Quality Assurance of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
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INTRODUCTION

The calibre of academic staff and the quality of their practice are pre-conditions for the assurance of quality and standards in higher education. This chapter of the Quality Management Handbook is based on the premise that staff are largely responsible for improving and enhancing their own practice which for current purposes may be defined as the teaching, support and assessment of students. Nevertheless, managers are accountable to the University for ensuring that the monitoring, review and development of staff both individually and collectively operate comprehensively, consistently and effectively.

This chapter makes frequent reference to the University’s Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Frameworks¹ and policies for teaching, learning and assessment² which are themselves aligned with the Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (UKQCHE)³, in particular Chapter B3 ‘Learning and teaching’⁴ and B6 ‘Assessment of students and recognition of prior learning’⁵. Institutional policies and procedures for student support and the provision of learning resources are similarly aligned with UKQCHE Chapter B4 ‘Enabling student development and achievement’⁶ and Edge Hill students contribute to the quality assurance of their own learning in line with Chapter B5 ‘Student engagement’⁷. Institutional monitoring and review processes⁸ consider the quality of the student learning experience and department-level monitoring includes programme and module evaluation⁹ and teaching observation¹⁰. Departments/areas also support staff to engage with good practice outwith the University through membership of academic and professional communities and the holding of external examinerships¹¹.

¹ See Section 2 of this chapter.
² http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/homepage/about/strategies-and-policies/.
⁴ Expectation: “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.”
⁵ Expectation: “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.”
⁶ Expectation: “Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.”
⁷ Expectation: “Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.”
⁸ For a description of the University’s annual monitoring and periodic review processes see QMH Chapter 3.
⁹ See Section 2 of this chapter.
¹⁰ See Section 1 of the chapter.
¹¹ See QMH Chapter 2.
1. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHING STAFF

The recruitment, selection and appointment of staff including associate (part-time) tutors is governed by the University’s human resources policy and procedures.\(^{12}\)

Responsibilities

All staff engaged in delivering programmes of study share responsibility for maintaining academic standards and enhancing the quality of students’ learning opportunities. In particular, Heads of Department/Area (HoDs) and programme leaders are accountable for developing and implementing local arrangements for assuring teaching quality and PVC Deans of Faculty are ultimately accountable to the Academic Board\(^ {13}\) for their implementation and for ensuring that staff are adequately supported. Faculties and their departments/areas determine the most appropriate systems and processes for managing their provision which may include designated programme and module leaders and these arrangements are tested at validation. The following functions are typically associated with programme leadership:

a) Monitoring student recruitment, retention and progression at award level
b) Providing programme-level guidance and support to module leaders and tutors
c) Ensuring appropriate communication with students including induction, and guidance for transition between levels/years
d) Ensuring programme assessment is conducted appropriately and securely including internal and external moderation and submission of module marks to assessment boards
e) Ensuring all modules within the programme have appropriate external examiner coverage
f) Operation of module evaluation questionnaires, programme boards and Student-Staff Consultative Fora including course-level student representation
g) Overseeing arrangements for personal tutoring and Personal Development Planning
h) Advising students on module options, careers information and guidance and procedures for extenuating mitigating circumstances, deferral of assessment, re-assessment, intercalation and appeals
i) Point of contact for programme-related complaints
j) Producing programme handbooks and reviewing and updating module and programme specifications and handbooks to reflect programme modifications (minor and major)
k) Contributing programme-level evaluation to departmental annual monitoring commentaries and Critical Review submissions for periodic review.

Where no single programme leader is in place and the functions of programme leadership are distributed amongst staff holding department-level responsibilities, e.g. directors of teaching or the student experience, (a) to (k) should be met collectively by the team. Staff participation in department-level committees and workgroups enables good practice to be identified and shared.

\(^{12}\) [https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/wiki/display/hr/Recruitment+and+Selection+Forms+Policies+and+Procedures](https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/wiki/display/hr/Recruitment+and+Selection+Forms+Policies+and+Procedures) (EHU staff login required).

\(^{13}\) Via its committees for learning and teaching and academic quality enhancement - see QMH Chapter 8.

Edge Hill University Quality Management Handbook
Institutional contact: Professor Mark Schofield, ext. 4101
Chapter 6 Quality Assurance of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
Latest version: October 2015
while Faculty and University-level committees, learning and teaching fellowships and associated staff development activities provide vehicles for wider dissemination and exchange.

**Staff qualifications and experience**

The University acknowledges the strengths of teaching teams and how their collective qualifications and experience support teaching and the student experience. Nevertheless, when considering the profile of teams validation panels will expect to see a ‘critical mass’ of individuals with appropriate academic qualifications and previous teaching experience. It is normally expected that teaching staff are qualified to at least the same level as the provision they are teaching, if not a level higher. In addition to academic qualifications it is expected that they will hold a teaching qualification and/or be a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) or be committed to achieving HEA Fellowship, either by completion of the University’s postgraduate certificate in higher education teaching or through the institution’s HEA-accredited CPD Scheme (see below). Staff may also possess relevant professional qualifications and/or industry experience which can be a valuable addition to teaching. For collaborative provision, Faculties via their departments/areas are responsible for approving individuals to teach on programmes that lead to Edge Hill University awards.

**Research and scholarly activity**

Staff delivering Edge Hill awards are expected to maintain their knowledge and understanding of subject-related scholarship and research commensurate with the level of the programmes being taught. At **Levels 4 and 5**, teachers will have relevant knowledge of, and maintain a close and professional understanding of, current developments in subject-related scholarship that inform curriculum design and directly enhance their teaching. Examples of this may include:

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- Familiarity with current subject-based and/or pedagogic research literature;
- Engagement with Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) subject benchmark statements;
- Engagement with relevant professional body standards (where applicable).

At **Levels 6 & 7**, teachers will have relevant knowledge of, and maintain a close and professional understanding of, current developments in subject-related research and advanced scholarship that inform curriculum design and directly enhance their teaching. While not every teacher will engage in original research, teams engaged in delivery at Levels 6 & 7 should be able to evidence some scholarly outputs that generate and disseminate academic knowledge and understanding. Examples of this are as detailed at Levels 4 & 5 (above) and may additionally include:

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- Membership of academic subject associations;
- Membership of professional bodies;
- Contributions to publications and/or conferences.

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14 For the University’s Registered Tutor Scheme for staff of collaborative partner organisations see QMH Chapter 5.
Induction, supervision, mentoring and development

Academic departments establish their own arrangements for the induction, supervision and mentoring of teaching staff which:

- Include the supply of handbooks and other relevant documentation;
- Provide for supervision, which may extend beyond the probationary period, of inexperienced staff in teaching, supporting and assessing students;
- Ensure individuals’ engagement with the University’s central staff induction programme.

Managers facilitate new teachers’ engagement with the University’s Higher Education Academy-accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education\(^{15}\) which also delivers HEA Fellowship. For more established staff, an HEA-accredited CPD Scheme\(^ {16}\) offers the opportunity to acquire Fellowship through demonstration of knowledge, understanding and experience relevant to the UK Professional Standards Framework Dimensions of Practice\(^ {17}\). All teaching staff have access to professional development activities including seminars and conferences hosted by the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT)\(^ {18}\). Academic departments make appropriate arrangements for the induction, supervision, mentoring and development of associate lecturers.

Teaching Observation and Peer Review

Observation of teaching is a key mechanism for ensuring that students receive the best possible opportunities to learn and succeed in their subject area. It provides a way to:

- Assure that the best possible teaching is available to students;
- Identify good practice for dissemination\(^ {19}\);
- Identify good practitioners for further development (such as application for internal fellowship and NTF) and who make valuable contributions to the CLT professional development series, its conferences and the University Learning and Teaching Day;
- Provide evidence to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)\(^ {20}\), Ofsted\(^ {21}\) and other external agencies (including professional bodies) of the commitment to the enhancement of learning and teaching, assessment and other practices linked to students’ learning;
- Identify poor practice and enable its rectification through providing opportunities for support, challenge and professional development.

\(^{15}\) [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/professional-development/pg-cert/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/professional-development/pg-cert/).

\(^{16}\) [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/professional-development/edge-hill-university-cpd-scheme-ukpsf/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/professional-development/edge-hill-university-cpd-scheme-ukpsf/).


\(^{18}\) [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/professional-development/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/professional-development/).

\(^{19}\) In the first instance this may be through a departmental committee but may also be referred to Faculty or University committees, e.g. the Student Experience Sub-Committee (SESC) for wider internal dissemination. Opportunities for external dissemination would typically include professional associations, journal publication and conference attendance, etc.

\(^{20}\) [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/default.aspx).

Observation of teaching is invariably most productive when it is carried out in a developmental fashion by peers. It is most effective in achieving the aims above if it includes all of those who teach students. This may include staff in learning support roles as appropriate to ensure peer supported development and sharing of good practice. It is important that observers have the skills and knowledge to make sound judgements about the quality of teaching and to be able to give high quality and constructive feedback; wherever possible, teaching observation should be constructive with areas of commendation highlighted. It is not a reviewer’s job to tell staff how to teach, or to impose their own working methods, but to engage in developmental dialogue before and after observation. To make observation effective, training and guidelines should be made available.

Heads of Department/Area are ultimately responsible for teaching quality and for staff development. Therefore, the receipt of records of teaching observation by a HoD/Area is valuable, both for the advancement of taught provision within the department and for the professional development of its teaching staff. A core part of the HoD/Area’s role is also to identify any problems that may need to be addressed and to ensure they are acted upon so as to protect students’ basic entitlement to be taught well - such should become evident through the current module feedback and student consultative processes. HoD/Areas should aim to observe the teaching of all their staff at some stage over a three year rolling period and this includes the compulsory observations required during probation. All staff teaching or facilitating learning (including Graduate Teaching Assistants) should also be involved in teaching observation within a subject/area, including associate lecturers, and Faculties should reflect on whether collaborative partners’ own teaching review processes are sufficient to satisfy the University of the quality of teaching on its awards or whether additional review mechanisms may be required.

Faculties should have their own plans and processes for the operation of teaching observation which address the following requirements:

1. A clear rubric for observation and feedback.
2. Provision of access to local or central training for observation.
3. A published timetable for observations so that the process may be monitored by managers.
4. Systems for capturing the outcomes of the observation and for reporting these to the HoD/Area with a particular focus on good practice and dissemination.
5. Mechanisms for reporting generic and specific professional development needs for action to the CLT where they cannot be easily provided locally, or where support needs to be provided in collaboration with the department.
7. Guidelines on supporting teachers whose teaching is unsatisfactory and linkage with performance review processes, as appropriate.

All Edge Hill staff are contractually obliged to participate in the University’s Performance Review and Development (PRD) process which may be informed by the areas for development identified in individuals’ teaching observations. Managers and academic staff should ensure that full

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22 [https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/hr/Performance+Review](https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/hr/Performance+Review) (EHU staff login required)
attention is given to the longer-term imperatives of supporting engagement with their wider academic communities (other HEIs, subject associations, professional bodies, etc.) and the research and scholarly activity that necessarily underpins their responsibilities for learning and teaching, and for curriculum development.

It should be noted that teaching observation, with this core focus on the peer review dimension, may include broader aspects of academic practice such as review of colleagues’ work in the Virtual Learning Environment, planning for teaching, assessment and feedback and personal tutoring, all of which make valuable contributions to the enhancement of teaching for learning.

Further advice and guidance on the development and operation of teaching review is available from the CLT on request and from Senior Learning and Teaching and Senior SOLSTICE Fellows (see below).

Learning and Teaching Fellowship and SOLSTICE Fellowship

The Learning and Teaching Fellowship and SOLSTICE Fellowship schemes\(^\text{23}\) are designed to:

- Recognise and reward excellence in teaching and supporting learning.
- Promote implementation of the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy\(^\text{24}\).
- Contribute to enhancing the learning of students and other staff.

To this end they assist in the achievement of the six inter-related key objectives of the Learning and Teaching Strategy:

1. The provision of quality learning opportunities, and guidance and support for students/learners.
2. Support for staff to engage in continuing professional development to enhance and improve their teaching and learning facilitation activities.
3. The continued development and strengthening of learning support services and the learning infrastructure.
4. The monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching to identify, support and disseminate good practice within the institution and within the wider community.
5. The provision of a focus for research and development into the potential offered by new technologies.
6. Enhancement of student learning through ‘research-informed teaching’ in relation to the formal curriculum, academic practice, and the components of the broader student experience that impact upon learning.

Fellowship activity is supported and monitored by the Dean of Teaching and Learning Development (or their designates) and there is an expectation that Fellows will support University

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\(^{23}\) [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/homepage/key-areas-of-activity/fellowship-scheme/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/homepage/key-areas-of-activity/fellowship-scheme/)

\(^{24}\) [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/homepage/about/strategies-and-policies/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/homepage/about/strategies-and-policies/)
staff development dissemination activities and the identification of development for programme design and delivery, and engage with and support CLT activities.

**Categories of Fellowship**

**Fellows** are expected to follow Faculty-defined lines of development and scholarly activity during their tenure which are specified in their application and related to the foci specified below which may include references to:

- The University Learning and Teaching Strategy or Information Strategy/e-learning strategy.
- Faculty/Department/Learning Services teaching and learning/learning support development.
- An area/s of interest germane to their individual teaching/learning support practice context.

**Senior Fellows** lead on activities to develop capacity and capability within their Faculties, identifying and contributing to providing professional development opportunities in relation to learning and teaching for individuals and groups both formally and informally as appropriate. They also:

- Liaise with and advise Associate Deans on relevant quality management and enhancement processes e.g. the Learning and Teaching Strategy action plan and validation, monitoring and review activities.
- Provide curriculum support, advice and guidance in relation to (e-)learning developments and approaches and feed into relevant University deliberative structures (committees).
- Identify and realise opportunities to engage learners and other stakeholders in feedback and evaluation of learning and teaching activities.
- Lead and encourage support for learning and teaching research, scholarship and knowledge transfer activities including support for Fellowship project activities, dissemination of research and participation in developments related to learning and teaching as appropriate.
- Present University learning and teaching developments, research and evaluation of projects and developments at regional, national and international conferences and events concerned with learning and teaching, and publication of articles in relation to the above as appropriate.
- Take a lead on identification of external funding opportunities and coordination of consultancy-related knowledge transfer activities.
- Mentor Fellows, and work alongside them, to advocate and embed the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degrees Frameworks in the University through application, communication and dissemination.
- Liaise regularly with the CLT team to keep abreast of new learning and teaching practices and to ensure synergy between Faculty developments and University-wide plans.
- Represent the University at regional, national and international conferences and events concerned with teaching and learning as appropriate.

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25 Applications for both Fellowship schemes are invited annually in December and considered by an academic panel.

26 [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/governance/strategies-policies/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/governance/strategies-policies/).

27 See Section 2 of this chapter.
• Contribute to the Learning and Teaching Strategy Group and other institutional fora as appropriate.

External Examinerships for Edge Hill University staff

UKQCHE Chapter B7 ‘External examining’ states that “Institutions recognise the importance, and mutual benefit, of the work undertaken by many of their staff as external examiners for other institutions”\(^{28}\). The appointment of Edge Hill University staff as external examiners helps maintain standards and promote quality enhancement, both for the appointing institution and for the University which benefits from its staff’s exposure to, and evaluation of, wider sector practice. Edge Hill encourages such opportunities and provides development\(^ {29}\) for staff seeking external examiner appointments.

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degree Frameworks

The University’s Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degree Frameworks contain guiding principles for programme design, both structural and pedagogical, and encourage the development of a contemporary curriculum that:

• Is consistent with relevant internal and external reference points, most notably the University’s Academic Regulations\(^ {30}\) and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education\(^ {31}\).
• Provides guidance on the shape and size of modules that best serve the needs of learners and subject areas.
• Uses flexible learning\(^ {32}\) to maximise accessibility and relevance to students (and employers).
• Allows for employer involvement in curriculum design, delivery and assessment and recognises prior and concurrent ‘extramural’ learning (RP[E]L) and Work-Based Learning (WBL)\(^ {33}\).
• Embeds student support to facilitate learners’ transition into, through and out of programmes.

Online handbooks\(^ {34}\) contain a series of ‘lenses’ through which curricula and their delivery may be viewed, with specific guidance concerning:

• Graduate/postgraduate attributes
• Inductions and transitions
• Teaching, learning and assessment including Recognition of Prior [Experiential] Learning
• Personal tutoring
• Personal Development Planning (PDP)

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\(^{29}\) See also [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/aqdu/external-examiners/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/aqdu/external-examiners/).

\(^{30}\) [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/governance/strategies-policies/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/governance/strategies-policies/).


\(^{32}\) See also QMH Chapter 7.

\(^{33}\) Ibid.

\(^{34}\) [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/aqdu/curriculum-frameworks/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/aqdu/curriculum-frameworks/).
• Learning literacies
• Work-Related and Work-Based Learning
• Technology Enhanced Learning and distance learning
• Employability
• International dimensions
• Education for sustainable development

Associated with the Frameworks is a wiki-based repository of additional guidance and supporting materials which is available to all Edge Hill University staff.\(^{35}\)

Validation panels explore the fitness-for-purpose and variety of strategies for teaching, assessment and student support during programme approval.\(^{36}\)

**Inclusive design and reasonable adjustments**

Teaching and learning are influenced by University policies\(^ {37}\) and UK legislation\(^ {38}\) related to equality and disability. Faculties seek to make their programmes accessible and inclusive at the point of design, devising learning and assessment activities that do not knowingly disadvantage or exclude any particular student group. Course designers take steps to identify and resolve any barriers and biases in respect of a proposed programme’s content, learning activities and learning outcomes, and assessment. For example, consideration may be given to how students with any form of sensory impairment will access learning materials resulting in adaptations to the materials or how and when they are made available. The provision of academic and personal support takes into account the diverse needs of students and the University subscribes to inclusive assessment as described in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education\(^ {39}\), “ensuring that assessment is designed in a way that meets the needs of all students at every stage of the assessment process, including those studying at different locations and through online arrangements, and those who possess one or more protected characteristics.”\(^ {40}\) Inclusion also features prominently among the fourteen principles of the University’s Assessment Policy which states that “assessment will be informed by Edge Hill’s Equal Opportunities policy and will seek to be inclusive and not to disadvantage specific individuals or groups of students.”\(^ {41}\) Validation panels for programme approval will judge the extent to which inclusion has been considered within the curriculum development process.

Once a programme or module is validated, reasonable adjustments (such as additional time for an examination) or alternative assessments (substituting one form of assessment for another) may be accessed by students with specific learning difficulties or disabilities who are advised to consult tutors or the Inclusive Services Team before making an application to their Faculty. In the case of alternative assessments, the substitute format is at the discretion of the module leader.

\(^{35}\) [https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/ufr/Home](https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/ufr/Home) (EHU staff login required).


\(^{37}\) [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/governance/strategies-policies/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/governance/strategies-policies/).


\(^{41}\) [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/ct/homepage/about/strategies-and-policies/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/ct/homepage/about/strategies-and-policies/).
on condition that it (i) meets the validated module learning outcomes (and any professional body requirements); (ii) is confirmed with the external examiner\textsuperscript{42}; and (iii) is verified by the responsible programme leader or Head of Department/Area.

Programme information: programme and module handbooks

Departments/areas give careful consideration to the information required by students to secure their status as ‘partners’ in their learning. Departments ensure the accessibility of such information which may be disseminated through various means including programme and module handbooks, noticeboards and the \textit{Learning Edge} (Blackboard) Virtual Learning Environment. Whilst programme teams will wish to bespoke such materials the University has developed guidelines\textsuperscript{43} that describe the information that it expects to be published to students in module and programme handbooks. It is important that students can access information easily and do not feel overwhelmed by it and in this regard departments will ensure that it is conveyed in a proportionate and timely manner. Programme and/or module handbooks will also contain the name, position and home institution of the relevant external examiner(s)\textsuperscript{44}.

Programme monitoring

Departments/areas and programme teams are responsible for monitoring the student experience and the quality of their learning opportunities. In addition to the University’s annual monitoring and periodic review processes Faculties ensure that departments have in place arrangements for the monitoring of modules and programmes\textsuperscript{45} based on the following considerations:

- The value of informal as well as formal mechanisms for eliciting the views of learners.
- Use of student module evaluation questionnaires (MEQs, see below).
- Use of module tutor reports based on student MEQs and evaluating quantitative data on student achievement.
- The role of Programme Boards and Student-Staff Consultative Fora (SSCFs) in considering the outputs from monitoring and review processes and external examiner reports (see below).
- The need to tailor the provision of feedback from student evaluation and consultative processes according to the mode of delivery, needs and circumstances of specific types of learner, e.g. part-time students and those engaged in distance learning programmes\textsuperscript{46}.

Module evaluation questionnaires (MEQs)

It is expected that all departments/areas will operate a system of formal written evaluation by students at module level which captures qualitative feedback on the module’s content, organisation, teaching, learning and assessment and learning resources. The outcomes of module

\textsuperscript{42} For modules that would normally require external examination – see QMH Chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{43} See ‘Guidelines for Programme and Module Handbooks’, at http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/homepage/about STRATEGIES-AND-POLICIES/.

\textsuperscript{44} Unless an alternative medium is used, e.g. the Virtual Learning Environment – see also QMH Chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{45} See QMH Chapter 1, ‘Faculty Academic Quality Statements’.

\textsuperscript{46} See QMH Chapter 7.
evaluation may influence decisions concerning module modification and the re-validation or replacement\(^{47}\) of modules and module handbooks provide a useful vehicle for communicating changes made in response to feedback from previous cohorts.

**Student course representation, Programme Boards and Student-Staff Consultative Fora**

Student course representatives are essential to effective communication between staff and students on programme-related matters. Edge Hill University’s course representation scheme is managed by the Students’ Union\(^{48}\) and is central in promoting academic responsibility within the student community, providing a channel for the student voice to be heard and encouraging discussion between students and academic and support staff who work in partnership to maintain and enhance programme quality. Representatives are elected at the start of the academic year and the Students’ Union provides training and networking opportunities that enable them to meet and share their experiences. In addition to attending Programme Boards and Student-Staff Consultative Fora (SSCFs)\(^{49}\) course representatives have the opportunity to become involved in wider student consultation, e.g. participating in Faculty committees and other working groups, and to develop transferable skills in communication, negotiation and advocacy that are useful to and valued by employers.

In order to secure comprehensive and effective course representation, departments/areas:

- (In conjunction with the Students’ Union) Promote the value of course representation to students, encouraging and facilitating the election of course representatives.
- (In conjunction with the Students’ Union) Prepare and brief course representatives for their participation in SSCFs and Programme Boards, scheduling meetings to maximise their attendance and enabling them to contribute to and shape agendas.
- Include the notes of SSCF meetings as a standing item on the agendas of Programme Boards.
- Communicate the decisions (minutes) of SSCFs and Programme Boards to course representatives and facilitate their ability to communicate with their peers, e.g. through reserved time in classes or via department noticeboards, group email or the Virtual Learning Environment.

Student course representatives contribute to the University’s periodic review process\(^{50}\). Students’ Union sabbatical officers also participate in periodic review panels and represent the student community on Faculty Boards and several University-level committees including the Academic Board and its Academic Quality Enhancement Committee, Learning and Teaching Committee and Student Experience Sub-Committee\(^{51}\).

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\(^{47}\) See QMH Chapter 4.
\(^{49}\) See QMH Chapter 8.
\(^{50}\) See QMH Chapter 3.
\(^{51}\) See QMH Chapter 8.
3. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment design and evaluation

Assessment is an integral part of learning and is linked closely to the aims and rationale of a programme/module, the methods of teaching and learning to be used and the intended learning outcomes to be demonstrated by students. In designing assessment activities tutors ensure they are appropriate to the learning outcomes and will enable their achievement to be measured. Guidance on the writing and assessment of learning outcomes is available from the Centre for Learning and Teaching.⁵²

Programme teams are responsible for deciding the nature, volume and timing of assessment in modules and programmes which are considered and approved at validation. When setting a specific task, e.g. an essay title, tutors ensure that it conforms to the assessment strategy that was approved at validation and that the assignment specification has been moderated by a second member of the teaching team and agreed with the external examiner.⁵³ Departments have procedures to ensure there is no inadvertent overlap between the assessments of different modules of the same programme or between coursework and examination questions in the same module.

Module evaluation and annual monitoring provide opportunities to reflect upon the inclusivity and general fitness-for-purpose of all teaching, learning and assessment activities. The terms of reference for assessment boards include specific evaluation of assessment in modules with low first-time pass rates, the precise threshold being defined by each Faculty.

Marking criteria, second marking, internal moderation and external examination

Marking criteria⁵⁴ are used to classify student achievement of intended learning outcomes above (and below) threshold standard, i.e. Pass (40%). Programme teams develop criteria that measure the demonstration of knowledge, understanding and skills within each classification band - Third, Lower Second, Upper Second and First Class (although further differentiation within the 70-100% First Class band is considered best practice). Use of marking criteria should be transparent within the assessment process enabling students, internal moderators and external examiners to see clearly how decisions have been arrived at and to this end will align closely with the written feedback provided to students.

First marking provides sufficient feedback to enable students to understand how their grades have been achieved and how they might raise the standard of their work in future. All examination scripts are ‘blind marked’ with the candidate’s name concealed on the cover sheet. Departments will determine whether to use blind marking for other forms of assessment such as essays although it is recognised that forms of practical assessment such as performance and

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⁵² http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/homepage/about/resources/.
⁵³ For modules at Level 5 and above but also including Level 4 for Foundation degrees - see QMH Chapter 2.
⁵⁴ Also referred to as ‘assessment criteria’ or ‘grading criteria’.
presentations often exclude this possibility. Where new staff (including associate lecturers) join a programme team and are inexperienced in assessment the module/programme leader is responsible for ensuring that they are aware of, understand and apply the marking criteria. Staff development for assessment is available from the Centre for Learning and Teaching and programme teams are advised initially to moderate all or a high proportion of less experienced colleagues’ assessments (see below).

Second marking is a process for reviewing and confirming marks as a prelude to internal moderation (see below). Unlike moderation it is not compulsory across all assessed pieces of work but may be used where departments/areas feel it is particularly appropriate, e.g. for the assessment of final year dissertations and extended projects. Second markers may attend assessed live performances or presentations which should be video-recorded where practicable for the purpose of internal and external moderation.

Internal moderation is a process used within departments/areas to test for consistent application of the marking criteria across the range of marks achieved by a cohort. Moderation uses sampling to confirm that the profile of marks is appropriate. The moderator reviews the work with sight of the marking tutor’s grades and feedback and focuses on establishing the appropriate grade/class of the work rather than being excessively concerned to arrive at a precise numerical score. Markers and moderators agree final marks for the work and where the variance is greater than ten marks (that is, the difference of a whole classification) it may be appropriate to engage a second moderator. Where the moderator identifies a consistent variance (over or under) across the majority of a sample, an additional sample is requested and in exceptional cases may prompt the scaling of marks or a requirement to re-mark the whole cohort. Moderators are mindful of the impact of changing individual marks on the rest of the cohort. Evidence of moderation is indicated clearly on assessment feedback sheets that are made available to students (and external examiners). Discussions between marking tutors and moderators will also consider the appropriateness of marking criteria.

Following internal moderation, a sample of marked work is sent to the external examiner and a full description of this role may be found in Chapter 2 of this Handbook. Module Assessment Boards are convened to consider students’ marks and make recommendations to Progression and Award Boards according to specifications set out in the University’s Academic Regulations (sections H & I).

‘Formative experiences - Preparing for success in assessment’

All assessment including summative assessment may be considered to have formative elements and validation requires programme teams to demonstrate and explain their deliberate plans for formative experiences - a key element of ‘assessment for learning’. The formative value is greater

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56 See QMH Chapter 8.

57 [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/governance/strategies-policies/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/governance/strategies-policies/).
when coupled with highly developmental feedback but formative experiences should go further and help students to understand the nature of assessment, what it is for and how it works (see also ‘assessment literacy’, below). Programme teams demonstrate at validation how formative experiences have been incorporated into modules and the Undergraduate Degree Framework wiki\(^{58}\) contains a number of useful links and exemplars which include:

- Writing in front of students to show and explain how good writing works.
- Showing pieces of written work and describing their qualities, annotating the text with comment bubbles and track changes ‘in action’.
- Involving students in ‘marking’ sample work and giving feedback as a means of demonstrating how marking criteria are used.

### Information about assessment and ‘assessment literacy’

UKQCHE Chapter B6 refers to the development of assessment literacy - “an understanding of the assessment process - in particular how professional judgements are made and on what they are based; and the ways in which this understanding can enable more effective use of assessment feedback to improve student learning”\(^{59}\). Programme teams provide detailed information to students about the following:

- **The purposes of assessment**: staff make clear links between assessment and the module’s aims, academic rationale and learning outcomes.
- **The form(s) of assessment**: staff ensure that students who have not previously experienced a particular form of assessment receive detailed information about it and where possible have the opportunity to practise it before it is used summatively.
- **The part played by a single piece of assessment in a student’s overall award**: staff ensure that students are aware of the credit and classification system which operates in the award for which they are studying.
- **The guidance and support available to help students prepare for assessment**: staff ensure that no student is disadvantaged by unavoidable absence from any taught session in which such guidance and support was offered.
- **The marking criteria to be used in judging students’ work**: students are made aware of the learning outcomes and marking criteria that will be used to indicate the standards they have achieved. They are also advised of any penalties for incorrect spelling, grammar or academic referencing\(^{59}\). The reasons for awarding a particular grade are made explicit on the assessment feedback sheet.
- **The penalties that will be incurred for any form of academic malpractice**: students are advised of current University policy as set out in the Academic Regulations\(^{60}\).
- **The effects that non-attendance will have on assessment**: students are advised of the general attendance requirement at the commencement of their studies. No grade penalty may be

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\(^{58}\) [https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/wiki/display/ufr/Home](https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/wiki/display/ufr/Home).


\(^{60}\) [http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/governance/strategies-policies/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/governance/strategies-policies/).
incurred for poor or non-attendance unless participation is assessed through specific activities, e.g. assessed seminar activities, or is referenced explicitly within the intended learning outcomes\textsuperscript{61}.

- **The procedures for submitting work for assessment:** a clear deadline for submission is set. Staff ensure that all submitted work is collected securely and its receipt acknowledged. Work submitted late receives a zero mark.

- **Extensions:** Students are advised of the procedures for extensions which must be agreed in advance of the submission date. Extensions are approved only where unforeseen circumstances have arisen and the reasons for them are clearly documented. Departments/areas ensure that students are treated equitably when granting extensions.

- **Exceptional mitigating circumstances:** students are advised of current University policy as set out in the Academic Regulations. Exceptional mitigating circumstances (EMC) procedures allow students to notify assessment boards of factors that may have affected their performance in assessment.

- **Students with disabilities and/or specific learning difficulties:** students are advised of current University policy as set out in the Academic Regulations. Referral may also be made to the Disability Adviser and the Academic Registry.

- **Arrangements and procedures for conventional examinations:** students are advised of current University policy as set out in the Academic Regulations. A clear date, duration and location for examinations is set. Non-attendance at examination is awarded a zero mark.

- **Arrangements and procedures for computer-based examinations:** where applicable, students (and staff) are cognizant of current University policy on computer-based exams as set out in the Academic Regulations\textsuperscript{62}.

- **Feedback on coursework:** staff agree the date by which assessed work will be returned to students with relevant grades and detailed written feedback. University policy dictates a maximum turn-round time of 4 weeks although the precise time may vary depending on the nature of the assessment (e.g. a short essay compared with a lengthy dissertation) and the number of students registered on the module.

- **Feedback on examinations:** all examinations are followed by feedback which as a minimum takes the form of a group presentation to students indicating common strengths and weaknesses exhibited in scripts and advising how general performance could be improved.

- **Students’ rights to appeal against assessment decisions:** students (and staff) are made aware of the guidance prepared by the Academic Registrar on the grounds for appeal\textsuperscript{63} and the way in which appeals will be handled.

**Retention and disposal of assessed work**

The University’s policy on keeping personal information includes guidance on the correct procedure and timelines for the retention and disposal of assessed student work which takes account of the requirements for external examination and academic appeals, internal periodic

\textsuperscript{61} For example, where minimum attendance is necessary to meet professional standards and/or Fitness to Practise requirements.

\textsuperscript{62} See Appendix 12 of the Academic Regulations at http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/about/corporate/policies/appendices

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid, Appendix 21.
review and external review. Departments/areas retain copies of the sample of student work moderated by external examiners for a period of two years. At the end of this period these are destroyed in accordance with the policy ‘Retention of personal information in respect of Edge Hill students’ and the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998). The original work may be returned to students or otherwise disposed of on completion of the assessment process, typically two weeks after the Progression and Award Board. Faculties establish separate arrangements for the retention and disposal of examination scripts and research theses.

4. KEY INFORMATION SET

Higher education providers are required to publish standardised information for each undergraduate degree in the form of a Key Information Set (KIS) which includes the following data on programme learning and assessment activities:

1. The proportion of time spent in the following learning activities by year/stage of a programme:
   - Scheduled learning activities
     - Lecture, Seminar, Tutorial, Project Supervision, Demonstration, Practical classes & workshops, Supervised time in studio/workshop, Fieldwork, External visits, Work Based Learning
     - Placement/Year Abroad
     - Guided Independent Study

2. The proportion of summative assessment by:
   - Coursework
   - Written examination
   - Practical skills assessment

Applications for Development Consent (ADC) for new undergraduate programmes contain estimated data on learning and assessment activities which are confirmed at validation and guidance for the completion of ADCs is available from the Faculty Quality Officer.

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64 For example by QAA, Ofsted and professional bodies. However, some professional bodies will require evidence from a complete undergraduate cohort over three years.


66 For Applications for Development Consent and the University’s validation process see QMH Chapter 4.