**
 - Do submissions evidence sufficiently how academic and support services work with students in a 'joined up' approach to support?
- **Student engagement and Programme monitoring and review:**
 - Do submissions evidence sufficiently how students are enabled to contribute to quality enhancement?

Group discussion

1. Using the '*Proforma agenda for validation*' (**supplied**), consider how and where student engagement and partnership with students could be explored in more detail at validation
2. Discuss how course teams might evidence student involvement in programme development and design (including TLA and student support)
3. Consider the merits of including students on validation panels – how might they contribute effectively?

‘Quality Assurance of Online Programmes’



Professor Mark Schofield

Dean of Teaching and Learning, Academic Director SOLSTICE Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Director of the Centre for Learning and Teaching Research

Brian Smith

Head of Technology Enhanced Learning

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 1

The academic standards of all awards made under a FDL arrangement should meet the Expectations of the Quality Code.

Indicator 2

The awarding institution should inform any professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB), which has approved or recognised a programme that is the subject of a possible or actual FDL arrangement, of its proposals and of any final agreements which involve the programme. The status of the programme in respect of PSRB recognition should be made clear to prospective students.

Indicator 3

FDL arrangements should be fully costed and should be accounted for accurately and fully.

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 4

The scope, coverage and assessment strategy of a FDL programme should be described in a programme specification that refers to relevant subject benchmark statements and the level of award, and that is readily available and comprehensible to stakeholders.

Indicator 5

The awarding institution should ensure that arrangements for admission to the FDL programme take into account the Expectations and Indicators of *Chapter B2: Admissions* of the Quality Code.

Indicator 6

The awarding institution is responsible for ensuring that the outcomes of assessment for a programme provided under a FDL arrangement meet the specified academic level of the award as defined in the FHEQ (or SCQF in Scotland), in the context of the relevant subject benchmark statement(s).

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 7

External examining procedures for programmes offered through FDL arrangements should be consistent with the awarding institution's normal practices.

Indicator 8

External examiners of FDL programmes must receive briefing and guidance approved by the awarding institution sufficient for them to fulfil their role effectively.

Indicator 9

The minimum level of information that prospective and registered students should have about a FDL programme is the programme specification approved by the awarding institution.

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 10

The information made available to prospective students and those registered on a FDL programme should include information to students about the appropriate channels for particular concerns, complaints and appeals, making clear the channels through which they can contact the awarding institution directly.

Indicator 11

The awarding institution should monitor regularly the information given by the partner organisation or agent to prospective students and those registered on a FDL programme.

Indicator 12

The awarding institution should ensure that it has effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to its provision offered through FDL arrangements.

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 13

Students should have access to:

documents that set out the respective responsibilities of the awarding institution and the programme presenter for the delivery of an FDL programme or element of study

descriptions of the component units or modules of an FDL programme or element of study, to show the intended learning outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment methods of the unit or module

a clear schedule for the delivery of their study materials and for assessment of their work.

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 14

The awarding institution, whether or not working through a programme presenter, should ensure that students can be confident that:

- any FDL programme or element offered for study has had the reliability of its delivery system tested, and that contingency plans would come into operation in the event of the failure of the designed modes of delivery
- the delivery system of an FDL programme or element of study delivered through e-learning methods is fit for its purpose, and has an appropriate availability and life expectancy
- the delivery of any study materials direct to students remotely through, for example, e-learning methods or correspondence, is secure and reliable, and that there is a means of confirming its safe receipt

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 14

The awarding institution, whether or not working through a programme presenter, should ensure that students can be confident that:

- study materials, whether delivered through staff of a programme presenter or through web-based or other distribution channels, meet specified expectations of the awarding institution in respect of the quality of teaching and learning support material for a programme or element of study leading to one of its awards
- the educational aims and intended learning outcomes of a programme delivered through FDL arrangements are reviewed periodically for their continuing validity and relevance, making reference to the Indicators of *Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review* of the Quality Code.

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 15

Prospective students should receive a clear and realistic explanation of the expectations placed upon them for study of the FDL programme or elements of study, and for the nature and extent of autonomous, collaborative and supported aspects of learning.

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 16

Students should have access to:

a schedule for any learner support available to them through timetabled activities, for example tutorial sessions or web-based conferences

clear and up to date information about the learning support available to them locally and remotely for their FDL programme or elements of study

documents that set out their own responsibilities as learners, and the commitments of the awarding institution and the support provider (if appropriate) for the support of an FDL programme or element of study.

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 17

Students should have:

from the outset of their study, an identified contact, either local or remote through email, telephone, fax or post, who can give them constructive feedback on academic performance and authoritative guidance on their academic progression where appropriate, regular opportunities for inter-learner discussions about the programme, both to facilitate collaborative learning and to provide a basis for facilitating their participation in the quality assurance of the programme appropriate opportunities to give formal feedback on their experience of the programme.

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 18

The awarding institution, whether or not working through a support provider, should be able to ensure that students can be confident that: staff who provide support to learners on FDL programmes have appropriate skills, and receive appropriate training and development support for learners, whether delivered through staff of a support provider or through web-based or other distribution channels, meets specified expectations of the awarding institution for the quality of learner support for a programme of study leading to one of its awards.

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 19

Students should have access to:

information on the ways in which their achievements will be judged, and the relative weighting of units, modules or elements of the programme in respect of assessment overall
timely formative assessment on their academic performance to provide a basis for individual constructive feedback and guidance, and to illustrate the awarding institution's expectations for summative assessment.

Indicators of sound practice: Flexible and distributed learning

Indicator 20

The awarding institution, whether or not working through a programme presenter or support provider, should ensure that students can be confident that:

their assessed work is properly attributed to them, particularly in cases where the assessment is conducted through remote methods that might be vulnerable to interception or other interference

those with responsibility for assessment are capable of confirming that a student's assessed work is the original work of that student only, particularly in cases where the assessment is conducted through remote methods

any mechanisms, such as web-based methods or correspondence, for the transfer of their work directly to assessors, are secure and reliable, and that there is a means of proving or confirming the safe receipt of their work.