Edge Hill University

The Quality Management Handbook

2021-2022

A Guide to Edge Hill University's
Academic Quality Strategy

Contents

Chapter 1	**The Quality Strategy: Management of Quality and Standards**
Chapter 2	**External Examiners**
Chapter 3	**Annual Monitoring, Periodic Review and Internal Audit**
Chapter 4	**Programme and Module Approval and Modification**
Chapter 5	**Academic Partnerships**
Chapter 6	**Quality Assurance of Learning and Teaching**
Chapter 7	**Quality Assurance of Assessment**
Chapter 8	**Academic Governance**
Chapter 9	**Quality Assurance of Research Degrees**
Chapter 10	**New Procedures**
Appendix	**Glossary**

Chapter 1
The Quality Strategy: Management of Quality and Standards

Updated October 2021

Contents

SCOPE 3

PURPOSE 3

EXTERNAL REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT 3

The Office for Students 3
Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework 5
Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) 6
Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies 6

QUALITY MANAGEMENT AT EDGE HILL 7

Our Quality 'Culture' 7
Assessing and Managing Academic Risk 7
Setting and Maintaining Standards and Enhancing Quality 8
Designing our Quality Assurance Systems 11
Evaluating our Quality Assurance Systems 13
Faculty Academic Quality Statements 13

SCOPE

The Quality Management Handbook (or QMH) describes the University's strategic approach to the management of quality and standards including the operational procedures used to:

- Set and maintain the standards of its taught qualifications and awards; and,
- To enhance the quality of the student experience.

The QMH is owned and managed by the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework unit (GQASC)[1], with principal oversight by Academic Board's Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC)[2].

PURPOSE

This handbook is the product of years of debate and experimentation within the University. The processes and procedures described in chapters 2 - 9 are continuously evaluated against current regulatory conditions (including alignment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)[3]) and sector best practice. Alongside other Institutional policies and procedures, it enables the Institution to remain compliant with the Office for Students' (OfS) Ongoing Conditions of Registration[4] contained within the Regulatory Framework for Higher Education (HE) in England[5], specifically the B conditions for quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students (see Figure 1).

On a practical level it assists staff in developing a detailed and contemporary understanding of the Institution's approach to setting standards and managing quality and the specific operational processes with which they are required to engage.

EXTERNAL REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

The Office for Students

The OfS is the independent regulator of HE in England. OfS's primary aim is to ensure that English HE providers deliver high quality courses, which deliver successful outcomes for all students and that their qualifications hold their value at the point of qualification and over time, in line with sector recognised standards.

[1] www.edgehill.ac.uk/gqasc/.
[2] Note: Principal responsibility for the quality assurance of postgraduate research degrees including PhD, Professional Doctorate and Masters by Research programmes resides with the Graduate School, with principal oversight by the Academic Board's Research and Innovation Committee - see Chapters 8 & 9.
[3] www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf?sfvrsn=170af781_16.
[4] Conditions of registration are the primary tool that the OfS uses to regulate higher education providers in England.
[5] Securing student success: Regulatory framework for higher education in England - Office for Students

All publicly funded HE providers in England are required, in accordance with section 4(5) of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA), to register with the OfS by demonstrating their compliance with a set of Initial Conditions of Registration[6]. Edge Hill University was entered into the Register of HE Providers in England in 2018.

All registered providers are subject to continuous monitoring by the OfS and are measured against a set of Ongoing Conditions of Registration[7] contained within their Regulatory Framework[8]. The conditions relating to Quality and Standards (the 'B conditions') are listed in Figure 1 below. In April 2018, the **Quality Assurance Agency** (QAA) became the OfS's designated quality body (DQB) for HE in England, with responsibility for managing the quality assurance elements of the Regulatory Framework. Specific responsibilities of the DQB include designing and conducting Quality and Standards Reviews of new providers seeking entry to the HE sector in England, and where there may be compliance concerns, gathering evidence on behalf of the OfS to inform decision-making prior to any formal investigation.

Figure 1: The ongoing conditions for Quality (B1 – B4 & B6) and Standards (B5)

The provider must:	
B1	Deliver well designed courses that provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed
B2	Provide all students, from admission through to completion, with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education
B3	Deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers and/or enable further study
B4	Ensure that qualifications awarded to students hold their value at the point of qualification and over time, in line with sector recognised standards
B5	Deliver courses that meet the academic standards as they are described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications at level 4 or higher
B6	Participate in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework[9].

The OfS's approach to the regulation of quality and standards is '**principles-based'**, rather than prescriptive. This means that providers have the autonomy to establish their own internal quality assurance processes, pursue excellence as they see fit and deliver value for money (VfM) for their students.

The Regulator's approach to monitoring and intervention is **risk-based and proportionate**, meaning their focus is on providers considered to be 'at risk'. Those not perceived to be at

[6] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/.
[7] Conditions of registration are the primary tool that the OfS uses to regulate higher education providers in England. See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/.
[8] Securing student success: Regulatory framework for higher education in England - Office for Students
[9] See 'Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework', below.

risk i.e., those who continue to meet the conditions of registration '*will find a supportive regulator that ensures success and innovation happens with little interference*' (OfS Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20, June 2020[10]).

Value for Money

The OfS expects all HE providers in England to deliver VfM for students and for taxpayers, i.e., where students '*experience the full benefits of higher education – both during their studies and afterwards – in exchange for the effort, time and money they invest*' and when '*providers use public money and student fees efficiently and effectively to deliver graduates, from all backgrounds, who contribute to society and the economy*' (OfS Value for Money Strategy 2019 to 2021[11]). It is up to individual providers to determine how they will deliver VfM for their students, however the strategy identified several key areas to consider when thinking about VfM. Those most pertinent to academic quality are:

- improving teaching quality;
- protecting students as consumers; and
- securing positive employment outcomes.

The processes and activities described within this Handbook are aligned to the key areas noted within the strategy and therefore support the University in delivering VfM for our students. Details of the specific processes, activities and sources of evidence can be found on the key documents page of GQASC's Wiki page under 'Value for Money'.[12]

Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework

A national Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)[13] establishes where the quality of HE provision exceeds baseline expectations by conferring Bronze, Silver and Gold awards against defined criteria for teaching quality, the learning environment, and student outcomes. Following an independent panel's evaluation of institutional performance data[14] accompanied by a provider commentary, Edge Hill's most recent TEF assessment[15] confirmed that:

[10] Office for Students Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20, published June 2020.
[11] *'Office for Students' value for money strategy 2019 to 2021'* (OfS, 2019). www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/336c258b-d94c-4f15-af0a-42e1be8f66a1/ofs-vfm-strategy.pdf.
[12] https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Key+Guidance+Documents
[13] *'The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF): A short guide'* (OfS, 2019) www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/0c6bd23e-57b8-4f22-a236-fb27346cde6e/tef_short_guide_-june_2019_final.pdf.
[14] Including National Student Survey outcomes, continuation rates and graduate employment outcomes.
[15] Published in May 2017 and available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-outcomes/#/tefoutcomes/provider/10007823.

- ✓ **The higher education provider (Edge Hill University) delivers consistently outstanding teaching, learning and outcomes for its students.**
- ✓ **It is of the highest quality found in the UK.**

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

Ofsted regulate and inspect Higher Education Institutions that provide education and training services in England. While ultimate responsibility for the quality assurance of Initial Teacher Education programmes resides with AQEC, operational arrangements for external Ofsted inspection are managed by the Faculty of Education, with oversight by the Education Faculty Board.

Additionally, Ofsted, in conjunction with other bodies[16], is responsible for the oversight of apprenticeship provision. They inspect the quality of apprenticeship training that is delivered by training providers to ensure it is high-quality and meets the needs of employers and apprentices; this includes higher apprenticeships (level 5) and degree apprenticeships (level 6) which are also regulated by the Office for Students. Ofsted is responsible for inspecting the quality of apprenticeship training provision and publishing the outcomes of these inspections. Where an apprenticeship training provider is registered with the OfS they will also share relevant information with Ofsted to inform its inspection activity and its regulation of providers on its Register.

In addition to full inspection activity (due within 24 months of a monitoring visit), Ofsted carries out monitoring visits to all new apprenticeship providers. The University, has established an Ofsted Working Group for Apprenticeships (which reports to the Institutional Apprenticeship Group) to oversee preparations and operational support for this visit, anticipated to take place during 2021/22.

Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

The Institution has a strong track record in developing degree programmes that integrate academic study with professional competencies resulting in registered practitioner status in teaching[17] and health professions[18]. Accreditation by Professional Statutory and Regulatory

[16] See the Apprenticeship Accountability Statement for details of the various bodies involved in apprenticeship system oversight in England: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-accountability-statement

[17] Regulated by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

[18] Including regulation by the General Medical Council www.gmc-uk.org/, Health and Care Professions Council www.hcpc-uk.co.uk/, Nursing and Midwifery Council www.nmc.org.uk/ and Social Work England www.socialworkengland.org.uk/.

Bodies (PSRBs) is also available on several other degree programmes, for example Law (recognised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and Bar Standards Board) and Psychology (accredited by the British Psychological Society). Accreditation may extend professional body membership to our graduates or, as in Accountancy, provide exemptions from some professional examinations. Processes for the approval, monitoring and review of PSRB-regulated provision are described in Chapters 3 and 4 of this Handbook, and a Professional Accreditations Register is published on the University's website[19].

QUALITY MANAGEMENT AT EDGE HILL

Our Quality 'Culture'

The OfS's principles-based approach to regulation requires providers to demonstrate a level of maturity. Our 'quality culture' is based on the concept of **shared responsibility** in which all parts of the organisation are accountable to each other through the Institution's executive management and governance structures[20]. This handbook therefore describes the roles and expectations of individuals, groups, panels and committees (which may include students and external stakeholders) in assuring standards, identifying and managing risk and enhancing quality.

Threats to standards and quality may be generated by internal or external conditions and are either exacerbated or mitigated by how the Institution responds to them. Managers at all levels are expected to promote a 'no blame' culture in which staff:

- Have the confidence to identify and highlight potential threats to quality and standards; and,
- Are empowered to formulate and take mitigating action when needed.

Assessing and Managing Academic Risk

Whether or not academic provision is deemed to be at risk depends on the interaction between the threats identified and our ability to manage them. A department operating in a high-risk environment may be regarded as medium or low *net risk* based on its ability to effective control measures put in place. Where net risk is deemed to be high, additional scrutiny measures[21] are put in place to support the department in managing it. Quality assurance systems and processes must therefore reflect an appropriate balance of rigour and flexibility, i.e., proportionate to the level of net risk.

[19] https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/gqasc/agqa/course-design-development-and-approval/professional-accreditations/
[20] As described at www.edgehill.ac.uk/corporate-information/.
[21] E.g., a Departmental Risk Assessment or Extraordinary Audit – see Chapter 3.

The **academic planning** and **validation** (curriculum approval) processes[22] as set out in this handbook, enable the management of risk associated with developing new provision, new modes of delivery and/or entry into new markets, as well as changing market and regulatory conditions. **Monitoring and review** processes[23] facilitate the identification and management of risks that arise during programme delivery and any associated impact on quality and standards.

Setting and Maintaining Standards and Enhancing Quality

The University is responsible for setting and maintaining academic standards and enhancing the quality of the student experience. These responsibilities are discharged through staff engagement with:

- The **Academic Regulations**[24] which govern programme structures and the award of qualifications and credit;
- The **Curriculum Strategy**[25] which provides a framework for which proposals for new curriculum may be measured against and the Institution's academic portfolio may be reviewed.
- The **Taught Degrees Framework**[26] which contains practical guidance on programme design and delivery in the context of the Institutions' graduate attributes; and
- The **Quality Management Handbook (QMH)** which describes the operational procedures for curriculum design and approval, monitoring and review.

The processes, as set out within this handbook, aim to deliver *threshold* judgements on academic quality and standards in line with minimum baseline expectations and to establish areas of potential excellence *above threshold* for the purpose of quality enhancement.

Academic standards are set at validation in line with condition B5, i.e., consistent with sector recognised standards as defined within the FHEQ. When designing and developing programmes, other non-mandatory reference points are also used, specifically the UK Quality Code for Higher Education's[27] (UKQCHE) Advice and Guidance[28], degree classification descriptors[29], qualification characteristics statements[30] and subject benchmark statements[31]. Once set at validation, external examiners[32] judge whether threshold standards are being

[22] See Chapter 4.
[23] See Chapter 3.
[24] www.edgehill.ac.uk/corporate-information/strategies-policies/?tab=governing-documents.
[25] https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/curriculum-strategy-2021-2025/
[26] www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/centre-learning-teaching-clt/taught-degrees-framework/.
[27] www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.
[28] www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance.
[29] Annex D of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). Link in footnote 1.
[30] www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/supporting-resources.
[31] www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements.
[32] See Chapter 2.

achieved at module and qualification award level. Beyond threshold (pass) standard, awarding bodies classify degrees according to their own academic regulations and external examiners judge whether these are applied consistently as well as commenting on the comparability of standards with similar provision elsewhere in the sector. Alongside this, every registered HE provider in England publishes a Degree Outcomes Statement (DOS)[33] which describes:

- The relationship between the Institution's degree outcomes and entry qualifications, student characteristics, subject mix and sector benchmarks.
- How degree outcomes address sector reference points e.g., the FHEQ and any relevant professional standards.
- The Institution's degree classification algorithm and how it is applied and reviewed.
- The role of committees and externality in assuring assessment outcomes.
- Academic staff development for assessment, and how assessment practice is evaluated and good practice shared.

The Institution remains responsible for setting standards in relation to curriculum delivered by, or with, an academic partner organisation[34]. Such responsibilities may never be delegated. However, partners contribute to the maintenance of standards through engagement with our partner-specific monitoring and review processes[35].

Academic standards are either met or not, it is a binary judgement. Assessing **quality** is more challenging. The Regulatory Framework provides minimum baseline expectations for the quality; however, quality goes beyond minimum expectations. Quality is subjective and can be enhanced. External reference points for quality enhancement are:

- The UKQCHE's and its supporting Advice and Guidance is a useful reference point for enhancement beyond the minimum baselines; and,
- The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidelines[36], and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's (OIA) Good Practice Framework[37] provide reference points for consumer and student protection.

---

[33] The Degree Outcomes Statement can be accessed via the GQASC website at https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/gqasc/agqa/academic-governance/degree-outcome-statement-2/. See also: *'Degree Classification: Transparency, Reliability and Fairness – A Statement of Intent'* (UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment, 2019) www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/degree-classification-soi.pdf.

[34] See Chapter 5.

[35] See Chapter 5.

[36] *'UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law'* (CMA, 2015) www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428549/HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf.

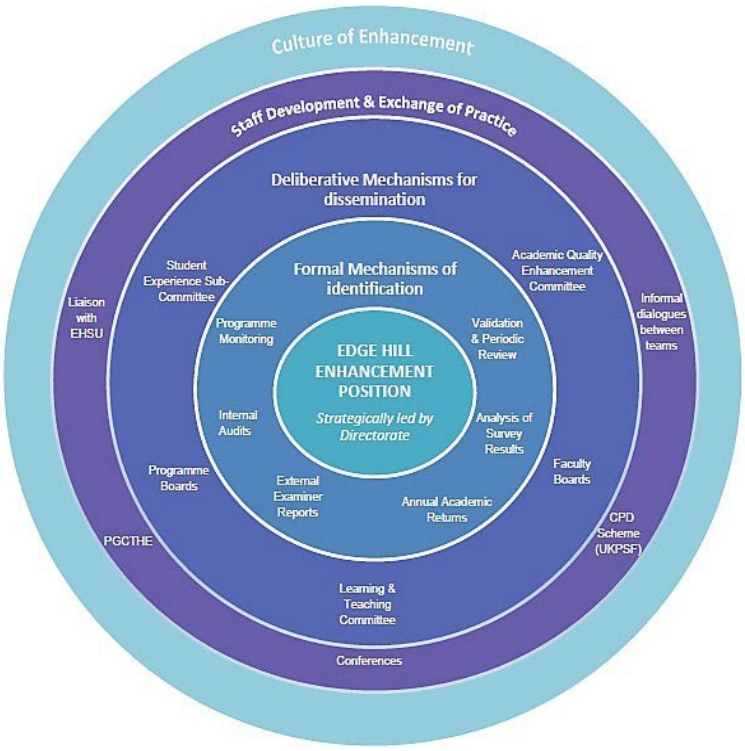
[37] *'The good practice framework: handling student complaints and academic appeals'* (OIA, 2016) www.oiahe.org.uk/media/96361/oia-good-practice-framework.pdf. See also *'Statement of Good Practice on Higher Education Course Changes and Closures'* (HEFCE et al, 2015) www.guildhe.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Statement-of-good-practice-Nov15.pdf.

Quality Enhancement and effective quality assurance are inextricably linked (see Figure 2), and the Institution is fully committed to '*doing things better*' - assuring quality so that it always exceeds baseline expectations; and '*doing better things*' - harnessing creativity and integrating and applying knowledge and practice to enhance quality[38]. Our strategy for quality management therefore extends beyond simple assurance and the mitigation of risks, to celebrating successes and identifying and sharing good practice.

Routine quality assurance activities identify potential good practice with dissemination via Academic Board committees. The University's Centre for Learning and Teaching evaluate its transferability to other settings and contexts, and it is used to inform staff professional development activities. Enhancement, however, is more than a collection of examples of good practice. It originates through an embedded, high-level cultural awareness of the need for continuous improvement.

Whilst a systematic approach to enhancement requires a degree of central coordination this does not necessitate a uniform or 'one size fits all' approach, and the most effective systems are those that supplement formal structures and processes with informal networks and communication chains formed across and between Institutional stakeholders (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement



[38] 'Learning and teaching enhancement: doing things better and doing better things', Schofield M., NEXUS Journal of Learning & Teaching Research Volume 1, January 2009, pp. 166-185.

The Institution's approach to enhancement, therefore, comprises an array of different processes, tools and activities (developed and implemented across faculties and departments) that share the following eight aims:

1. To embed a culture and commitment to enhancement in the University's mission, policies and strategies.
2. To use formal and informal mechanisms to identify potential good practice wherever and whenever it is occurring within the student lifecycle, from pre-enrolment to completion and beyond
3. To evaluate and confirm that it is good practice and capable of being transferred to other settings and contexts.
4. To identify or develop vehicles for dissemination within and between departments, Faculties and support services (and externally) which are workable and sustainable and do not add additional burden.
5. To apply said practice in new settings and (ideally) improve upon it.
6. To monitor and evaluate its impact, engaging students in co-creating and evaluating good practice and sharing or cascading the outcomes.
7. To benchmark against best sector practice and use this to enhance the quality of learning opportunities for Edge Hill students.
8. To undertake ongoing reflection on (and enhancement of) our enhancement processes themselves as they evolve further

The University's **Enhancement Position Statement**[39] contains further details of how each enhancement aim is achieved through various processes, tools and activities.

Designing our Quality Assurance Systems

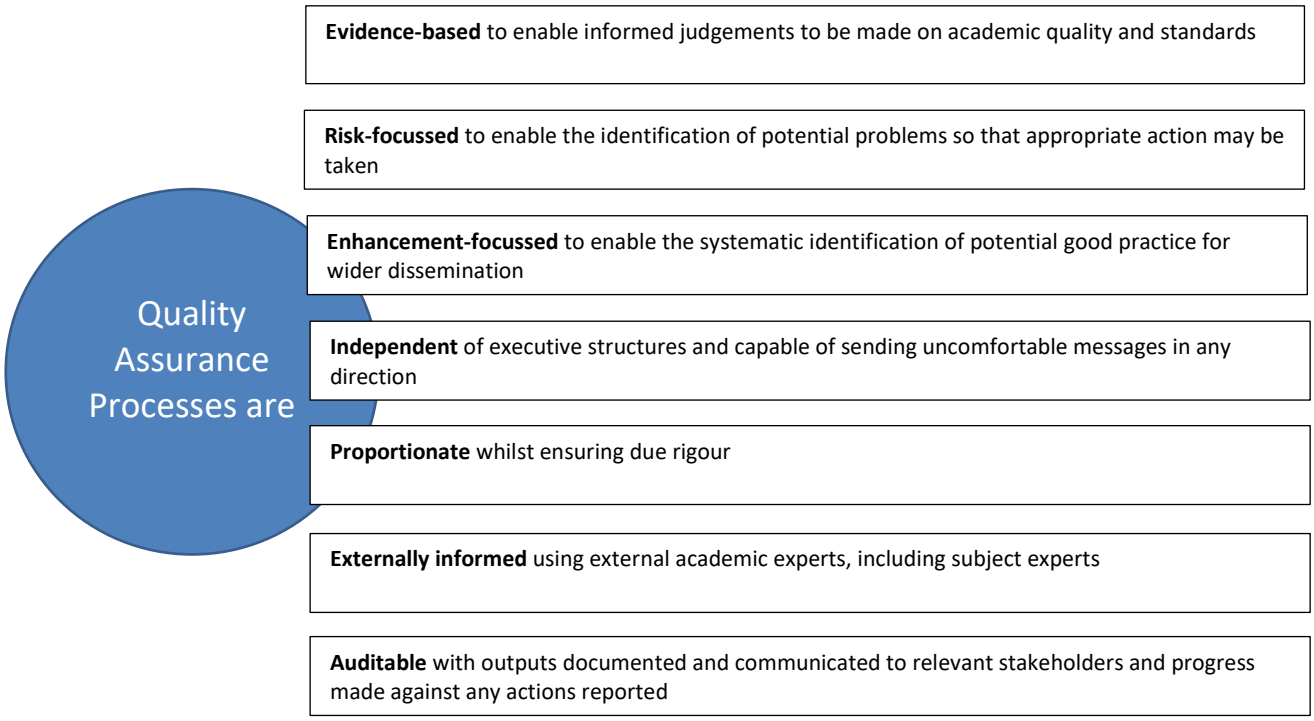
All quality assurance systems and processes in place must add value to the Institution by contributing to one or more of the following measures of value:

- Secures academic standards through alignment with the FHEQ, any relevant professional standards and requirements of Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSBRs);
- Enhances the student experience (either indirectly or directly);
- Assists in demonstrating ongoing compliance with the OfS's Regulatory Framework; and/or,
- Contributes to the achievement of a strategic aim.

To this end, all processes are designed and evaluated against the 7 principles presented in Figure 3.

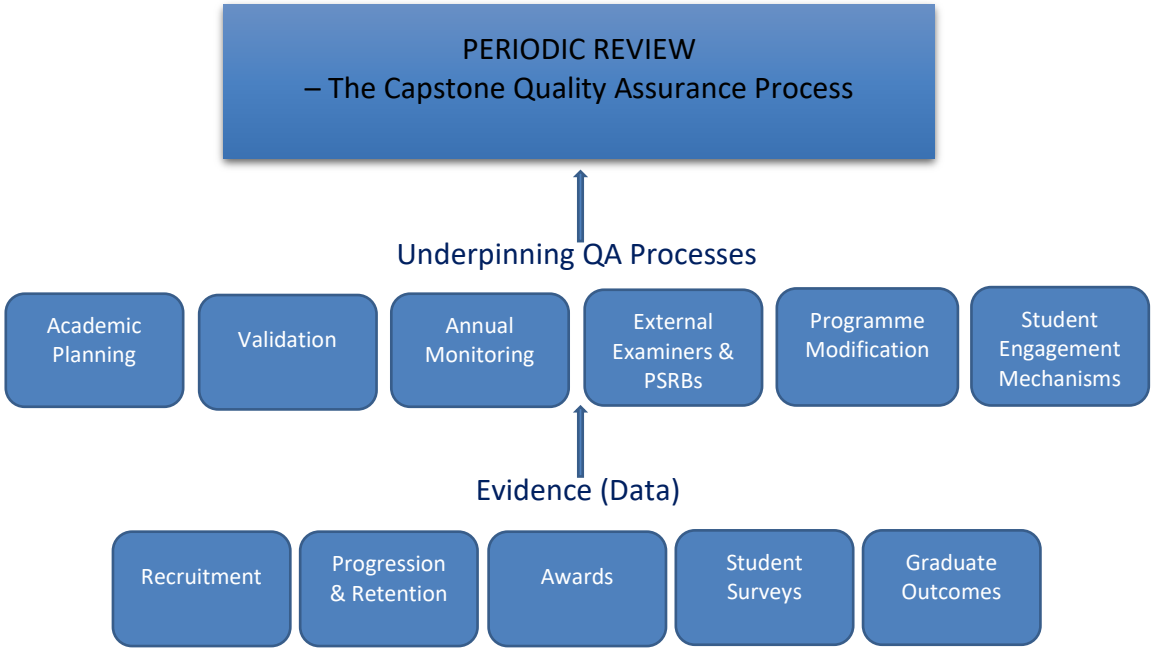
[39] https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Key+Guidance+Documents.

Figure 3: Process Design Principles



The QA processes currently in operation are shown in Figure 4. More details on each of these processes, including the supporting evidence used to inform them, can be found in the forthcoming chapters, 2 – 7.

Figure 4: Quality Assurance Process Chart



Evaluating our Quality Assurance Systems

The operation of the quality strategy is monitored and evaluated using direct feedback from Faculties and academic-related support services and the membership of AQEC. The **Annual Process Review (APR)** provides the opportunity to propose procedural changes for implementation in the next academic year. APR planning and preparation commences at the Quality Operations Group[40] and discussions inform the production of a preliminary scoping document which is received by AQEC in Spring. Following a period of consultation, the final APR is approved by AQEC in summer, prompting revisions to this Handbook. A revised edition of this Handbook is considered for approval by AQEC at the beginning of the academic year[41].

AQEC may occasionally be asked to approve minor in-year procedural amendments in response to internal (strategic) or external market or regulatory changes. Chapter 10 of this Handbook, titled *New Procedures*, provides a 'holding area' for approved in-year changes which are then reviewed and incorporated within the relevant principal chapter when the Handbook is re-published the following year.

Faculty Academic Quality Statements

The University's quality management strategy permits the delegation of certain quality assurance responsibilities to Faculties. Each Faculty produces a **Faculty Academic Quality Statement** that describes the operational processes for executing the responsibilities that have been delegated to it. The purpose of the statements is to assure the University (via AQEC) that the arrangements adopted by Faculties remain consistent with the Institution's overarching quality management strategy, remains fit-for-purpose and are being carried out effectively.

Faculty Academic Quality Statements specify how the following delegated responsibilities are operationalised:

Chapter	Ref.	Delegated Responsibility
2	a)	Any arrangements for direct engagement between external examiners and students.
2	b)	The process by which students are informed of the name, position and home institution of their external examiner.
2	c)	The process by which the Faculty communicates the addition or replacement of modules within external examiners' approved programme remits and communicates these to the External Examiners Administrator and/or updates the institutional External Examiners' Database.
2	d)	The process by which the Faculty approves the addition or replacement of modules assigned to external examiners outside of their approved programme

[40] A forum for the exchange of information to enable quality practitioners located within Faculties and the GQASC unit to fulfil their responsibilities for quality management in a cohesive way
[41] See Academic Board Committee / Sub-Committee Business Plans for meeting dates.

		remit and communicates these to the External Examiners Administrator and External Examiners Sub-Committee (as 'Changes to Academic Provision Coverage').
2	e)	The process for reviewing actions taken in response to issues raised by external examiners and surfaced in the Faculty's annual Summary of External Examiners Reports and Departmental Responses.
2	f)	(Other than via programme boards) The process by which students may access external examiner reports and departmental responses.
3	a)	Consideration of actions from Department Annual Monitoring that have been directed for the Faculty's attention, including matters raised by Heads of Department in their departmental Quality Enhancement Plans (action plans).
3	b)	Annual monitoring of modules and programmes within departments and how the Faculty is assured of its consistency and rigour.
3	c)	Operation of programme boards and Student-Staff Consultative Fora (SSCFs); to include the consideration of external examiner reports and departmental responses; annual monitoring and periodic review reports; Student Pulse Surveys; and (where practicable) Applications for Development Consent and initial proposals for programme modifications.
4	a)	Planning of new programmes, including the use of Market Analysis Reports and the approval of Applications for Development Consent to proceed to the University's Academic Planning Committee (APC).
4	b)	Faculty approval of new programmes to proceed to Institutional validation, including the setting and enforcement of Faculty conditions and/ or recommendations.
4	c)	Faculty approval of new modules and the review and re-approval of existing modules (for example prior to Periodic Review.
4	d)	Faculty approval of minor modifications to existing modules or awards.
4	e)	Faculty process for monitoring minor programme modifications to ensure that the credit threshold for such modifications is observed.
4	f)	Faculty approval of the addition of STEM, Sandwich and Year Abroad routes to existing validated undergraduate degrees.
4	g)	Faculty approval of new joint honours and major/ minor combinations where the contributing single honours programmes are already in validation.
4	h)	(Other than via programme boards) How students are engaged in the planning and development of new, and the modification of existing, programmes.
4	i)	Arrangements for the review of programmes that have not recruited for two successive years prior to enrolment of students re-commencing.
4	j)	The process for approving non-credit bearing provision.
4	k)	Approval of requests for module-sharing from other Faculties.
4	l)	The process by which changes of (and to) modules are notified to all affected programmes including those hosted outside the home department and/or Faculty.
5	a)	Faculty approval, monitoring and closure of placements and student exchanges (Category 'A' academic partnerships) and the Faculty processes that support them.
5	b)	Faculty approval, monitoring and closure of UK-based learning venues (Category 'B' academic partnership) and the process that supports them.

6	a)	The process for submission, consideration and approval of claims for Recognition of Prior (Experiential) Learning and how RP[E]L applicants obtain feedback.
7	a)	Faculty process for approving Student-Initiated Credit.
-	-	How the Faculty periodically reviews and evaluates its quality assurance processes in the context of the Institution's Quality Management Strategy.

Faculties are responsible for determining the precise format of their Quality Statements, however they should, **as a minimum**, contain:

- A brief description of processes used for each of the above responsibilities, including reporting lines and timescales where appropriate.
- Highlighted sections to denote where processes have changed since the previous Statement, along with a brief explanation of the change.

Faculty Academic Quality Statements are approved by Faculty Boards[42] prior to their receipt by AQEC[43] and are available internally[44].

All academic programmes must be hosted by a Faculty for the purpose of quality assurance and the management of assessment; for this reason, AQEC will occasionally assign quality management responsibilities to Faculties for programmes delivered outside their own departmental structures[45]. This typically entails those programmes being subject to Faculty processes for programme and module approval and modification; monitoring and review, including external examining; and the operation of programme and assessment boards including RP[E]L approval panels. Such programme teams are responsible for the design, development and delivery of the curriculum and for operational arrangements for activities such as student enrolment and induction; student support, including personal tutoring, Personal Development Planning and student academic progress reviews; marking and internal moderation; managing extensions, extenuating mitigating circumstances and interruptions of study; and the operation of Student-Staff Consultative Fora and managing student feedback including complaints. However, this is wholly dependent on such local arrangements being:

- fully consistent with University policies and regulations; and,
- notified to the responsible Faculty at the beginning of each academic year, typically through receipt of the latest Programme Handbook.

[42] Or the delegated Faculty Board committee – see Chapter 8.
[43] See AQEC Business Plan.
[44] Via the GQASC's Wiki at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities.
[45] For example, the Edge Hill Language Centre (Faculty of Arts and Sciences) hosts quality assurance of the cross-faculty Fastrack programme, while quality assurance of the PGCert Teaching in Higher Education is conducted via the Business School (Faculty of Arts and Sciences).

Chapter 2
External Examiners

Updated October 202

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 3

NOMINATION AND ENGAGEMENT 5

Criteria for engagement 5

Current or previous associations 7

Reciprocity and other restrictions 8

Criteria for Chief External Examiners 8

Nomination Process 8

Institutional Approval 9

Period of engagement 10

Induction 12

Changes of assigned modules or programmes 12

Changes of examiners' circumstances 14

Published Information for Students 14

Research Degrees 14

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES 14

Primary role of External Examiners 15

Secondary role of External Examiners 17

The Role of Chief External Examiners 17

Edge Hill University External Examiners Workload Model 18

REPORTS 19

Institutional Overviews of External Examiner reports 21

'CAUSES FOR CONCERN' PROCEDURES 22

ENDING AN EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S ENGAGEMENT 22

INTRODUCTION

Degree-awarding bodies are responsible for the quality of their educational programmes and the standards of the awards to which they lead, and the external examiner system within UK higher education is one of the principal means for assuring both. Once set at programme validation[1], external examiners judge whether threshold standards defined within the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)[2] and subject benchmark statements[3] are being demonstrated at module and qualification award level. Beyond threshold (pass) standard, awarding bodies classify degrees according to their own academic regulations and external examiners provide judgements on whether these are applied consistently as well as commenting on the comparability of standards with similar provision elsewhere in the sector.

External examiners are expert assessors whose authority is derived from their knowledge of, and qualifications in, their subject disciplines and their experience of teaching and assessing students at higher education level. The external examiner is also an independent assessor whose judgement will not be compromised by any prior association with the programme team or by some reciprocal arrangement with their home institution.

The University's external examiner system addresses the Office for Students' (OfS) General Ongoing Conditions of Registration[4] as specified in Figure 1 and is informed by the Advice and Guidance contained within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018)[5].

Figure 1: The ongoing conditions for Quality (B1 & B4) and Standards (B5) pertinent to the external examiner system.

The provider must:	
B1	Deliver well designed courses that provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed
B4	Ensure that qualifications awarded to students hold their value at the point of qualification and over time, in line with sector recognised standards
B5	Deliver courses that meet the academic standards as they are described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications at level 4 or higher

External examiners are engaged by the University and added to its External Examiners Register in accordance with the criteria set out in this chapter (see 'Criteria for Engagement' below).

[1] See Chapter 4.
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf?sfvrsn=170af781_16.
[3] www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements.
[4] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/.
[5] www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Revised-UK-Quality-Code-for-Higher-Education.pdf.

External examiners are assigned to all modules / programmes that lead to the award of credit at FHEQ level 5 and above[6]. With the exception of dissertation, project and 'shell' modules, where a range of subject expertise may be required, no module is normally assigned more than one examiner. Exceptions are permitted where the number of students registered to a module makes sampling too large for a single individual. In such cases examiners work together to ensure parity and consistency of moderation decisions. A single programme delivered across multiple sites, e.g., by different academic partner organisations is normally assigned the same examiner to enable standards to be compared. Examiners produce an annual report on the programmes/ modules to which they have been assigned and attend the relevant assessment boards[7] where access to complete student profiles enables the confirmation of standards at qualification award level.

Taking full account of current QAA Advice and Guidance on the use of external expertise in academic quality assurance[8], this chapter provides information and guidance on:

- The nomination and engagement of external examiners.
- The external examiner's role and responsibilities.
- The production and consideration of annual reports.
- Access to internal and external concerns procedures.
- Arrangements for ending an external examiner's engagement.

Information on the appointment of University staff as external examiners by other HEIs is provided in Chapter 6 of this Handbook.

All communications with external examiners in relation to their nomination and engagement, including any subsequent changes to it, must be done using the approved templates which are available on the **External Examiners Wiki[9].** Where requested, the **External Examiners Mailbox externalexaminers@edgehill.ac.uk** should be copied into such communications to enable Institutional records to be updated.

[6] Examiners are also assigned Levels 3 and 4 where prescribed by professional bodies or approved at validation, for example level 3 Fastrack and level 4 Foundation degrees that contribute to classification of the learner's award.
[7] See also 'Roles and Responsibilities', below.
[8] www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/external-expertise. Further guidance is provided in 'Fundamentals of External Examining' (Advance HE, 2019) www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/Fundamentals%20of%20External%20Examining%20AHE%20March%202019.pdf.
[9] https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/External+Examiners.

NOMINATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Criteria for engagement

External examiners are typically academic staff of other UK HEIs and are **academically qualified to at least the level of the qualification in the subject to be examined**. The academic and professional criteria used by the University ensure that examiners are capable of exercising impartial, independent and expert judgement to confirm ongoing alignment with national standards (FHEQ) and the University's Academic Regulations[10], as well as confirming the comparability of standards with those of other HEIs. The engagement of external examiners complies with the University's statutory and legislative responsibilities in relation to the employment of casual workers. Individuals seeking to become external examiners of the University are expected to demonstrate appropriate evidence of:

1. **Competence and experience** in the fields covered by the module/ programme of study to which they will be assigned.
2. **Sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience** within their discipline to be able to command the respect of academic and, where appropriate, other professional peers.
3. **Knowledge and understanding of the UK sector agreed reference points** for the setting and maintenance of academic standards (FHEQ, Degree Characteristics Statements and Subject Benchmark Statements) and familiarity with the standard to be expected of students in relation to their award.
4. **Knowledge and understanding of the standards and/or requirements of Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies** (PSRBs) that govern students' awards (where applicable).
5. **Awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of programmes** in their subject including competence in and experience of designing and managing assessment.
6. Current employment status including **eligibility[11] to work in the United Kingdom** and (where relevant) **PSRB registration**.
7. **Fluency in the English language**[12].

'Standing, credibility and breadth of experience' may be indicated by:

- The individual's present post and place of work (as 6, above);
- The range and scope of their experience across higher education/ other relevant professions;

[10] Available via www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/.
[11] Evidenced by a physical inspection of the individual's passport in line with HM Government's requirements – see *'An Employer's Guide to Right to Work Checks'* (Home Office, June 2018), https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/720858/29_06_18_Employer_s_guide_to_right_to_work_checks.pdf.
[12] **Note:** Edge Hill University's Academic Regulations do not permit delivery and assessment in languages other than English (Academic Regulations C1.5).

- Current and recent active involvement in research/ scholarly/ professional activities in the relevant field of study.

While a nominee's standing and credibility may be determined in part by their seniority within their home institution, this does not preclude the nomination of other appropriately qualified individuals. Where they have no previous experience of external examining, candidates' nomination should be supported by evidence of:

- other types of 'externality'[13]; and/ or
- significant experience of internal moderation or verification of assessment within their home institution; and/ or
- other relevant and recent experience likely to support them in their duties, e.g., participation in their home institution's validation, monitoring and review activities.

Where possible, individuals without previous experience either join an experienced team of examiners and/ or are **mentored** by an experienced examiner in the same or cognate subject area. Where an examiner's engagement is conditional on them being mentored, Faculties identify a current external examiner and outline to both parties the expectations of the mentoring relationship. Experience is developed in the following areas as required:

- UK sector agreed reference points for the setting and maintenance of academic standards (Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, Degree Characteristics Statements and the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement/s).
- Moderation of assessed student work and the writing of annual reports.
- The operation of assessment and award boards and the role of the external examiner within them.
- Administrative processes and procedures for the engagement and payment of external examiners.

The onus is on the mentor to make initial contact with their mentee following which they are available to provide advice and support on request. Faculties will collect and evaluate feedback from mentors' and mentees' annual reports for reporting to the relevant Faculty Board committee. Faculties provide periodic reports on the mentoring process on request from the University's External Examiners Sub-Committee (EESC)[14].

The engagement of external examiners from outwith the higher education sector may be appropriate in certain circumstances, e.g., to provide specific industrial or other professional expertise. In such cases nominations will describe the extent and relevance of the individual's knowledge and experience including any professional body recognition, and their familiarity with the design, delivery and assessment of higher education programmes. Where an individual from industry is nominated to work in tandem with an academic examiner, this is considered during the nomination process.

[13] For example, association with a PSRB.
[14] See Chapter 8.

Retirees or other former staff of HEIs will normally only be considered within two years of exit or, exceptionally, where other significant evidence of their academic and professional currency is available. A former external examiner may be re-engaged only in very exceptional circumstances and after at least five years have elapsed since the end of their previous engagement.

Nominees should normally hold no more than two external examiner positions at the same time. This includes their position with Edge Hill. Exceptions would require special justification during the nomination process (see also below).

Current or previous associations

Departments and Faculties supported by the External Examiners Administrator (located in the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework unit) are responsible for ensuring that nominations adhere to the University's rules governing external examiners' engagement.

External examiners should not be involved in:

- The delivery of any modules and/ or programmes of the University,
- Advising students about their modules and/ or programmes of study,
- Examination and/or assessment,
- The programme/s development[15] (as an external consultant) within the last three years.
- Other conflicts of interest, including **any** of the following:
    - a professional, contractual or close personal relationship with Edge Hill staff or students.
    - Engagement in substantive collaborative research with a member of Edge Hill staff.
    - Membership of the University's governing body; or
    - Employment as a member of University staff or at one of its academic partner organisations, including Erasmus or other overseas partner institutions.

Note: Previous examination of a PhD viva at Edge Hill does not count as a conflict of interest and therefore does not exclusively, prevent a nominee from becoming an external examiner of our taught provision. Taught degrees and research degrees are governed by separate and equally robust Regulations. Acting as an examiner to a PhD viva does not provide opportunity to influence our taught provision.

[15] This applies specifically to individuals who have provided advice to course teams in their preparations for programme approval (validation). Previous external members of Institutional validation panels may seek engagement as external examiners for a limited term of three academic sessions (years).

Reciprocity and other restrictions

Reciprocity occurs **only** where staff of two HEIs hold external examiner positions in each other's home departments. Academic staff are responsible for checking for potential reciprocity when seeking external examiner positions with other providers.

In addition to the 'current or previous associations' described above, other restrictions include:

a) Reciprocal arrangements[16] with other HEIs.
b) Engagement of multiple or consecutive examiners from the same department of another provider.
c) Engagement of former Edge Hill staff or students as examiners, until five years have elapsed since their exit or after all students taught by or with them have completed their studies (whichever is the longer).
d) Ineligibility to work in the United Kingdom.

Restriction (b) may be relaxed in *exceptional* circumstances, e.g., discipline areas that are small and specialist where the pool of potential examiners is extremely restricted and/ or limited to a very small number of HEIs – this should be specified clearly in the nomination form and the measures already taken to engage a suitable individual described in the previous section.

Criteria for Chief External Examiners

Where more than one examiner has been appointed to oversee several cognate or related awards, Faculties may engage a chief external examiner to provide an additional layer of oversight and to co-ordinate moderation activities (See 'The Role of Chief External Examiners' below). In addition to the standard nomination criteria described above, nominees should:

- Be an existing member of the external examiner team for the provision.
- Be an experienced external examiner with an academic and/or professional reputation esteemed by other examiners already engaged in the area academic provision.
- Ideally, have Senior or Principal Fellowship of Advance HE and/or have successfully completed the Advance HE Professional Development Course for External Examiners.
- Not exceed the maximum period of engagement as an existing examiner.

Nomination Process

Faculty Quality Officers alert academic departments when an external examiner is required for new provision[17] and provide sufficient notice of when an existing examiner's period of

[16]For additional guidance, please consult the External Examiners Administrator (GQASC).
[17] Normally at FHEQ level 5 and above, however certain level 3 and 4 provision including some PSRB-regulated programmes may be assigned a requirement for external examination at Institutional validation.

engagement is about to end[18]. By instruction of the University's Directorate, all nominations must normally have been approved before the start of the academic session in which the individual is due to commence work, typically October for undergraduate programmes or January for some Masters programmes. Where in-year engagement is unavoidable, for example to cover for resignations or terminations, appointments are back-dated to the start of the academic session which counts towards the standard four sessions for which examiners are normally engaged.

Heads of department complete and submit to their Faculty a **Nomination Form for a New External Examiner**[19] accompanied by a **Curriculum Vitae** detailing the nominee's employment history, academic and/ or professional qualifications and any previous and current research and scholarly activity. Heads of department ensure that the proposed workload of the examiner does not exceed normal Institutional expectations[20]. Nominations must contain sufficient information to allow a judgement to be made. Missing or incomplete information may delay the nominee's confirmation. Nominations are authorised in the first instance by the PVC Dean or Associate Dean of the relevant Faculty before being submitted to the External Examiners Administrator (GQASC).

Where a department believes there is a need for a chief external examiner to provide additional oversight across a number of awards, a short business case should be submitted to the EESC. If approved, the Department should complete a **Changes to Academic Provision Coverage Form**[21] for faculty consideration and approval. Faculties submit approved Coverage Forms to EESC for information only.

Institutional Approval

All nominees must have received both **Committee Approval** and **Personnel Approval** prior to undertaking any work for the University (see figure 2).

- **During Committee Approval**, EESC considers[22] nominations and confirms suitability. The Academic Quality Enhancement Committee is informed of all confirmations via the EESC Minutes.
- **Personnel Approval** considers all HR-related requirements including pre-engagement checks.

[18] EESC receives regular reports from Faculties confirming external examiner coverage and highlighting current or imminent vacancies.
[19] Available from https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/External+Examiners .
[20] Based on the estimated time for moderation and other activities contained within the University's workload model for external examiners – see 'Edge Hill University External Examiners Workload Model', below.
[21] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Template+Documents.
[22] Nominations may exceptionally be approved by EESC Chair's Action outside the cycle of scheduled meetings, e.g., to fill current or imminent vacancies. Where the nomination is from the same Faculty as the Chair of EESC, Chair's Action will be taken by the Deputy Chair of EESC.

Committee Approval and Personnel Approval run concurrently. On completion, the External Examiners Administrator notifies the outcome to the nominee and proposing Faculty (see figure 2).

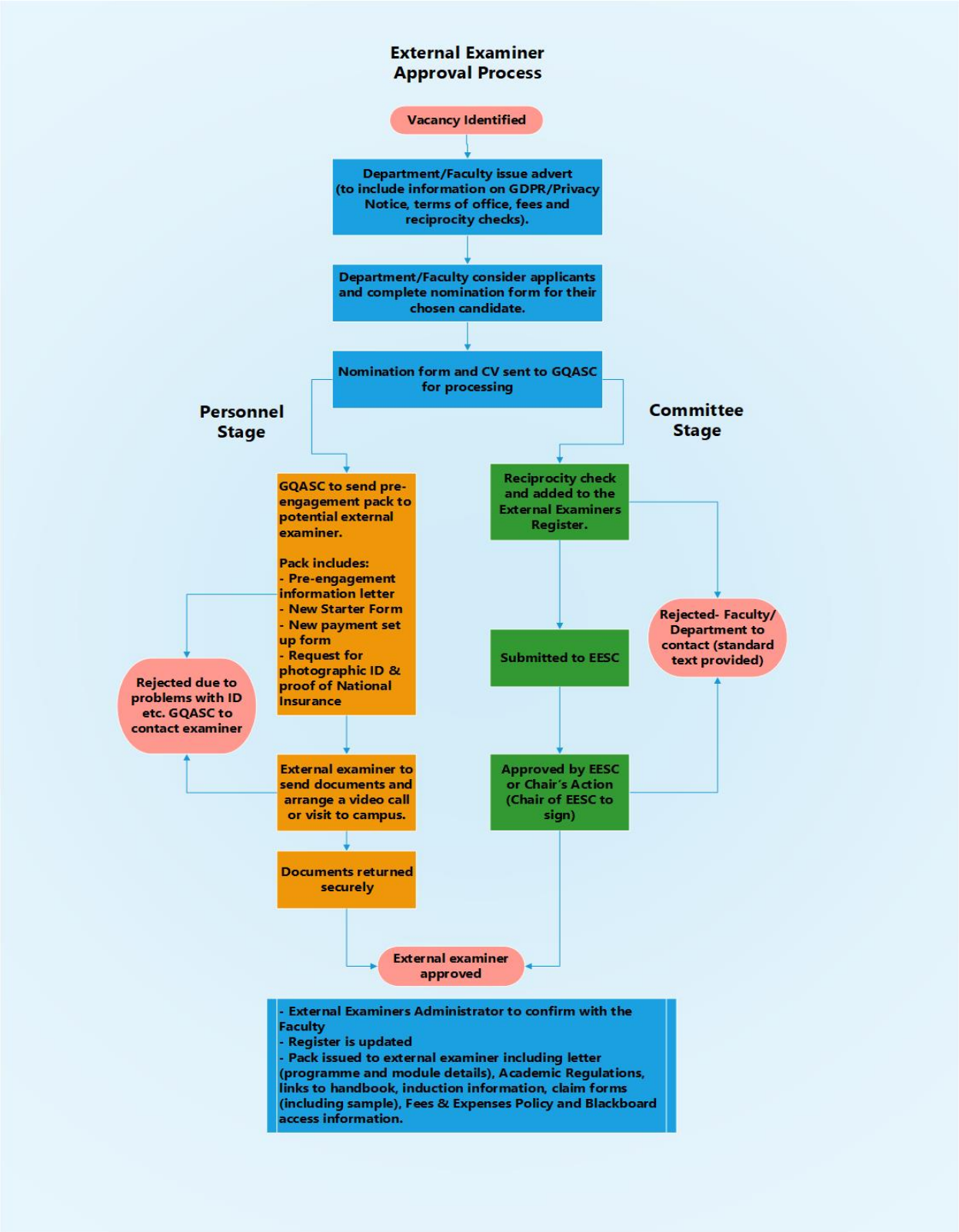
Period of engagement

External examiners are typically placed on the External Examiners Register for a period of four academic sessions (years). In certain circumstances an examiner may be retained on the Register for a longer period. For example, where a closed programme is being 'taught out' and there is no more than one academic session remaining; or where efforts to secure a replacement have been exhausted. Departments complete a **Permission to Remain on the External Examiners Register Form**[23] which is considered and approved by EESC.

If an examiner's period of engagement is interrupted, e.g., through long-term sickness or maternity leave, they are not be prohibited from resuming and completing the typical four academic sessions. **Where an examiner ceases to be employed[24] by a recognised HEI** during their period of engagement, they should notify the University and may remain on the Register for a maximum of two further years if they have not resumed relevant[25] HE employment in the meantime.

[23] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/External+Examiners .
[24] This would include retirement and redundancy.
[25] Relevant employment in this case would constitute appointment to another academic position in the same discipline area.

Figure2: The External Examiner Approval Process



Where a serving external examiner is offered employment by Edge Hill University, the head of the appointing department notifies the Faculty and External Examiners Administrator at the earliest opportunity and takes immediate steps to nominate a suitable replacement examiner or arrange cover by another examiner in the same or cognate subject area (see 'Changes to assigned modules or programmes', below).

Induction

The University ensures that all examiners are informed about its organisational procedures and practices with specific relation to assessment and the regulations that govern it. New examiners receive written confirmation of the programmes/ modules to which they have been assigned, in addition to:

- A copy of the University's Academic Regulations[26].
- A hyperlink to the External Examiners Handbook[27] incorporating the guidance contained in this chapter with accompanying information on fees, operation of assessment boards and key institutional contacts.
- A copy of the Privacy Notice for External Examiners[28] which advises how their data is used and handled in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

New external examiners are advised to inform their employer of their engagement with the University and are encouraged to visit the campus in advance of taking up their duties. An annual Induction event is held in January and provides an opportunity to meet with host departments and to network with other examiners. Induction sessions cover the role of the external examiner in UK higher education, use of national reference points (FHEQ and QAA subject benchmarks) and practical workshop-style activities.

External examiners familiarise themselves with and observe the University's policies on data protection[29] and information security[30]. Any information passed between the University and its external examiners, e.g., students' names and grades, is kept strictly confidential.

Changes of assigned modules or programmes

Where an external examiner has been assigned to modules that combine to form a programme or 'portfolio' of cognate subject modules, the **replacement or addition of modules** within the programme/ portfolio does not require further Institution-level approval. Faculties describe their own process for approving such changes in their Faculty Academic Quality Statements[31], ensuring that:

[26] Available via www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/.
[27] Available at https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/gqasc/aqqa/external-examiners/useful-information/.
[28] www.edgehill.ac.uk/aqdu/files/2020/09/Privacy-Notice-External-Examiners.pdf.
[29] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/data-protection-policy/.
[30] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/information-security-policy/.
[31] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities.

- Any substituted or additional modules are within the external examiner's subject expertise (where they are not, the Faculty will nominate an additional examiner for approval by EESC in the normal manner);
- The examiner's workload remains sustainable such that the totality of provision assigned to them will receive sufficient academic scrutiny and does not exceed normal Institutional expectations[32]. Moderation activity resulting from changes of assigned modules should not exceed an additional 3.75 hours per year and Faculties will consider this when evaluating the totality of an examiner's workload.

Changes of assigned modules are confirmed with the external examiner via the appropriate template email and copied to the External Examiners Mailbox externalexaminers@edgehill.ac.uk to enable updating of the External Examiners Register.

Where, by mutual agreement, an external examiner is asked to assume responsibility for an **additional programme** - typically following the re-validation or replacement of an existing programme, or to fill a programme vacancy in the same subject area - the Faculty ensures that:

- The programme is within the external examiner's subject expertise (where it is not, the Faculty will nominate another examiner for approval by EESC in the normal manner); and,
- The GQASC unit are notified through receipt of a Faculty-approved **Changes to Academic Provision Coverage Form**[33]. Coverage Forms are received by EESC for noting only (in agenda Section C).

Depending on its relationship to the examiner's originally assigned programme (typically characterised by any module sharing or simultaneous phasing in/ out of modules), the additional programme may be either:

- absorbed within the examiner's existing remit, in which case the totality should be sustainable within their contracted hours and any additional moderation activity does not exceed +3.75 hours per year; or
- treated separately from their existing remit with a full annual allowance of hours and fees for the programme that has been added.

Note: Faculties confirm the terms of adding a programme to an examiner's remit with the External Examiners Administrator before commencing any formal discussions with them.

[32] For further details see below section on 'Edge Hill University External Examiners Workload Model', below.
[33] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Template+Documents.

Changes of examiners' circumstances

Examiners are requested to indicate any changes to their current employment status or PSRB registration during their period of engagement to the External Examiners Administrator at externalexaminers@edgehill.ac.uk. Examiners will carefully consider the impact of taking on additional external examiner appointments during their term of engagement with Edge Hill.

Published Information for Students

Students are informed[34] of the name, position and home institution of their external examiners and advised that entering into direct correspondence with them is prohibited[35]. Examiners are requested to forward any direct communications from students to their departmental contact and/ or the External Examiners Administrator at externalexaminers@edgehill.ac.uk. External examiners' reports and department responses are shared with student representatives at the next available Programme Board and made available to all students via the programme area of the Learning Edge Virtual Learning Environment and/ or Student Information Hub Wiki.

Research Degrees

Research degrees including PhD, professional doctorates and Masters by Research (MRes) awards are assessed by dissertation viva panels. Panels include at least one independent external examiner. Such examiners are nominated by the academic department and approved by the Graduate School Board of Studies. Arrangements for the external examination of research degrees are described in chapter 9 of this Handbook.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The GQASC unit, Faculties, academic departments and programme teams are jointly accountable in ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to support examiners in discharging their responsibilities. Programme teams provide their examiners with the specific information they need to perform their duties.

Examiners normally visit[36] the University at least once a year to moderate assessed coursework and examination scripts although further mid-year visits may be required for programmes with a performance, practical or professional element, or for cohorts with variable/ multiple intakes or non-standard completion times. External examiners attend Module Assessment Boards where the detailed discussion of academic standards takes place. In the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the Faculty of Education, Progression and Award Board examiners ensure the rigour of the process underpinning the conferment of awards through

[34] Via module or programme handbooks and/ or the Learning Edge Virtual Learning Environment.
[35] Students who wish to raise an academic issue or concern are directed to the relevant University systems and procedures, e.g. personal tutors, programme boards and Institutional processes for complaints https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/gqasc/student-casework-2/complaints/ and academic appeals https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/gqasc/student-casework-2/academicappeals/ .
[36] Subject to government advice. For example, travel restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic, in which case alternative arrangements are made.

the Board's application of the Academic Regulations. In the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine, where Module and Progression and Award Boards are conflated, all examiners are in attendance and access complete student profiles to confirm standards at award level.

In producing their annual reports (see below) external examiners comment on the fairness and consistency of assessment boards' decisions and their adherence to the University's regulations. If in highly exceptional circumstances, examiners are unable to attend any of the assessment boards they are requested to be available using a video conferencing solution.

In specific relation to **re-assessment**, external moderation of students' work is normally unnecessary and internal moderation provides the necessary confirmation of standards. However, an external examiner presence is required at Progression and Award Boards to oversee the application of the Academic Regulations (which may be the Award Board Examiner, Chief Examiner or a representative programme examiner).

Primary role of External Examiners

External Examiners' main responsibility is to confirm that academic standards are appropriately set and maintained. This is carried out by:

- Reviewing and approving examination papers that contribute to a student's final award, and any other assessment material as agreed between themselves and the programme team for which an annual time allowance is provided[37].
- Moderating samples[38] of student work that have been marked and internally moderated[39] in order to be satisfied that students have been graded fairly in accordance with Intended Learning Outcomes, marking criteria and the University's Academic Regulations.
- Reviewing and approving the content, learning outcomes and assessment of negotiated learning modules leading to the award of Student Initiated Credit[40].
- Sampling the assessment of portfolios that accompany claims for Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)[41].
- In their annual reports (also see 'Reports' below):
    - Confirming that national threshold standards (FHEQ) are being met or exceeded, content is in broad alignment with other external reference points (e.g., Subject Benchmark Statements) and that students have achieved the Intended Learning Outcomes for the award of credit and qualifications.

[37] For further details see below section on 'Edge Hill University's External Examiner Workload Model'.
[38] For moderation sample sizes see *'Marking and Moderating Assessed Work'* (EHU, 2013). Where a programme/module is delivered across multiple partners, samples for external moderation must include all partners for a programme and this should be clearly labelled to allow comparability between cohorts. However, the overall sample should not exceed the sample size as defined in the policy.www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/files/2013/01/MarkingModeratingAssessedWork.pdf.
[39] See the University's guidelines on *'Marking and Moderating Assessed Work'* at www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/about/strategies-and-policies/.
[40] See Chapter 7.
[41] See Chapter 7.

- Beyond threshold attainment, providing advisory comment on the comparability of standards (grades and degree classifications) with other programmes of the same subject/ level.
- Providing advisory comment on the standard of marking and moderation and quality of written feedback for programme teams, departments and Faculties to act upon.
- Providing advisory comment on assessment processes including the operation of assessment boards for the University to act upon.

In addition to samples of assessed student work and written feedback, programme teams supply their examiners with the relevant programme and module handbooks, coursework specifications, examination papers, marking criteria and a record of marks for each assessment item. **External moderation should not replicate internal marking and moderation but rather verify that the latter are operating fairly and consistently**. Programme teams arrange for external examiners to receive or view students' work in good time before assessment boards. External examiners are provided with, or given access to[42], all the internally moderated work[43] from each module as the basis for conducting their own sampling sufficient to establish that, in their judgement:

- **Internal moderation, and by extension first marking, have been broadly effective and resulted in fair assessment decisions in line with the published marking criteria** – other than at the boundaries of grade classifications, a difference of opinion between internal markers and moderators of +/-2 marks will not normally warrant specific comment.
- **Assessment feedback is of high quality and developmental, and aligned with Intended Learning Outcomes, marking criteria and the grades awarded to students.**

Any work likely to be the subject of discussion at a Module Assessment Board should be made available to the examiner in advance of the board having already been assessed by no fewer than two internal markers. Where there is a significant difference of judgement between first and second markers it is expected that programme teams should have taken steps to resolve this internally, although examiners may request additional samples where any inconsistency persists.

External examiners of practice-based programmes, typically in Initial Teacher Education are requested to visit placement settings (schools) to meet with students and mentors for which additional time is allocated. Otherwise, there is no general expectation that examiners meet with students, although they may do so on specific request to the Programme Leader. Faculties determine, and ensure examiners are aware of, the arrangements by which they may engage directly with students. Such arrangements are formally documented in Faculty Academic Quality Statements[44] and communicated formally to the EESC.

[42] Including via the Learning Edge Virtual Learning Environment.
[43] While only internally moderated work is provided to external examiners as standard, other assessed work may be accessed on request to the Programme Leader.
[44] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities.

Secondary role of External Examiners

In addition to their principal duties, external examiners are also requested to assist programme teams and the University by being available to:

- Comment on the continuing currency of programmes and modules and any proposed modifications to them[45].
- Be consulted about any proposed changes to assessment strategies, programme structures (e.g., the addition of new modules and other programme modifications[46]) or the regulations for the provision to which they are assigned.
- Review curriculum mapping for any proposed external articulation route[47] delivering advanced entry to the programme/s within their remit.

The Role of Chief External Examiners

The Chief External Examiner is responsible for maintaining oversight of the operation of a group of cognate or related awards, and alerting the University to any themes, risks, or concerns across the suite of academic provision. For example, the University currently utilises a chief external examiner to coordinate the moderation activities of profession and field-specific examiners for its Integrated Masters in Nursing and Social Work, as agreed with the relevant professional bodies.

In addition to their role and standard responsibilities as an external examiner, the Chief External will:

- Liaise with all other external examiners responsible for an aspect of the designated provision.
- Comment on the conduct of progression and award boards and institutional procedures, the extent to which the Academic Regulations have been applied fairly and consistently across the provision they are responsible for and whether discretion was used appropriately.
- Comment on the above in their annual report; in addition to making comments and confirming academic standards for programme/modules/themes or years of study that they may ordinarily be responsible.[48]
- Where appropriate, attend re-assessment boards to oversee the application of the Academic Regulations on behalf of the subject-based externals.

[45] See Chapter 4.
[46] See Chapter 4.
[47] See Chapter 5.
[48] Chief external examiners are not required to produce a separate and additional annual report.

Edge Hill University External Examiners Workload Model

Except for annual reports, which are paid separately, all duties are paid at an hourly rate[49] in accordance with the time allocations defined below. Claims that exceed the time allocated for a specific activity, without the prior consent of the Director of Governance and Assurance (or nominee), will usually not be accepted.

Fees and expenses should normally be claimed within 30 days of any external examiner duties undertaken.

Annual Reports:

- Writing and submission of the annual report is allocated 7.5 hours. This includes all preparatory activity including the production of any interim or module reports completed during the academic session/ year. Where an examiner is responsible for collaborative provision, they should complete a single report which compares the provision across each partner.

Moderation:

- External examiners are allocated 15 hours for moderation of assessed work per academic year. This allowance is based on the typical volume of moderation per external examiner which is confirmed by the External Examiners Sub-Committee at the point of engagement.
- If an external examiner accepts additional moderation responsibilities during their engagement which significantly increases their workload, then additional hours can be claimed for. If this is queried by the Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance, the department will need to provide evidence of this.
- External examiners may claim hourly for "real-time" moderation activities e.g. live performances, Observed Structural Clinical Examinations and observed teaching practice in schools.

Where a programme is non-modular, the programme team will review the moderation and assessment workload to ensure that it remains within the workload model.

Attendance at Assessment Boards and Induction activities:

- Attendance at assessment and award boards may be claimed in hours dependent on the precise length of the activity.
- Up to 7.5 hours may be claimed per academic session/ year for attendance at the External Examiners' Induction event.

Other duties:

[49] For current rates see *'External Examiners' Fees and Expenses Policy'* at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Fees%2C+Workload+and+Expenses.

- Up to 7.5 hours per academic session/ year may be claimed for mentoring a new external examiner at the formal request of the University.
- Up to 3.75 hours per academic session/ year may be claimed for external verification of draft coursework briefs and examination papers contributing to a student's final award, typically at FHEQ level 5 and above.
- Up to 3.75 hours per academic session/ year may be claimed for providing written comments on proposals for new modules, or for module or programme modifications.

REPORTS

External examiners' reports are an important source of direct evidence of academic standards, as well as indirect evidence of the quality of teaching, and the University gives full and serious consideration to them. External examiners complete an online annual report[50] on the provision for which they are responsible. Faculties must ensure that new examiners receive their predecessor's final report accompanied by the relevant departmental response when commencing their term of office.

In their reports, examiners provide informative comment and recommendations on:

- Whether the University is maintaining the academic standards it has set[51] for its awards in relation to national threshold standards defined by the FHEQ level descriptors and Subject Benchmark Statements, and the University's Academic Regulations[52].
- Beyond threshold, the comparability of the University's academic standards and student achievement with other UK higher education institutions (HEIs).
- The rigour, equity and fairness of assessment of Intended Learning Outcomes.
- The quality of summative written feedback to students.
- The conduct and transparency of assessment processes including marking, internal moderation and the operation of assessment boards.
- Evidence of good practice and innovation in learning, teaching and assessment, and opportunities to enhance the quality of learning opportunities provided to Edge Hill students.
- Any modules that in their judgement would benefit from early review and modification/ re-validation.

Where programmes are delivered at more than one site, e.g., at different Edge Hill campuses or by multiple academic partners, examiners differentiate these explicitly to identify any standards-related issues or good practice pertaining to the specific instance of delivery. Where an examiner's duties are spread across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, separate annual reports are submitted for which additional payments are made.

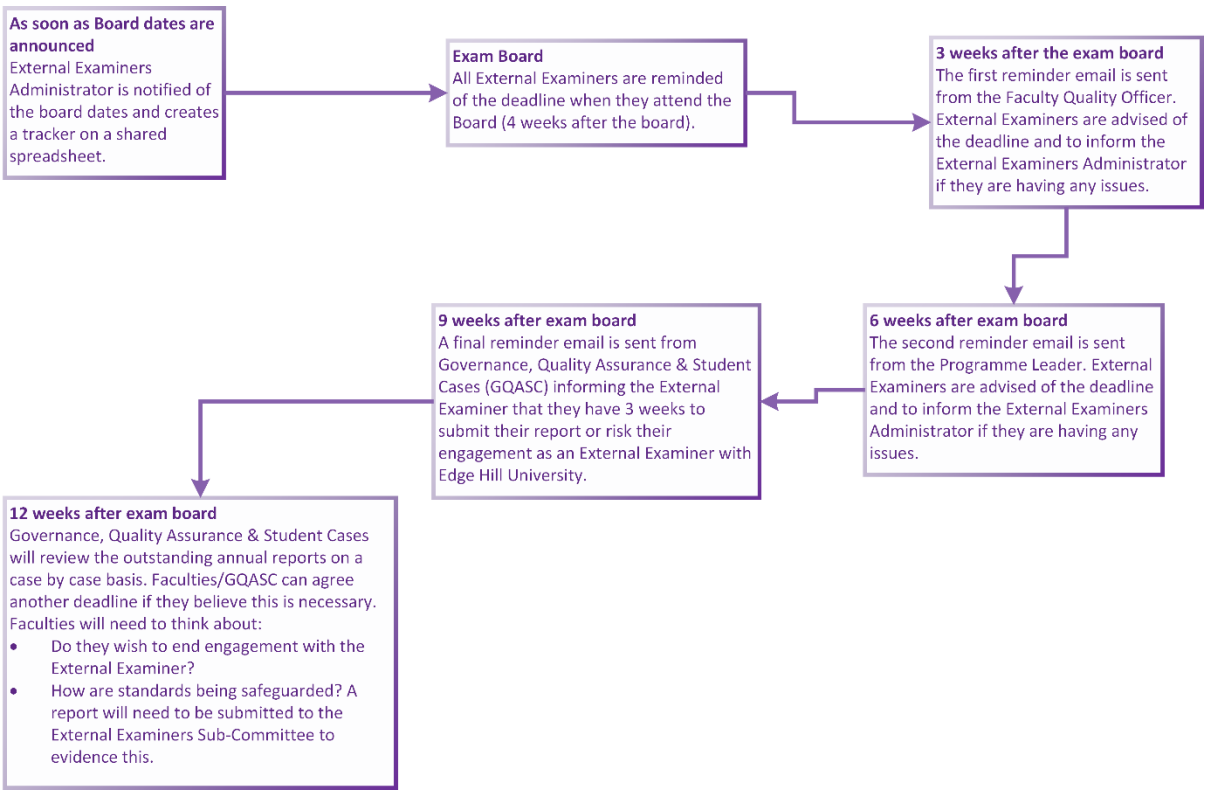
[50] The link to the online external examiner report form is at www.edgehill.ac.uk/aqdu/external-examiners/annual-report/.
[51] I.e., at Institutional validation through the approval of Intended Learning Outcomes at module and programme level – see Chapter 4.
[52] www.edgehill.ac.uk/corporate-information/strategies-policies/.

Examiners confirm that sufficient information and evidence was made available to them to fulfil their role and that issues raised by them in previous reports, including those of their immediate predecessors, have been responded to.

Examiners refrain from identifying individual students and staff in their reports, however references to staff roles e.g., 'the Programme Leader' are acceptable. Barring mitigating circumstances which should be discussed in advance with the External Examiners Administrator (GQASC), examiners submit their reports within four weeks of the relevant assessment board. Where following appropriate reminders an external examiner's report has not been received within 12 weeks of the relevant assessment board, alternative arrangements for (repeat) moderation will be made[53].

[53] See also 'Ending an External Examiner's Engagement', below.

Figure 3 'Edge Hill University Annual Report Escalation Process'



Programme teams are required to provide formal and timely responses to external examiners' reports outlining any action to be taken as a result of their recommendations (or the reasons for not taking action). Faculties ensure that responses are accurate and of appropriate quality and reflect current University policy on assessment.

Responses to external examiner reports are considered for approval at the next available Faculty Board (or delegated committee). Approved responses are dispatched to examiners within seven business days or, in the event of referral back to the host department, seven days following Faculty Chair's Action. Where significant time is expected between receipt of an examiner's report and the response via the Faculty Board or relevant committee, Faculties contact examiners to advise them of the estimated wait-time.

Institutional Overviews of External Examiner reports

The Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance (GQASC) produces an initial 'risk-based' overview of key issues from external examiner reports for the early consideration of Faculties and EESC[54]; Faculty Associate Deans subsequently produce more detailed

[54] At its November meeting

evaluations[55] which also describe the good practice surfaced by examiners. Overview reports bring to the attention of EESC and, through its minutes, AQEC any recurring or potentially systemic issues around assessment practice or regulation that may require consideration at University level, e.g., through the Regulations Review Sub-Committee (RRSC)[56].

'CAUSES FOR CONCERN' PROCEDURES

External examiners are asked to refer any standards-related concerns to the Programme Leader and/ or Head of Department in the first instance with the aim of finding a resolution. However, examiners also have the right to escalate any continued serious concerns to the Vice-Chancellor, via a confidential written report to which a considered and timely response is provided. In the unlikely event that internal University procedures have been exhausted and examiners remain concerned about an actual or potential failure in standards, they may notify the OfS[57]. In the case of PSRB-regulated programmes, examiners use their knowledge and understanding of professional codes and standards to inform any decision on escalation to the relevant professional body.

ENDING AN EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S ENGAGEMENT

The University is committed to the maintenance of academic quality and standards and therefore reserves the right to make alternative arrangements for the external examination of its awards if necessary. A Faculty may seek to end its engagement with an external examiner through a formal written recommendation to the Chair of EESC. Where the external examiner is responsible for provision in the same Faculty as the Chair of EESC, this should be directed to the Deputy Chair of EESC. While neither exhaustive nor prescriptive the following are indicative of reasons for ending an external examiner's engagement:

- Failure to disclose a relationship, contractual or otherwise, which may impair the integrity of the examination process and their own independence as external examiner.
- Persistent failure to attend meetings, respond to communications and/ or present the required reports by the stated deadline without prior agreement, and/ or the submission of identical reports and/ or failure to return students' work following moderation.
- Persistent and deliberate failure to use the relevant national academic and/ or professional benchmarks to support judgements on academic standards and Edge Hill students' attainment of them.
- For clinical and other professional programmes, failure to maintain professional body membership or professional registration where this is a requirement of being an external examiner, or disbarment from professional practice which may impair the

[55] Using Form EE1 *'Faculty Summary of External Examiner Reports and Department Responses'*, available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Template+Documents. Faculty summaries are typically received by EESC in February or March.
[56] See Chapter 8.
[57] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/ofs-and-students/notifications/.

integrity of the examination process or the individual's standing as an external examiner.

Such matters will normally be dealt with in accordance with the University's Human Resources (HR) policies and procedures, details of which may be found on the HR wiki[58]. Where the proposal to end engagement is approved, the examiner is notified in writing of the University's decision and their name removed from the External Examiners Register. The outcome is noted by AQEC via receipt of the EESC minutes.

Occasionally, a programme may be closed before the end of the external examiner's period of engagement and in such cases the individual will be formally notified[59] and AQEC informed as part of the process for Programme Closure[60]. Any external examiner may choose to end their engagement with the University by writing to the Chair of EESC to advise of their intention.

[58] https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/humanresources/Forms%2C+Policies+and+Documents.
[59] By the External Examiners Administrator acting on advice from the relevant Faculty.
[60] See Chapter 4.

Chapter 3
Annual Monitoring, Periodic Review and Internal Audit

Updated October 2021

Table of Contents

Table of Contents 2
INTRODUCTION 3
ANNUAL MONITORING 4
Annual Monitoring of modules and programmes 5
Departmental Annual Monitoring 6
Table 1: Departmental Planning Units (updated October 2020) 6
Affirmation of Standards and Quality 7
Quality Enhancement Plans 8
Annual Monitoring for PSRBs 9
Annual Review of Academic Partnerships 9
University Annual Monitoring Report 10
Academic Assurance Report 10
PERIODIC REVIEW 11
Table 2: '*Edge Hill University Periodic Review Cycle*' (updated October 2021) 12
Programme Transfers between Departments 13
INTERNAL AUDIT 13
Developmental Enquiry 14
Extraordinary Audit 14
Departmental Risk Assessment 14

INTRODUCTION

Annual Monitoring, Periodic Review and Internal Audit are the principal mechanisms by which the University ensures the continuing standards and quality of its academic provision. The processes described below are fully aligned with the Conditions of Registration for Quality and Standards B1-B5 of the Office for Students' (OfS) Regulatory Framework[1] thereby underpinning the key indicators upon which the University is measured. Processes also informed by the supporting Advice and Guidance on Monitoring and Evaluation contained within the UK Quality Code[2] (published November 2018).

Annual Monitoring considers comprehensive quantitative and qualitative evidence on programme performance and the students' academic experience and alerts the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC)[3] - and through it, the Academic Board - to any internal or external factors that could place academic provision including academic partnerships[4] at risk. It provides an opportunity to look holistically at performance data, typically from the preceding academic year, and because it is carried out at a fixed point each year[5], allows us to identify any emerging trends.

Annual Monitoring confirms that:

- academic standards, as set at validation, remain secure;
- the students' academic experience is being evaluated and enhanced effectively; and,
- the department has the ability and capacity to identify and manage risk.

It also enables the identification of good practice for wider dissemination within the University for the purpose of quality enhancement[6]. Outputs from departmental annual monitoring are used to inform the University's academic planning[7] and budget-setting processes.

The purpose of **Periodic Review** is to review and evaluate all taught curriculum within an academic department or other grouping of cognate programmes in the context of its performance, aims and aspirations in a broader University, regional and national context. Each academic department undergoes Periodic Review once every five years.

The purpose and process of **Internal Audit** varies according to particular requirements and may *risk-focused*, e.g., Departmental Risk Assessment or Extraordinary Audit; or *enhancement-focused*, e.g. Developmental Enquiry.

---

[1] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/.
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/monitoring-and-evaluation.
[3] For AQEC's constitution and terms of reference see Chapter 8.
[4] See Chapter 5.
[5] Departmental annual monitoring typically takes place in Semester 1.
[6] See Chapter 1.
[7] See Chapter 4

ANNUAL MONITORING

Annual monitoring is based on the premise that:

- Staff at all levels of the Institution are responsible and accountable for maintaining standards and enhancing the quality of students' learning opportunities.
- Shared responsibility and accountability require frank and open exchanges between departments, Faculties, support services and the University (Directorate).
- The processes by which both opportunities and threats to standards and quality are defined, identified and assessed should draw fully on a range of expertise and experience from within and outwith the University's executive and deliberative structures.

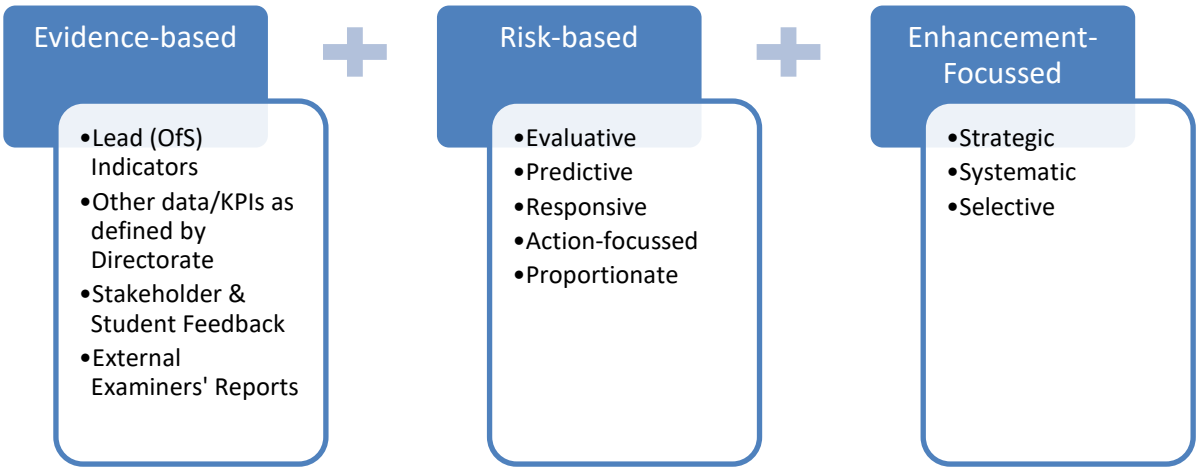
Key features of Annual Monitoring (see figure 1) are that it is:

- **Evidence-based** – this typically includes staff and student feedback (e.g. module leader reports, Student Pulse Surveys, minutes of Programme Boards and Student-Staff Consultative Fora (SSCFs)[8] and other evidence of feedback as appropriate); reports of external examiners[9] and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs); statistical data on recruitment[10], retention[11], progression[12] , degree outcomes[13], the National Student Survey (NSS)[14] and Graduate Outcomes[15].
- **Risk-based**[16] - drawing upon the experience and expertise of staff and other stakeholders[17] to identify and evaluate potential opportunities and threats, and to propose targeted and proportionate actions to *mitigate* risk. In helping AQEC to form a view about a department's ability and capacity to manage risk, Annual Monitoring plays an important part in confirming confidence in the University's managers and staff.

[8] See QMH Chapter 6.
[9] See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 2 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/02-external-examiners.pdf.
[10] Data may be disaggregated by entry qualification and protected characteristic where possible.
[11] The **Retention Rate** is the % of students registered on the programme who returned to the University the following academic year (however briefly), including those who are repeating the year, interrupting or transferring to another programme. This measure is not meaningful for finalists so it is only calculated for non-finalists.
[12] The **Progression Rate** is the % of students who 'pass' the year and are eligible to progress to the following year, or who have completed the programme (if they are finalists). Any students who do not have a result yet because they have interrupted, or are referred or deferred, are excluded from the calculation.
[13] **Completion** is where a student has finished a programme of study and been awarded a university qualification.
[14] www.thestudentsurvey.com/.
[15] Graduate Outcomes Progression Rate is the proportion of graduates in professional employment, further study, or who are retired, travelling, or caring. www.graduateoutcomes.ac.uk.
[16] For a more detailed description of the University's approach to academic risk management see Chapter 1.
[17] Who may include: relevant academic and professional communities; external examiners; regulatory bodies; collaborative partners; employers; service users and carers; and graduate alumni.

- **Enhancement-focused**[18] – enabling the systematic identification and evaluation of good practice that is suitable for general dissemination for the purpose of enhancing quality across the Institution.

Figure 1: Key Features of Annual Monitoring



The Annual Monitoring process described in this chapter is focused primarily on academic departments, however the engagement of Faculties and academic-related professional support services enables full and holistic consideration of issues affecting academic standards and quality at Institutional level; for example, outputs from Annual Monitoring can be used to inform Directorate decisions on academic strategy and resources. The minuted discussions of Faculty Boards (or their sub-committees) and AQEC help assure staff and students that issues raised by them during Annual Monitoring have received appropriate consideration. While fixed-point Annual Monitoring provides a clear focus for identifying and resolving risks, monitoring itself is continuous[19]. It is inevitable that some matters will require action outside the annual reporting cycle. To this end, all staff are made aware of their responsibility to alert managers to any issues affecting standards and quality that require the immediate attention of the Directorate, PVC Deans of Faculty, the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework unit, AQEC or other relevant Academic Board committees.

Annual Monitoring of modules[20] and programmes

Academic departments are responsible for the detailed evaluation of module performance and holistic consideration of issues affecting standards and quality at programme level. Faculties have oversight of module and programme monitoring occurring within departments[21] - **as a minimum**, this considers:

[18] For further details of the University's approach to quality enhancement see Chapter 1.

[19] For example, programme performance data is made available to academic departments via Tableau and AQEC receives updates on progress against departments' Quality Enhancement Plans during the academic year, typically through the receipt of Faculty quality committee minutes.

[20] Programmes in Health, Social Care and Medicine that follow a non-modular structure consider this evidence as it relates to each Year of Study.

[21] See Chapter 1.

- Module first-time and overall pass rates[22];
- Student Pulse Survey data[23] and module and programme evaluations;
- Retention, progression and degree outcomes data disaggregated by relevant protected characteristics, where appropriate[24];
- External examiner reports and programme teams' responses[25]

Departmental Annual Monitoring

Departmental Annual Monitoring is informed by programme-level monitoring and assesses an academic department's ability and capacity to manage risk associated with academic standards and the quality of students' learning opportunities. The annual monitoring process at department level is managed centrally by the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework unit and consists of a Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) of Academic Standards and Quality for all departments listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Departmental Planning Units (updated October 2021)

Planning Unit	Department
Faculty of Arts and Sciences	1. Biology 2. Business School[26] 3. Computer Science 4. Creative Arts[27] 5. Edge Hill Language Centre[28] 6. English, History and Creative Writing 7. Geography and Geology 8. Law and Criminology 9. Psychology 10. Social Sciences 11. Sport and Physical Activity
Faculty of Health Social Care and Medicine[29]	1. Allied Health Professions 2. Applied Health and Social Care 3. Medical Education 4. Nursing and Midwifery Education[30] 5. Social Work

[22] The first-time pass rate includes students who have passed a module in their first attempt at the final assessment point.
[23] See Chapter 6.
[24] www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics.
[25] External examiners confirm that the standards set at validation meet or exceed national threshold (pass) standards and are comparable with similar provision of other UK higher education providers - See Chapter 2.
[26] Also includes the PGCert Teaching in Higher Education delivered out of the Centre for Learning and Teaching.
[27] Formally the departments of Media and Performing Arts.
[28] Current credit-bearing provision comprises the University Foundation Certificate International Foundation Programme, the Stem Foundation Year, the level 3 Fastrack programme and foreign Language Study modules.
[29] A new School-based structure was introduced in the Faculty in 2019-20 however departments retain their individual identities for monitoring and review purposes.
[30] Merged department w.e.f. 2020-21.

Planning Unit	Department
Faculty of Education	1. Primary and Childhood Education 2. Early Years Education 3. Secondary and Further Education

A factual DBA report summarising the Department's performance during the previous academic year is prepared in partnership with the Head of Department and a representative from the Strategic Planning and Policy Unit (SPPU).

In confirming that standards remain secure, the DBA report will consider:

- academic and professional benchmarking;
- PSRB Reports (where applicable and available)
- external examiners' reports.

In assessing indicators of quality the report reviews 3-year data against Key Performance Indicators[31] for:

- Recruitment i.e., the conversion rate and enrolments at programme level including any programmes that failed to recruit;
- A list of Programme modifications undertaken in the preceding year;
- Instances of academic malpractice;
- Student academic outcomes (e.g., module pass rates (first-time and overall), progression, retention and degree outcomes;
- Student satisfaction – National Student Survey and internal survey data; and,
- Graduate Outcomes – employment, highly skilled employment or further study.

In assessing departments' ability and capacity to manage risk, the report considers:

- The content of the department's 'strategic-level' Quality Enhancement (action) Plan, separated by programme as necessary, based on *the department's* evaluation[32] of the above indicators of Quality.
- A progress update on the previous year's Quality Enhancement Plan.

Affirmation of Standards and Quality

DBA reports contain a judgement on threshold Standards and Quality[33]. Reports are required to affirm, based on consideration of the evidence, that the Department continues to meet the ongoing conditions for Quality (B1 – B4) and Standards (B5), as follows:

- B1: Deliver well designed courses that provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

[31] Key Performance Indicators are defined by the University's Directorate (senior management team).
[32] Heads of Department are provided with detailed datasets disaggregated by relevant protected characteristics to enable a full evaluation of their portfolio.
[33] I.e., whether programmes have met or not met the national Expectations for Standards and Quality as set out in the OfS's Regulatory Framework.

- B2: Provide all students, from admission through to completion, with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
- B3: Deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers and/or enable further study.
- B4: Ensure that qualifications awarded to students hold their value at the point of qualification and over time, in line with sector recognised standards.
- B5: Deliver courses that meet the academic standards as they are described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications at level 4 or higher.

Judgements are reached by triangulating external examiner reports and responses, PSRB reports (where available) and 'contextualised' performance data. Beyond threshold, comparisons are made between programme performance data and a set of Institutional benchmarks set by the Directorate. Any data which falls below Institutional benchmark is contextualised and commented upon by the Head of Department as part of the DBA process and actions formally recorded in a Quality Enhancement Plan (below).

Quality Enhancement Plans

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is divided into two sections:

1. Agreed actions in response to indicators of Standards and Quality (performance data); and
2. A summary of good practice linked to evidenced improvements/ exemplary performance against Institutional benchmarks.

In part 1 of the QEP, Heads of Department state concisely what is being done and / or will be done to improve performance (in the spirit of SMART action planning). This means that actions are linked directly to programmes or areas where performance has fallen below the benchmark set by the University. Actions are set at an appropriate, departmental level and need not contain operational details.

Part 2 of the QEP provides a summary of specific features of good practice with the potential for wider dissemination across departments and/ or Faculties. Good practice citations are linked to external examiners' reports, previous validation and/ or periodic review reports, evidenced improvements in performance data between academic years or programmes/ subject areas which show exemplary performance against Institutional benchmarks.
Faculties consider if the issues raised by the data have been addressed sufficiently within the report and in the QEP. Where this is deemed not to be the case, reports and / or plans are referred back for further work. Completed reports (including the QEP) are submitted to the GQASC for 'in principle' approval. Final approval is granted by AQEC[34].

Part 1 of the QEP is considered a live document which can be updated by departments at any time during the academic year when data becomes available, or progress has been made. Faculties monitor progress against the actions contained within part 1 of the QEP. Faculties receive updated plans for discussion, exploring where updates have not been provided or if

[34] Normally at the February meeting.

updates require more detail. All progress updates are expected to be completed by the end of the academic year. The Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework unit (GQASC) uses the final versions of the QEPs as part of the evidence for the next Annual Monitoring round.

Departmental Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) comprise a Desk-Based Assessment Report and a Quality Enhancement Plan.

Department AMRs are made available to staff and students via the AQDU Wiki page[35] and Programme and/ or Faculty Boards[36] respectively.

GQASC produces an overview document which highlights key themes from departmental annual monitoring. As well as providing the basis of discussion by AQEC[37], this overview also informs production of the University Annual Monitoring Report (below).

Annual Monitoring for PSRBs

Programmes that are regulated by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) may be required to submit external monitoring reports to meet their specific requirements. These will normally be received for approval by Faculty Boards (or their committees) but should be referred for additional consideration by AQEC where any issues requiring University level attention are identified.

For further details on the annual monitoring process, please contact the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework unit. For specific queries on the quantitative data used, please contact the Strategic Planning and Policy Unit.

Annual Review of Academic Partnerships

Edge Hill University develops academic partnerships with a wide range of third-party organisations, from UK-based employers, colleges and awarding bodies to overseas higher education providers, for the delivery of modules or programmes leading to the award of University credit or qualifications; or the provision of student learning opportunities including work placements, international exchanges and arrangements for entry with advanced standing (articulation). The Annual Review of Academic Partnerships operates in conjunction with Departmental Annual Monitoring but is a separate process reflecting the level of risk associated with partnership working. Full details are provided elsewhere in this Handbook[38], however for partnerships in Category C and above including Higher and Degree Apprenticeships this entails the completion of an **Annual Review Form** at the start of each new academic year for any provision delivered in the previous academic year. This is usually completed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor with support and input from the Faculty Partnership Lead, and supporting evidence includes external examiner reports, retention and other performance data, and student feedback. Annual Review may also revisit current programme Delivery Plans, due diligence, online marketing materials and staffing

[35] https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu
[36] Or delegated committee.
[37] At its February meeting.
[38] See Chapter 5.

arrangements. Completed forms receive Faculty-level scrutiny and approval[39] prior to their submission to AQEC[40], which:

- assesses, on the basis of the evidence provided, the ability and capacity of the partner organisation (working with the University) to identify and manage academic risk;
- provides feedback to Faculties, departments and partners or, where necessary and appropriate, requests additional information from them; and
- considers any additional scrutiny and/ or support for a partner or host University department that may be indicated by the Annual Review Form or other relevant evidence.

GQASC produces an overview document[41] which highlights key themes from annual monitoring of academic partnerships. As well as providing the basis of discussion by AQEC[42], this overview also informs production of the University Annual Monitoring Report (below).

University Annual Monitoring Report

The University Annual Monitoring Report, which is received by AQEC[43] and approved by the Academic Board[44], assesses and evaluates the key risks identified through the annual monitoring of departments and their programmes including the annual review of academic partnerships. It is presented in the context of Faculty Academic Development Plans[45] and the outcomes of annual budget-setting in so far as these impact the delivery and quality of both current and planned provision. Drafted by GQASC on behalf of the PVC (Student Experience) & University Secretary[46], the University AMR highlights issues for attention by the Academic Board, Faculties and professional support services, giving particular emphasis to the longer-term and strategic implications of its assessment of risk in the context of external market and regulatory conditions. The University AMR is a key mechanism in promoting a culture of mutual accountability for the maintenance of standards and enhancement of quality and in so doing addresses the following audiences:

- **Academic departments and academic partner organisations**, which expect to see the broad concerns raised by them through the Annual Monitoring process have been considered and responded to; and
- **AQEC and Academic Board**, which require assurance that the University's academic governance is being managed appropriately.

Academic Assurance Report

The Academic Assurance Report (AAR) is authored by GQASC on behalf of Academic Board and it is informed by the University AMR. It provides supporting evidence of the maintenance of standards and quality for the Board of Governors' annual accountability return to the Office

[39] With representatives of partner organisations attending by invitation.
[40] At its February meeting.
[41] Jointly authored by the AQDU and Faculties.
[42] At its February meeting.
[43] At its June meeting.
[44] At its July meeting.
[45] See Chapter 4.
[46] Also the Chair of AQEC.

for Students ([47]). The AAR maps current Institutional processes and outcomes to the OfS's General Ongoing Conditions of Registration, specifically Conditions B1-5 for Quality and Standards. A draft AAR is approved by Academic Board[48] with the final version received for consideration by the Board of Governors.

PERIODIC REVIEW

The purpose of Periodic Review is to review and evaluate all taught curriculum in a particular department or other cognate grouping of programmes (planning unit[49]), in order to:

- Confirm that the academic standards set at programme validation remain appropriate and are being demonstrated by students through assessment and achievement of their awards.
- Confirm that the quality of the student learning experience is being maintained and enhanced.
- Address, in an holistic way, any issues concerning curricula, teaching, learning and assessment, student support, staffing and resources, course organisation and quality assurance that apply to the department's whole provision.
- Consider the department's academic strategy and direction in the context of the University's mission, provision and students as well as national and regional agendas, exploring new areas for programme development or the re-focusing or closure of existing provision[50].
- Consider trends in student recruitment, retention, progression and completion, including graduate employment, across the whole of the department's portfolio from sub-degree to Masters level.
- Capture the 'voices' of current students, employers and alumni (through focus groups).
- Use evidence of standards and quality to support continued approval of the department's programmes and awards.

Periodic reviews are programmed on a five-year cycle, the schedule and any changes to it being confirmed annually by AQEC (see table 2).

An Institution-level panel drawn from the membership of the Validation and Audit Standing Panel[51] makes judgements on the overall academic health of the department and its programmes based on its reading of review documentation and separate discussions held with staff, students and employers. Periodic Review reports are received by AQEC where the review panel's recommendations are considered and continued approval of all validated programmes normally confirmed although individual programmes may be referred to the host Faculty for modification or re-validation before the next student intake.

[47] For more detail on the Office for Students and associated sector regulation see Chapter 1.
[48] At its November meeting.
[49] See Chapter 4.
[50] Informing discussions that will take place during Departmental Academic Planning – see Chapter 4.
[51] See Chapter 4, also https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=71188453.

Table 2: '*Edge Hill University Periodic Review Cycle*' (updated October 2021)

Year no. in cycle	Academic Year	Faculty	Unit of periodic review
1	**2021-2022**	FAS	Computer Science – hybrid event incl. Re-val
		FAS	Geography and Geology[52]
		FAS	Social Sciences[53]
		FHSCM	Medical Education[54]
2	**2022-2023**	FAS	Biology[55]
		FAS	Business School[56]
		FAS	English, History and Creative Writing[57]
		FAS	Law and Criminology
		FOE	Early Years Education[58]
		FOE	Primary and Childhood Education[59]
3	**2023-2024**	FAS	Creative Arts[60]
		FAS	Edge Hill Language Centre[61]
		FAS	Psychology
		FHSCM	Applied Health and Social Care
		FHSCM	Allied Health Professions
4	**2024-2025**	FAS	Sport and Physical Activity
		FOE	Secondary and Further Education
		FHSCM	Nursing and Midwifery Education[62]
5	**2025-26**	FAS	Business School
		FAS	Computer Science
		FAS	Engineering
		FAS	Geography and Geology
		FAS	Social Sciences
		FOE	Early Years Education
		FHSCM	Medical Education
		FAS	Law and Criminology
		FOE	Primary and Childhood Education

[52] Extraordinary DBA mechanism to grant continuing approval. Next scheduled review in 2025-26.
[53] Extraordinary DBA mechanism to grant continuing approval. Next scheduled review in 2025-26.
[54] Extraordinary DBA mechanism to grant continuing approval. Next scheduled review in 2025-26.
[55] Deferred from 2021-22.
[56] To include the PGCert Teaching in Higher Education. Deferred from 2021-22.
[57] Deferred from 2021-22.
[58] Deferred from 2021-22.
[59] Formerly the department of Children, Education and Communities
[60] Formerly the departments of Media and Performing Arts.
[61] Credit-bearing provision comprises the University Foundation Certificate International Foundation Programme, the Stem Foundation Year, the level 3 Fastrack programme, and foreign Language Study modules.
[62] Combined department from 2020-21. Includes programmes transferred from the Partnerships and Practice Learning Unit in September 2019.

Periodic Review considers any programmes delivered by or with third-party organisations (academic partners) for the purpose of continuing programme approval, however these are also reviewed individually as part of a separate five-year cycle of partner and delivery re-approval[63].

Faculties are advised against instigating standalone re-validation in the year of, or year before, a department's scheduled Periodic Review, although circumstances may make this unavoidable, such as the need to implement revised PSRB standards. Where a programme's re-validation[64] is scheduled ***in same year*** as Periodic Review, the requirement for a Critical Review document is replaced by the standard validation documentation and the DBA completed in the same year as part of the Annual Monitoring process. If scheduled separately, Periodic Review and re-validation events should ideally be held three months apart to allow some opportunity for the review's outcomes to inform the validation process.

Where Periodic Review is scheduled for ***the year following re-validation*** the review process is determined by the re-validation's scope, for example:

- where the majority of the department's programmes were re-validated the previous year, the requirement for a Critical Review document is replaced by the DBA, which supports continuing programme approval; or,
- where a minority of programmes were re-validated, a standard periodic review is completed.

Application to AQEC for **deferment of a scheduled Periodic Review** is normally supported by a Departmental Risk Assessment (see below). Reviews may be deferred for one year only.

Programme Transfers between Departments
Where programme transfer between departments creates the risk of individual programmes not being reviewed within a five-year period, the DBA process, carried out at the next available monitoring point, supports continuing programme approval.

A full description of the periodic review process and associated documentation is contained in *'Preparing for Periodic Review: A Guide for Panels and Departments'*.

INTERNAL AUDIT

Internal audits are commissioned by AQEC, the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) or the Directorate and may be prompted by:

a) The University's strategic imperatives;
b) reports of external examiners, Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, annual monitoring, validation or periodic review; or,

[63] See Chapter 5.
[64] See Chapter 4.

c) by specific request of Academic Board committees, the Directorate, Faculties or professional support services.

Internal audits are serviced by staff of GQASC who convene panels, distribute documentation, minute meetings and produce final reports according to timescales set by the commissioners (c, above). Whilst panels are normally constituted by members of the VASP, additional specialist expertise may be co-opted which could include external contributors.

Developmental Enquiry
Thematic and enhancement-focused by nature, Developmental Enquiries (DEs) explore specific aspects of the learner experience; recent DEs have focused on cross-Faculty approaches to managing placement-based learning, the joint honours student experience and developing students' assessment literacy. Written and oral evidence is taken from key Institutional stakeholders and the report, which is normally received by LTC, contains recommendations for development as well as highlighting good practice for wider dissemination. LTC decides upon any action to be taken in response to the report's recommendations and progress is monitored through separate update reports, the timing and frequency of which are determined by the committee.

Extraordinary Audit
An Extraordinary Audit may be convened at very short notice and enables a rapid response to a specific presenting issue, incident or set of circumstances, for example an adverse external examiner's report. An Institutional panel chaired by a senior manager is convened and considers written and oral evidence with a report submitted to AQEC and the Directorate within two to six weeks of commissioning.

Departmental Risk Assessment
Whether or not academic provision is deemed to be at risk depends on the interaction between the internal or external threats to which it is exposed and its owner's capacity to manage these, resulting in an evaluation of net risk; thus a department operating in a high-risk environment may be assigned a rating of medium or even low net risk based on its perceived ability to manage those risks. Departmental Risk Assessment is a useful tool for confirming the continuing academic health of a department or programme, enabling swift conclusions to be drawn and any immediate support needs identified.

Commissioned by AQEC and conducted by the Governance Quality Assurance and Student Casework unit, Departmental Risk Assessments normally comprise the department's most recent Annual Monitoring Report and updated QEP, accompanied by the reporting officer's summary estimation of net risk. Departmental Risk Assessment may also be used to support an application to defer a scheduled Periodic Review which is considered by AQEC at its next available meeting (reviews may be deferred for one year only).

Chapter 4

Programme and Module Approval and Modification

Updated October 2021

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 4
ACADEMIC PLANNING 4
Departmental Academic Planning Meetings 6
Table 2: '*Departmental Planning Units'* (updated October 2021) 7
Faculty Strategic Plans 8
Applications for Development Consent 8
VALIDATION 10
Re-validation 12
INTENDED AND ALTERNATIVE (EXIT) AWARDS 13
Programme Learning Outcomes: Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and Subject Benchmark Statements 14
Sandwich Year and Study Abroad routes 15
STEM Foundation Year 16
COMBINED PROGRAMMES 16
Joint Honours & Major/ Minor degrees 16
Integrated Single Honours degrees 18
'Module Sharing' 18
MODULE APPROVAL AND MODIFICATION 18
Module approval 18
Year of Study Approval 20
Optional Modules 21
Minor Module Modification 22
Module review and re-approval 23
Modifications to Years of Study 24
PROGRAMME MODIFICATION 24
'Material changes' 24
Entry standards and entry requirements 25
Minor Programme Modification 26
Minor Modifications Review 27
Major Programme Modification 28
PROGRAMME CLOSURE 30
Procedures 31
PROGRAMME-SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES 33

NON-CREDIT BEARING PROVISION 33
HIGHER AND DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS 33
Table 3: 'Processes for Module and Programme Approval (simplified)' 34
Appendix: Validation and Audit Standing Panel (VASP) 36
Articulations Approval Panel (AAP) 37
Major Modifications Panel (MMP) 38

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of **programme approval** is to ensure the academic standards and quality of student learning opportunities within a proposed programme of study leading to the award of an Edge Hill University qualification. **Module approval**[1] ensures the appropriateness of module content and approaches to teaching, learning and assessment for the award of academic credit. **Programme and module modification** enable validated curricula to be refreshed ahead of their next formal review/ re-validation.

The University's processes for the approval and modification of programmes and modules are fully aligned with the Quality and Standards Conditions B1 to B5 of the Office for Students' (OfS) Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in England[2]. Processes are informed by the supporting Advice and Guidance on Course Design and Development contained within the UK Quality Code (published November 2018)[3].

The University operates a standard cycle for programme development and approval which is also described below.

ACADEMIC PLANNING

Edge Hill University's primary strategic aim is to remain a highly valued and financially-sustainable organisation that provides an exceptional student learning and living experience. A crucial factor in securing the Institution's future sustainability and success is the attractiveness, quality and effectiveness of its prospectus. This means that we must continually strive to achieve enhanced levels of forward-planning, communication and collaborative working across Faculties and professional services, underpinned by an effective, holistic and flexible academic planning process.

Academic Planning is based on two overarching principles:

- Faculties reflect upon their objectives and priorities in the context of the Institution's vision, strategic aims and priorities, and external drivers.
- Faculties and professional support services support the Institution's development by working together to facilitate systematic, appropriate and constructive collaboration and communication.

[1] Or Year of Study Approval for non-modular curriculum (Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine) – see 'Module Approval and Modification', below.
[2] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/.
[3] www.qaa.ac.uk//en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/course-design-and-development.

Table 1: 'Academic Planning: Principles and Expectations'

Principle 1: Faculties reflect upon their objectives and priorities in the context of the Institution's vision, strategic aims and priorities and external drivers
Expectation: Faculties will
a) Re-assess the impact of external drivers upon the business of the Faculty and the strategies in place.
b) Review and evaluate each department's portfolio of programmes in the context of the University's Curriculum Strategy[4] and the Faculty's vision and priorities; and identify any current provision that needs to be modified, replaced or closed.
c) Identify scope for potential new programme developments for inclusion in the Faculty's Academic Development Plan which are supported by a Market Analysis Report[5] and an evaluation of likely resource requirements including staffing.
d) Remain cognisant of the agreed University timeline for curriculum development and modification, marketing and recruitment whilst remaining responsive to the respective sector needs and requirements.
e) Consider any limiting factors to recruitment such as specialist facilities or placement opportunities.
f) Review staffing and the allocation of resources, in line with the introduction of newly validated curriculum, and identify any additional requirements that are likely to impact financial planning to inform preparation of the Faculty's budget submission.
g) Consider resources required to support each department's strategies for staff development and the enhancement of learning and teaching and the student experience.
h) Consider how departmental strategies for research and knowledge exchange, enterprise and other external engagement activities will be taken forward.
i) Evaluate each department's progress against the Faculty Strategic Plan which will include a review and discussion of the department's agreed Quality Enhancement Plan[6] from the previous Annual Monitoring or Periodic Review Report.
Principle 2: Faculties and professional support services support the Institution's development by working together to facilitate systematic, appropriate and constructive collaboration and communication.
Expectation: Faculties will
a) Exchange information and the outputs that emerge from the academic planning process with relevant stakeholders across the Institution (if applicable).
b) Signpost and consult on any resource and/ or support requirements that are likely to impact the financial planning of professional support services.
c) Highlight and consult on any proposed changes to administrative processes, approaches to assessment or delivery of the curriculum which may impact the future resources or service level agreements of the professional support services.
d) Prior to the refinement of the Faculty Strategic Plan, communicate and liaise with other Faculties to moderate proposed curriculum developments, identify opportunities for collaborative working and avoid potential internal competition.

[4] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/curriculum-strategy-2020-2025.
[5] Generated by colleagues in Marketing.
[6] This may also include other more detailed operational actions plans.

Departmental Academic Planning Meetings

Faculties typically convene Academic Planning Meetings with each of their departments[7] at which detailed discussions take place about how departmental objectives and priorities as outlined in their Quality Enhancement Plan[8] will be operationalised and measured. Meetings are convened by the Faculty[9] during the spring term and are informed by the department's most recent annual monitoring/ periodic review report[10]. Departmental academic planning meetings:

- Discuss how departmental objectives and priorities are being operationalised and measured.
- Review the department's current portfolio of programmes in the context of the University's Curriculum Strategy, the Faculty's Strategic Plan (see below) and the department's current position, for example its capacity and capabilities including staffing and resources and in-year performance data, e.g. student retention.
- Identify scope for new programme developments for the medium to long-term for inclusion in the Faculty Academic Development Plan (appended to the Faculty's Strategic Plan and including timescales in line with the University's timeline for curriculum development and approval – see also below).
- Provide feedback on draft proposals for validation in the next academic year in advance of seeking formal development consent from the University's Academic Planning Committee (APC)[11].
- Identify any current provision that may require modification, replacement or closure.
- Consider the department's research strategy and identify any support needs.
- Consider any implications for financial planning and use this to inform preparation of the Faculty's annual budget submission.
- Identify any requirements for additional central support that may impact on professional support services' own planning.

[7] See Table 2 'Departmental Planning Units (updated October 2021)'.
[8] See Chapter 3.
[9] The constitution of departmental planning meetings is determined by the PVC Dean of Faculty (Chair) or delegated alternate and may include representation from other Faculties and support services. Department representation is agreed with the Faculty and typically consists of the Head of Department and members of their senior management team, e.g. Assistant Head(s) and/ or programme leaders.
[10] Faculties may request additional supporting evidence from departments to inform discussions.
[11] For APC's constitution and terms of reference see Chapter 8.

Table 2: '*Departmental Planning Units*' (updated October 2021)

Planning Unit	Department
Faculty of Arts and Sciences	1. Biology 2. Business School[12] 3. Computer Science 4. Creative Arts[13] 5. Edge Hill Language Centre[14] 6. English, History and Creative Writing 7. Geography and Geology 8. Law and Criminology 9. Psychology 10. Social Sciences 11. Sport and Physical Activity
Faculty of Health Social Care and Medicine[15]	1. Allied Health Professions 2. Applied Health and Social Care 3. Medical Education 4. Nursing and Midwifery Education[16] 5. Social Work
Faculty of Education	1. Primary and Childhood Education 2. Early Years Education 3. Secondary and Further Education

The outputs from the academic planning process are:

1. A revised **Faculty Strategic Plan** (where appropriate);
2. An updated **Faculty Academic Development Plan** (appended to Faculty's strategy); and,
3. The Faculty's budget submission.

[12] Also includes the PGCert Teaching in Higher Education delivered out of the Centre for Learning and Teaching.
[13] Formally the departments of Media and Performing Arts.
[14] Current credit-bearing provision comprises the University Foundation Certificate International Foundation Programme, the Stem Foundation Year, the level 3 Fastrack programme and foreign Language Study modules.
[15] A new School-based structure was introduced in the Faculty in 2019-20 however departments retain their individual identities for monitoring and review purposes.
[16] Merged department w.e.f. 2020-21.

Faculty Strategic Plans

Faculty Strategic Plans represent each Faculty's agreed position in relation to:

- Learning and teaching;
- Research;
- External engagement and enterprise; and
- Academic (curriculum) development, including any academic partnership activity.

Strategic Plans are informed by:

- The University Strategic Plan[17]and its key underlying strategies;
- External drivers that are likely to impact the Institution;
- Individual departmental strategies for learning and teaching, and research;
- External engagement; and
- Staff development.

Faculty Plans are refined each year using the intelligence gained from departmental planning meetings, however they are expected to remain relatively stable unless required to respond to government regulatory or funding initiatives.
Each Strategic Plan includes a **Faculty Academic Development Plan (ADP)** which, as a minimum:

- Describes how the Faculty's plans align with the University's Curriculum Strategy and provides an indication of the anticipated size and shape of the portfolio.
- Differentiates medium and longer-term developments.
- Clearly identifies any programmes to be validated, modified or closed during the next academic session.

Faculty Strategic Plans are received by APC[18] which reviews them in the context of Institutional strategy and identifies any potential for additional cross-Faculty collaboration or curriculum exchange, where appropriate.

Applications for Development Consent

Applications for Development Consent (ADCs) are outline programme proposals, usually individual to each programme and produced[19] by the proposing department, describing:

- The proposed programme and its alignment with the University's Curriculum Strategy, including academic and vocational rationale and market analysis[20].
- The intended award and any alternative (exit) awards.

[17]Strategic Plan 2021-2025 - Documents (edgehill.ac.uk)
[18] Usually at its May meeting.
[19] The ADC template can be found on the E-Val database which is accessed via www.edgehill.ac.uk/services/E-Val/.
[20] ADCs for new programmes are usually accompanied by a Market Insight Report produced by a member of the Marketing team.

- Location and mode of delivery: Edge Hill University campus and/ or academic partner organisation[21]; full-time/ part-time[22]; classroom/ distance/ blended learning[23].
- Professional body accreditation (where applicable).
- Indicative programme content.
- Staffing and resources based on projected student numbers[24].

Before proceeding to Institutional scrutiny by APC, ADCs and the accompanying Market Analysis Report are considered at relevant committees (e.g., Programme Board/ Student-Staff Consultative Forum and/ or Faculty Board[25]) and approved at Faculty level. Such scrutiny also provides opportunity for consultation with students.

The University has agreed the following **standard timeline**[26] for development and approval of new undergraduate programmes:

Month	Process
June 2020:	Application for Development Consent approved by APC
July – December 2020:	Programme development
January – April 2021:	Faculty approval to proceed and Institutional validation
June 2021:	Final approval by Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC)
September 2021:	Programme recruitment opens (UCAS)
September 2022:	**Programme delivery commences**

[21] See Chapter 5.
[22] Programmes are normally designated full-time when a student is required to attend the University or elsewhere (which may include distance or blended learning) for a period amounting to **at least 24 weeks within the year** and during that time is expected to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace or work placement which amount to an average of **at least 21 hours per week**. Full-time undergraduates will normally undertake a **minimum of 105 credits** (1,050 Notional Learning Hours) per annum, while full-time postgraduate students will normally undertake a **minimum of 150 credits** (1,500 Notional Learning Hours) per annum.
[23] GQASC have agreed the following definitions: **Classroom** Programme designed to be studied through attendance on site with teaching and learning in person, and supplementary asynchronous and/or synchronous sessions to add value; **Blended** Programme designed to be studied through a combination of both sustained online delivery and on-site learning. Patterns of study will vary but will be through a combination of online and on-site teaching and learning across the academic year; **Online** Programme designed to be studied online remotely, with teaching and learning consisting of both synchronous and/or asynchronous online learning activities.
[24] Whilst noting any additional staffing or resources that may be associated with new programme proposals, APC does not authorise spending which is approved separately through the University's annual budget-setting process.
[25] Or delegated committee.
[26] The full version of the timeline including the approval of programme modifications may accessed at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Key+Guidance+Documents.

ADCs for undergraduate programmes are normally received by the June meeting of APC, with validation the following year and delivery a year later. ADCs for Masters-level programmes may be received up to and including the December APC for validation between January-April and delivery the following year. ADCs for commissioned (closed) programmes or new partner-delivered/ co-delivered provision may be received at any time of year, with validation scheduled as required. Development consent may occasionally be sought outside the normal schedule[27] of APC meetings and in such circumstances the Chair will determine whether to:

- Convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee; or
- Circulate the ADC and if applicable, the associated business case to members for comment by correspondence and subsequent approval by APC Chair's Action; or
- Approve the ADC by APC Chair's Action without further consultation.

APC Chair's Action is routinely reported to the next scheduled meeting where it is endorsed by the committee. Where Chair's Action has been used to give development consent, this is on the understanding that the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC)[28] will consider the ensuing validation report in full session and in these circumstances the approval of the validation report by AQEC Chair's Action would normally be unacceptable.

Development consent is notified to key Institutional stakeholders via the Programme Validations and Modifications (PVM) email group[29] whereupon departments proceed to detailed programme development. ADCs have a maximum shelf life and where validation is deferred by more than eighteen months following development consent a fresh ADC will normally be required.

VALIDATION

The University's annual schedule of **Institutional validation** (academic programme approval) events is based on Faculty Academic Development Plans and individual Applications for Development Consent (see above).

Responsibility for validation resides with AQEC through its Validation and Audit Standing Panel[30]. VASP is a body of suitably experienced University academic and senior support staff from whom Institutional validation panels are convened. Membership of the Standing Panel is by application[31] to the Chair of VASP and additional criteria apply to the appointment of Panel Chairs. Standing Panel members receive appropriate training and development and all panels contain a majority of academic members.

---

[27] The annual calendar of committee meetings is published on the Governance wiki which can be accessed at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/governance/Academic+Governance.
[28] For AQEC's constitution and terms of reference, see Chapter 8
[29] Stakeholders typically comprise Faculties, GQASC, Academic Registry, Admissions, Careers Centre, Corporate Communications, International Office, Learning Services, Strategic Planning and Policy Unit and Student Recruitment.
[30] See https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=71188453, also **Appendix**.
[31] Using the form accessed from https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/VASP+Membership.

Prior to Institutional validation, Faculties convene **Faculty Approval Panels** at which the programme documentation is reviewed in full and approved to proceed to validation. Panel constitution is determined by the Faculty, however panels must include an appropriate level of VASP representation which includes a VASP Chair. Occasionally, when the University is required to be more responsive[32], a more 'fastrack' approach to Faculty approval may be adopted as an exception. **As a minimum this must include** confirmation that proposals are compliant with the University's Academic Regulations[33] and that modules are appropriately mapped to Programme Learning Outcomes, by confirming their alignment with module content and Module Learning Outcomes. Plans to make use of the faculty's fastrack approval process must be reported to APC as part of seeking development consent. Faculty panels may set conditions of approval and / or recommendations and while recommendations are advisory, conditions must be met in full by the proposing team and verified[34] by the Faculty prior to proceeding to Institutional validation.

Institutional Validation panels are convened by the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework unit (GQASC) and selected from the membership of VASP. External members (such as academic subject experts, industry experts, PSRB representatives and, where applicable, Service Users and Carers[35]) and students participate in validation panels.

Panels consider programme documentation in detail and judge whether academic standards have been set correctly and learning opportunities of appropriate quality put in place. Consideration of standards includes evidence of programme teams' engagement with national academic frameworks and benchmarks[36] and/ or professional standards, the Academic Regulations[37], and Institutional guidance on programme design located within the Taught Degrees Framework[38]. Discussion of staffing and resources is based on APC's approval of the initial ADC, therefore any changes to projected intake numbers that have occurred since ADC approval should be clearly signposted.

Where an existing programme is proposed for delivery by an academic partner organisation[39] an abbreviated agenda[40] focuses on the partner's arrangements for student support, management of work-based learning (placements), staffing and learning resources, course

[32] Reasons for adopting this approach may typically include mitigation of potential academic risk, responding to changes in PSRB requirements or to make best use of presenting business opportunities.
[33] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/
[34] Ensuring also that only changes specified by the Faculty Approval Panel have been introduced into the document.
[35] See 'Quality Assurance Handbook' (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2019), para. 109, www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/qualityassurance/nmc-qa-handbook-july19-.pdf.
[36] Most notably the '*Framework for Higher Education Qualifications*' (QAA 2014), Degree Characteristics Statements and Subject Benchmark Statements www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/the-existing-uk-quality-code/part-a-setting-and-maintaining-academic-standards (see also 'Programme Learning Outcomes', below).
[37] Available at.
[38] www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/taught-degrees-framework/.
[39] See Chapter 5.
[40] See 'Proforma Agenda for Delivery Approval' at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Template+Documents.

organisation and quality assurance. Delivery approval is coterminous with 5-year partner approval, and partners/ programmes are subject to review and re-approval during their final year of approval.

Validation outcomes comprise unconditional approval; approval with conditions and/ or recommendations; or referral for further development by the programme team. Panels do not set conditions around resources but may highlight significant matters for attention by the host Faculty or Directorate as part of the University's annual budget-setting process. Institutional validation culminates in a recommendation to AQEC which confers final programme approval on behalf of the Academic Board.

For a full description of the standard validation process and documentation see *"Preparing for Validation: A Guide for Panels and Course Teams"*[41].

Re-validation

Once validated, programmes normally remain in approval until their next scheduled Periodic Review[42] which confers continuing approval on evidence that the standards set at validation are being maintained, and the quality of student learning opportunities enhanced. Between scheduled reviews Faculties may update their programmes through a formal modifications process[43], however where widespread changes are proposed - typically, **where more than two thirds of the credit derived from Core/ Compulsory modules[44] at any FHEQ level is to be changed simultaneously** - standalone re-validation becomes necessary. As with new programmes, the host department completes an Application for Development Consent which the Faculty submits to APC for approval to proceed to re-validation. Standalone re-validation is also utilised for some PSRB-regulated programmes in health, social care and medicine, e.g. pre-registration nursing and midwifery.

Proposals for re-validation are supported by evidence of **consultation** with the current external examiner and students. Consultation with students should be by letter or email, presented in a 'student-friendly' style, and contain an overview of the proposed changes, the rationale for them and why they are beneficial to learners. Written communication should be preceded by discussion in the classroom, and at Student-Staff Consultative Fora and/ or Programme Boards where student representatives are in attendance. In all cases, students should be allowed reasonable time to consider and respond to the proposed changes. Nil responses will usually be treated as tacit agreement, however should a majority be achieved by this means the Faculty will exercise caution and seek to obtain a more positive mandate for its proposals.

[41] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Key+Guidance+Documents (EHU staff login required).
[42] Periodic reviews of academic departments taken place on a five-yearly cycle – see Chapter 3.
[43] See 'Programme Modification', below.
[44] Modules designated **Core** to a programme do not permit condonement (compensation) of marginal failure. Modules designated **Compulsory** permit condonement within the limits prescribed by the Academic Regulations, section H11.

Re-validated undergraduate programmes are normally 'phased in', commencing with the next level 4 intake, however simultaneous or 'block' implementation of two or more years/ levels of a re-validated programme may occasionally be proposed and in these circumstances Faculties must evidence **consent** by a simple majority of all affected students. Where block implementation of a re-validated programme is being considered, Faculties/ departments consult in advance with the Director of Quality Assurance and the Academic Registrar to discuss any operational or regulatory implications.

When re-validating an existing programme course teams should consider any impact on the balance between different types of learning activity including classroom-based and online learning, work placements, field trips and guided independent study; or different modes of assessment such as coursework, written examinations and practical skills tests. Faculties remain alert to any significant shifts resulting from re-validation, particularly in the ratio of tutor contact time to independent study, a reduction or removal of placements, or increased use of assessment by examination which are consulted on with current students and notified to prospective students through the designated communication channels[45].

INTENDED AND ALTERNATIVE (EXIT) AWARDS

Institutional validation panels are responsible for confirming the level and title of all University awards consistent with Section B of the Academic Regulations and the national *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications* (FHEQ)[46]. **Intended Awards** are promoted in the course prospectus and equate to completion of a full programme of study. **Alternative Awards** are available to students who exit their programme prematurely and have completed the requisite number and level of credits for an award, e.g. (for undergraduate degree programmes) a 120 credit Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE), 240 credit Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) or 300 credit Ordinary (non-Honours) degree; and (for Masters degrees) a 60 credit postgraduate certificate or 120 credit postgraduate diploma. Alternative awards are also available for in-programme transfer, e.g. between an Integrated Masters and associated undergraduate Honours degree, or for students on PSRB-regulated programmes who have achieved the requisite number/ level of credits but have not met the requirements for professional registration, e.g. 'BSc (Hons) Health & Social Care Studies' as an alternative non-professional award for students of pre-registration nursing and midwifery degrees. Titles of Intended and Alternative Awards include the following component information:

- Target award, e.g. 'FdA', 'BSc (Hons)', 'MA', 'MComp'[47].
- Named Award, e.g. 'Computer Science'.

[45] The term **prospective students** may describe (i) potential applicants; (ii) individuals who have applied and received an offer; or (iii) individuals who have applied, received and accepted an offer. Communication with potential applicants is normally via the University's online prospectus which is updated frequently to reflect any material course changes - https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/sr/Communicating+with+prospective+students

[46] www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf.

[47] Target awards are approved by the Academic Planning Committee as part of the process of Development Consent – see 'Academic Planning', above – and confirmed at validation. See Appendix 2 of the Academic Regulations, www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/.

Titles of Ordinary degree and DipHE alternative exit awards are usually consistent with the title of the associated Honours degree, nevertheless validation panels should confirm that these appropriately reflect the proportion of subject study undertaken at the exit stage of the programme. CertHE exit awards are normally unnamed unless specifically justified at validation.

Programme Learning Outcomes: Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and Subject Benchmark Statements

Programme Specifications define separate Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for each level of the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (levels 4-6 of an undergraduate degree, and level 7 for a Masters degree). PLOs are described under the following four headings:

- **Knowledge and Understanding**
- **Intellectual Skills** - e.g. skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation
- **Practical Skills** - subject-specific skills developed, for example, through lab or studio-based activity, fieldwork or placement
- **Transferable Skills** - general employability skills such as oral and written communication, literacy and numeracy, time management, and working independently and in teams.

In developing their PLOs course teams consult the relevant FHEQ qualification level descriptors[48] and QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s)[49]. While the FHEQ descriptors are *generic* – describing the types of understanding and skills that students will have demonstrated, irrespective of their subject discipline – Subject Benchmark Statements describe the *specific* knowledge and skills that a student should have acquired on completion of their named award. The content of Subject Benchmark Statements is comprehensive, reflecting the full range of subject delivery across higher education providers, and for this reason it is not expected that programme teams will adopt them wholesale. However, validation panels seek evidence[50] of how subject benchmarks have been **used critically and selectively** to inform the curriculum choices of course teams. Where applicable, teams also describe and illustrate their engagement with any relevant professional standards or other PSRB requirements.

Within Programme Specifications, PLOs are mapped by modules (or by 'in-year learning outcomes' where the curriculum is non-modular, e.g. medicine and nursing) in order to demonstrate how and where they are achieved. Validation panels confirm that each PLO is mapped by at least one Core or two Compulsory modules which helps ensure that where condonement is applied, the relevant PLOs should still have been met.

[48] www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf.
[49] www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements.
[50] For example, through a narrative statement and accompanying matrix that maps Programme Learning Outcomes to the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement(s).

The description of PLOs within Programme Specifications is preceded by one of the following two generic statements:

- ***(For undergraduate awards)*** "The Programme Learning Outcomes shown here describe the knowledge, understanding and skills that students will have demonstrated on achievement of their intended qualification award. Students who do not complete their full programme of study may qualify for an alternative award and the validated exit awards for this programme are listed at the front of this Programme Specification. For an Honours degree, exit awards are available at level 4 (Certificate of Higher Education), level 5 (Diploma of Higher Education) and level 6 (Ordinary degree on achievement of 60 level 6 credits). The precise learning outcomes of an Ordinary degree are determined by the modules taken and passed at level 6 and can be identified from the table below."
- ***(For postgraduate taught awards)*** "The Programme Learning Outcomes shown here describe the knowledge, understanding and skills that students will have demonstrated on achievement of their intended level 7 qualification award. Students who do not complete their full programme of study may qualify for an alternative award and the validated exit awards for this programme are listed at the front of this Programme Specification. The learning outcomes of level 7 exit awards are determined by the combination of modules taken and passed and can be identified from the table below."

Sandwich Year and Study Abroad routes

The University has validated generic one-year Sandwich and Study Abroad routes which can be incorporated within any undergraduate degree programme. The **Sandwich Year** is scheduled following the second year of normal full-time study (FHEQ level 5) and delivers 120 additional level 5 credits that contribute to the student's degree classification[51]. Degree award titles do not typically reflect the sandwich year which is acknowledged within students' transcripts, however some law and business-related programmes have adopted the nomenclature 'BA/BSc (Hons) [X] [Sandwich]' or similar in their award titles as justified at validation.

In respect of **Study Abroad**[52] including the Erasmus exchange scheme, undergraduate students may either substitute 60 level 5 credits (one semester) of their second year with overseas study, or undertake an additional overseas year between their second and final year which delivers 120 supernumerary credits at level 5. Unlike the Sandwich Year, Study Abroad credit is ungraded and does not contribute to students' degree classification but is recorded on their final transcripts.

The addition of Sandwich Year or Study Abroad routes to existing programmes is delegated to Faculties using approval processes described in their Faculty Quality Statements[53].

[51] For the contribution of supplementary level 5 credit to degree classification see the Academic Regulations, section J3.10.
[52] For details of the approval process for Study Abroad including Erasmus exchanges see Chapter 5.
[53] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities.

STEM Foundation Year

The University has validated a generic one-year, level 3 STEM Foundation Year route which can be studied as part of any undergraduate STEM subject degree programme. Students automatically progress to level 4 of their chosen STEM subject on successful completion[54]. The addition of the STEM Foundation Year route to existing STEM programmes is delegated to Faculties using approval processes described in their Faculty Quality Statements.

COMBINED PROGRAMMES

The University will occasionally validate programmes comprising more than one academic subject, either as **Combined Honours (Joint or Major/ Minor)** or **Integrated Single Honours** awards. The difference between these is mainly one of credit structure (distribution) and all combined programmes require the contributing subjects to collaborate closely in relation to the following which are scrutinised closely at validation:

- Programme design – culminating in a set of integrated Programme Aims and Programme Learning Outcomes.
- Programme organisation and management – overseen by a dedicated Combined Honours Tutor such that students may develop a sense of identity and 'belonging,' receive clear contact information and communications, and have access to support such as Personal Tutors and opportunities for Personal Development Planning.
- Administrative arrangements for student engagement and representation, Programme Boards and Student-Staff Consultative Fora[55].

When developing new Single Honours programmes course teams may wish to identify the modules that would be utilised in any future combined honours programme.

Joint Honours & Major/ Minor degrees

Joint Honours degrees are made up of modules from two different Single Honours degrees[56] in which each subject accounts for precisely 50% of study, i.e. 60 credits per FHEQ level[57]. The contributing subjects are normally shown in alphabetical order[58] in the award title, e.g., '*BA (Hons) Drama and English*', and programme responsibilities relating to organisation and management, personal tutoring and the operation of Personal Development Planning usually reside with the first subject, i.e., Drama in the above example. The first subject is also

[54] The target award will only be available to students who successfully complete the year but choose not to progress to an undergraduate programme. Students who do progress to an undergraduate programme will have the STEM Foundation Year modules added to their transcript.
[55] See Chapter 6.
[56] It is however possible to validate half of a Joint programme where there is no associated Single Honours programme, e.g., the Mathematics half of 'BSc (Hons) Computer Science and Mathematics'.
[57] Tolerance for 'free electives' - 20 credits per level, provided there is approximately equal balance between the joint subjects across levels. See Academic Regulations C5.2.
[58] Where it is intended to vary the usual order of subjects in the award title, this should be highlighted in the Application for Development Consent for consideration and approval by APC.

responsible for providing the Combined Honours Tutor and for producing and maintaining the Programme Specification and managing programme modifications.

Major/ Minor degrees are usually derived from modules of two Single Honours programmes[59] in the ratio of 80/40 credits per FHEQ level. Programme management responsibilities reside with the Major subject. Award titles use the formula '*BA (Hons) [Major subject]* <u>*with*</u> *[Minor subject]*' to reflect the balance of subjects/ credit. The Major subject is responsible for providing the Combined Honours Tutor and for producing and maintaining the Programme Specification and managing programme modifications.

As with standard Single Honours undergraduate degrees, new Joint and Major/ Minor degrees require Development Consent and are validated as shown below:

For combinations derived from *two existing Single Honours degrees:*

- Application for Development Consent to APC.
- Programme Specification produced by the first subject (for Joint Honours awards), or Major subject (for Major/Minor awards).
- Validation delegated to Faculties using processes described in their Faculty Quality Statements. The normal requirement for externality in validation is waived because the contributing modules are already in approval.
- Faculty minutes of approval are received by the next available meeting of AQEC which confirms final approval of the award.
- AQEC Secretary notifies award approval via the PVM email group.

For combinations derived from two Single Honours degrees where *at least one of the subjects is new*:

- Application for Development Consent to APC.
- Programme Specification produced by the first subject (for Joint Honours), or Major subject (for Major/Minor).
- Standard Institutional validation process with report to AQEC and notification of approval via the PVM email group.

Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for Joint and Major/ Minor awards are 'mapped' by modules of both subjects and should as far as possible reflect their integration, particularly in the definition of Intellectual and Transferable Skills. Programme Specifications also contain integrated statements of programme aims, teaching, learning and assessment.

Joint and Major/ Minor degrees are considered within the University's Annual Monitoring and Periodic Review processes, and Faculties are alert to the impact of modifications to the Single Honours programmes on which they are based. It is the responsibility of Faculty approval panels to ensure that proposals to modify joint and major/ minor awards do not distort the required balance of subject credit.

[59] It is possible to validate a standalone Minor where there is no associated Single Honours programme, e.g., Politics Minor.

Integrated Single Honours degrees

Integrated Single Honours programmes facilitate bespoke combinations of subjects at the point of design and are not constrained by the assignment of fixed credit values/ ratios to each subject. The approximate balance of subjects is reflected in the award title, e.g. *'A' & 'B'* (around half) or *'X with 'Y'* where X is the lead subject and may be varied between FHEQ levels which should also be considered when determining the titles of any intermediate alternative (exit) awards. Integrated Single Honours programmes are approved using the standard processes for Development Consent and Institutional validation.

'Module Sharing'
Where appropriate and practical, programme developers may seek to re-use modules from different programmes, subjects, departments or even Faculties, or work together to develop new modules. As well as providing efficiencies in how programmes are delivered, module-sharing between different cohorts can enrich the overall student learning experience however the necessary permissions[60] must have been obtained from the module 'owners' before their adoption in any new programme proposal.

MODULE APPROVAL AND MODIFICATION

Module approval

Modules exist both as standalone units of learning and as constituent parts of larger programmes of study. New modules may be approved either individually by a Faculty (see below), or through Institution-level validation as part of a complete programme/ award. In either case, module approval is governed by similar principles to programme approval on the basis that successful completion of a module:

- Demonstrates the achievement of Intended Learning Outcomes that lead to the award of academic credit; and
- In a programme context, demonstrates the achievement of one or more Programme Learning Outcomes that lead to a full qualification award.

Module approval must therefore ensure that:

- Credit is assigned at the appropriate level (in relation to national credit level descriptors[61]) and volume (in relation to learning and assessment activities and Notional Learning Hours[62]).
- Module learning outcomes are described at the appropriate FHEQ level.
- Learning and teaching activities are described within the following categories: (i) scheduled learning activities, e.g., lectures, seminars and tutorials, including synchronous 'real-time' delivery of online learning activities; (ii) asynchronous online

[60] As evidenced by the signatures of collaborating PVC Deans of Faculty in Applications for Development Consent (see 'Academic Planning', above).
[61] *'Higher Education Credit Framework for England'* (QAA, 2021) https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/higher-education-credit-framework-for-england
[62] Where one academic credit equates to 10 Notional Learning Hours.

tutor-supported learning; (iii) external visits and Work-Based Learning; and (iv) guided independent study[63].

- An assessment strategy, mapped directly to the module learning outcomes enables them to be demonstrated by students. Assessment tasks are described within the following broad categories: (i) coursework, (ii) examination, and (iii) practical.
- Indicative module content and learning resources including teaching staff[64] and recommended reading are appropriate to the module's rationale and support students' achievement of the learning outcomes.
- Any pre- or co-requisites for study of the module are clearly stated[65].
- For joint and major/ minor awards, the addition of a new module does not undermine the required division of credit.

New modules for standalone delivery, or for addition to an existing programme, do not require APC Development Consent; however, modules to be delivered as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)[66] must be notified to APC before proceeding to Faculty approval. Where module approval takes place in Faculties, this is by means of processes described in their Faculty Quality Statements which **as a minimum** will**:**

1. Engage an external academic subject expert[67] as follows:
   - (*For standalone modules or modules for use in new programmes or in new subjects*) an independent external expert[68]; or
   - *(For a module contributing to an existing programme or portfolio of cognate subject modules*) the current external examiner.
2. Ensure that panels include an appropriate level of VASP representation which must include a VASP Chair.
3. Ensure that at least one VASP member of another Faculty is engaged in the approval process, typically as a standing member of a Faculty module approval panel.
4. Utilise internal specialist expertise in Technology Enhanced Learning[69] where the module is to be delivered mainly or wholly online.
5. (*For a module contributing to an existing programme*) Receive evidence of appropriate consultation with students, typically via a Programme Board or Student- Staff Consultative Forum[70].

---

[63] Further detail is provided in the Module Specification template at www.edgehill.ac.uk/services/E-Val/.
[64] Appropriateness of staffing is confirmed via receipt and consideration of the module leader's CV.
[65] Which may include completion of an associated module at the same or a different level or Recognition of Prior Certificated or Experiential Learning. Note: pre-requisite modules identified at the point of module approval must be undertaken prior to students undertaking linked modules, however condonement of marginal failure remains available unless the pre-requisite has been specified as Core.
[66] MOOCs are aimed at large-scale interactive participation and open access via the internet. Courses are typically free and tend not to offer academic credit. See Chapter 6 for further details.
[67] Usually through the provision of written comments.
[68] In this case the subject expert would be eligible to serve as an external panel member for any associated programme validation.
[69] Typically, a University SOLSTICE Fellow www.edgehill.ac.uk/solstice/.
[70] Where no Programme Board or Student-Staff Consultative Forum is scheduled, consultation with students should be undertaken through alternative means e.g. by email or the Learning Edge Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

6. Report approval of the module to the Faculty Board (or designated committee).

For standalone modules delivered in partnership with other organisations such as NHS or private training providers, additional approval requirements[71] apply and proposers should consult the Faculty's lead for academic partnerships.
On completion of the approval process, the module is:

- Approved unconditionally; or
- Approved with conditions and/ or recommendations; or
- Referred for further development by the proposing department.

Module approval is notified by the Faculty via the PVM email group, and to partner organisations where applicable, and the module's status is changed from University Draft to Approved on the E-Val database[72]. Institutional oversight is by AQEC through receipt of the relevant Faculty committee minutes. Once approved, modules are subject to Faculty review and re-validation aligned with Periodic Review[73] of the host department's programmes.

The addition of a module to an existing programme, either as an option or in substitution for another module, will necessitate modification of the receiving programme. This is usually a **Minor Programme Modification** (process described below). The minor modification process is delegated to Faculties, therefore the approval of new modules and the resulting minor programme modification are often conflated within a single Faculty process. However, if the addition of a new module necessitates a change to the validated Programme Learning Outcomes the proposal must be referred for **Major Programme Modification** (process described below).

Faculty approval panels consider the cumulative impact of module changes on the balance between different types of learning activities including classroom-based and online learning, work placements or field trips, and guided independent study; or different modes of assessment such as coursework, written examinations and practical skills tests. Faculties remain alert to modifications resulting in any significant shifts, particularly in the ratio of tutor contact time to independent study, a reduction or removal of placements, or increased use of assessment by examination which are consulted on with current students and notified to prospective students through the designated communication channels[74].

Year of Study Approval

Medicine, Nursing and certain other subjects in the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine utilise a non-modular structure in which student learning is developed thematically within 120-credit Years of Study. Year of Study Specifications contain In-Year Learning

[71] See Chapter 5.
[72] Accessed via www.edgehill.ac.uk/services/E-Val/.
[73] See Chapter 3.
[74] The term 'prospective students' describes (i) potential applicants, (ii) individuals who have applied and received an offer; and (iii) individuals who have applied, received and accepted an offer. Communication with potential applicants is normally via the University's online prospectus which is updated frequently to reflect material course changes - see https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/sr/Communicating+with+prospective+students

Outcomes which are mapped directly to assessments. Programme structures based on Years of Study rather than modules must be approved through Institution-level validation as part of a complete programme/ award.

Optional Modules

Optional Modules are offered within some programmes to provide an element of choice and variety and do not form part of the compulsory curriculum requirements for the award. Where they are available, students select their options annually for each academic year of study. Optional Modules may be either:

- '**Defined Options'** – elective subject modules listed by name within Programme Specifications and mapped by code to the Programme Learning Outcomes. Where defined options include Core (uncondonable) modules, this should be flagged in the Programme Structure pathway column and explained within the Student 'Learning Journey' narrative.
- '**Flexible Options'** – sourced from a 'pool' of modules that extends beyond the immediate subject area but has some affinity with it, for example a selection of Continuing Professional Development modules with general application to health and social care practitioners[75]. Flexible Options are not listed by name within Programme Specifications and may be block-mapped to a generic Programme Learning Outcome related to the 'enhancement of (professional) practice through the development of additional knowledge or skills'.
- '**Free Electives'**[76] – up to 20 credits per FHEQ level, sourced from the same or another subject area in substitution for a Defined Option (above). At level 4, choice is restricted to foreign language study modules which may be defined in Programme Specifications and mapped to the main Programme Learning Outcomes[77]. Free Electives at levels 5 and 6 are not normally defined in Programme Specifications due to the potentially wide choice available, and Programme Specifications contain a standard statement on the permitted number of credits that may be substituted. Students complete a **Free Elective Application Form**[78] which enables consideration of any pre- or co-requisites as well as other potential restrictions such as Disclosure and Barring Service clearance; issues with timetabling or non-standard delivery modes/patterns; impact on subject balance within combined honours programmes; timing of assessment boards, and availability of in-year re-assessment; or any PSRB-related matters[79]. Approval of a student's choice of Free Elective is normally the responsibility of their programme leader following consultation with the 'receiving' module leader.

Note: The availability of Optional Modules varies from year to year and is subject to achieving the minimum student numbers. This means that not all options may be available in any given

[75] www.edgehill.ac.uk/health/cpd-modules/?tab=search-for-a-cpd-module.
[76] See Academic Regulations section C5.2.
[77] Typically, those associated with 'employability'.
[78] Available from the Faculty Quality Officer.
[79] For example, specific requirements pertaining to the assessment of PSRB standards and competencies or potential impact on PSRB-monitored Student-Staff Ratios (SSRs).

year which is notified to prospective and current students in line with Competition and Markets Authority guidelines[80].

Minor Module Modification

Faculties may make minor modifications to existing modules using processes described in their Faculty Quality Statements, which **as a minimum** will require:

- Supporting comments from the current external examiner (at FHEQ level 5 and above[81]).
- (For a module contributing to an existing programme) Evidence of consultation with student representatives, typically via a Programme Board or Student-Staff Consultative Forum[82].
- A report of the modification's approval to the Faculty Board (or designated committee).

Minor modifications to modules may comprise:

a) A minor change to the module's title[83] (on condition that it remains appropriate to the module's rationale and learning outcomes); or
b) Changes to module pre-/ co-requisites; or
c) Changes to Intended Learning Outcomes; or
d) Changes to the described teaching and assessment strategies, including individual assessment tasks.

However, the following will normally require validation of a new module:

- Any change to the module's academic rationale; or
- Change of FHEQ and/ or credit value; or
- Significant change to the module's title, learning outcomes or teaching and assessment strategies such that the external examiner and/ or module approval panel deem this to warrant the validation of a new module[84].

Minor module modifications are notified by the Faculty via the PVM email group, and to partner delivery organisations where applicable, and the module's status on E-Val is changed

[80] See *'UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law'*, Competition and Markets Authority (2015) www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428549/HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf.

[81] Also level 3 STEM Foundation Year, Fastrack: Preparation for HE and International Foundation Programme, and level 4 of Foundation Degrees.

[82] Where no Programme Board or Student-Staff Consultative Forum is scheduled consultation with students should be undertaken through alternative means, e.g. by email or the Learning Edge Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

[83] Requires a new module code, available from the Academic Registry. Changes of module title and code resulting from minor module modification do not count towards the credit threshold for triggering a Minor Modifications Review (see below) **except** where the module's academic rationale or intended learning outcomes have also changed such that the module could be considered 'new'.

[84] In the **Faculty of Arts & Sciences** all changes to module titles follow the process for new module approval as described earlier.

from University Draft to Approved. Institutional oversight is by AQEC via receipt of the relevant Faculty committee minutes.

Note: The following changes do **not** require formal module modification:

- Names of module leaders and staff involved in delivery (recognising that beyond module approval, teaching staff allocations will change over time and be managed by the host department with appropriate Faculty oversight).
- Balance of scheduled learning activities, placement and guided independent study hours (**however** see 'cumulative impact of module changes', below).
- Indicative content (on the assumption that it remains consistent with the module's academic rationale and learning outcomes).
- Books, journals and other learning resources (which are updated annually in module handbooks and/ or online reading lists, or when modules are next formally modified or re-validated).

Minor module modifications will normally have been completed before the end of the academic session (year) preceding their implementation, and module leaders should consult the University's timeline for curriculum development and modification and refer any queries to their Faculty Quality Officer. Only in exceptional circumstances[85] will Faculties consider in-year modifications to modules which in all cases must have been finalised no later than the end of the semester preceding the module's delivery.

At programme level, Faculties consider the cumulative impact of module changes on the balance between different types of learning activities including classroom-based and online learning, work placements or field trips, and guided independent study; or different modes of assessment such as coursework, written examinations and practical skills tests. Faculties are alert to modifications resulting in any significant shifts, particularly in the ratio of tutor contact time to independent study, a reduction or removal of placements, or increased use of assessment by examination which are consulted on with current students and notified to prospective students through the designated communication channels[86].

Module review and re-approval

Every validated module is subject to Faculty review and re-validation which is synchronised with Institution-level Periodic Review[87] of the host department's programmes. Processes for module review and re-approval, which are described in Faculty Quality Statements, include consultation with external examiners[88]. Any proposed changes should take account of

[85] For example, in response to external examiner recommendations.

[86] The term **prospective students** may describe (i) potential applicants; (ii) individuals who have applied and received an offer; or (iii) individuals who have applied, received and accepted an offer. Communication with potential applicants is normally via the University's online prospectus which is updated frequently to reflect any material course changes – see also https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/sr/Communicating+with+prospective+students (EHU staff login required).

[87] See Chapter 3. Where current time-limited approval of modules expires before the next scheduled periodic review, separate arrangements for module review/ re- validation will be made.

[88] External examiners identify any modules requiring possible modification or replacement in their annual reports – see Chapter 2.

student feedback and be consulted on via Programme Boards or Student-Staff Consultative Fora. On the basis that modules are reviewed as part of annual programme monitoring and changes made using the modifications procedures described above, re-approval of an existing module is likely to be commensurately 'light-touch' and Faculties will consider the history of modifications to a module when determining its continued currency. Programmes to which modules contribute are reviewed and re-approved through Institution-level Periodic Review or standalone re-validation[89], both of which make use of appropriate independent subject externality.

Modifications to Years of Study

The type and volume of change to a 120-credit Year of Study can vary from minor to more substantial, however because of the amount of credit involved all proposals to modify Years of Study are classed as Major Programme Modifications (see below).

PROGRAMME MODIFICATION

Once validated, programmes/ awards remain in continuous approval until their next scheduled Periodic Review (or standalone re-validation). The modifications process described above enables established[90] curricula to be refreshed or otherwise adjusted between formal review points to enhance the learner experience and maintain alignment with academic subject benchmarks and professional standards. **However**, such 'in-cycle' changes must also be controlled to ensure they do not compromise the validated programme aims and learning outcomes (sometimes referred to as 'incremental drift') or undermine the contract[91] entered into with students at the point of entry. The University has categorised the modifications that may be made to a programme during its lifetime with associated procedures designed to safeguard the integrity of the validated qualification award. Faculties notify all material programme changes to current and prospective students through the designated communication channels[92].

'Material changes'

The following aspects of a programme of study are considered material to the choices made by students at the point of application, and to the contract entered into by them at entry for the lifetime of their programme:

- Course title and final award
- Awarding body/ institution (normally Edge Hill University)

[89] See 'Re-validation', above.

[90] That is, programmes that are already in delivery and have been evaluated via annual monitoring. Only exceptionally will validated programmes be modified prior to their first delivery.

[91] See '*UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law*', Competition and Markets Authority (2015), HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf.

[92] The term **prospective students** may describe (i) potential applicants; (ii) individuals who have applied and received an offer; or (iii) individuals who have applied, received and accepted an offer. For (i) and (ii) communication is normally via the University's online prospectus which is updated frequently to reflect any material course changes. Offer holders are notified by Admissions – see also https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/sr/Communicating+with+prospective+students (EHU staff login required).

- (For prospective students) Entry standards or entry requirements (see also below)
- Course length
- Location and mode of study (Edge Hill University or academic partner organisation; delivery via classroom, distance or blended learning[93])
- Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body accreditation (where applicable)
- Core/ Compulsory modules
- Any advertised Optional modules[94]
- Overall method(s) of course delivery including balance of face-to-face learning (lectures, seminars, tutorials), online learning, placements and guided independent study
- Overall method(s) of course assessment including balance of coursework, written examinations and practical skills tests
- Modifications to Years of Study (for non-modular curricula).

The following sections describe the processes for effecting changes to any of the above which are differentiated by (i) **locus of approval**, i.e. in Faculties or by an Institution-level validation panel; and (ii) **student consultation and, in limited circumstances, individual written consent** which must be evidenced before the modification may proceed to approval. In respect of major programme modifications or re-validations affecting current students, APC formally records the requirement for student consultation and/ or consent as described elsewhere in this chapter while Institutional validation panels receive explicit evidence and provide assurance of same via their reports to AQEC.

Entry standards and entry requirements

Entry standards for admission to an undergraduate programme are defined typically by previous level 3 qualifications (A-level, BTEC National Diploma, Access to HE Diploma) and the UCAS entry points range agreed at validation by which offers are made to applicants during the standard UCAS recruitment cycle, i.e. prior to Clearing. Entry standards also comprise GCSE English Language at minimum Grade 4 (or equivalent level 2 qualification), and IELTS[95] scores for non-native speakers of English. Changes to entry standards constitute major programme modifications which require summary approval by the Academic Planning Committee (APC).

Entry requirements for both undergraduate and taught post-graduate programmes are described in Programme Specifications, such as evidence of previous work-related learning, e.g. a portfolio, or additional admissions arrangements such as selection tests, auditions and

[93] GQASC have agreed the following definitions: **Classroom** Programme designed to be studied through attendance on site with teaching and learning in person, and supplementary asynchronous and/or synchronous sessions to add value; **Blended** Programme designed to be studied through a combination of both sustained online delivery and on-site learning. Patterns of study will vary but will be through a combination of online and on-site teaching and learning across the academic year; **Online** Programme designed to be studied online remotely, with teaching and learning consisting of both synchronous and/or asynchronous online learning activities.

[94] See 'Optional Modules', above.

[95] International English Language Testing System www.ielts.org - see Academic Regulations F2.4.

interviews. These may be modified without reference to APC on condition that the Programme Specifications are updated to reflect them.

In line with age discrimination legislation the University makes no stipulation with respect to the age of candidates for entry, however the admission of students under 18 at the time of enrolment may be prohibited where it is a requirement of a professional body which is exempted under age discrimination legislation[96], or where a programme team exceptionally demonstrates at validation that the curriculum and/ or available support make it inappropriate. Any proposed age restriction should be clearly indicated in the Entry Requirements section of the Programme Specification and a detailed justification provided in the Programme Rationale section of the Part B validation document (to include a link to the University's under-18 policy[97]).

Minor Programme Modification

Using processes defined in their Faculty Quality Statements, Faculties may make the following minor modifications[98] to existing programmes/awards:

- Add or replace Optional Modules without limit; and/or
- Replace up to **half** of the credit derived from Core and Compulsory Modules[99] at each FHEQ level of the programme since its most recent scrutiny by VASP[100].

Faculty processes for the approval of minor programme modifications will require **as a minimum:**

- An initial proposal containing a written justification (rationale) evidencing the demonstrable benefits of the modification to students and any associated drivers, e.g. changes to national subject benchmarks or professional body (PSRB) standards or feedback from students and/or industry or individual employers.
- Supporting comments from the programme's external examiner.
- Engagement of at least one VASP member of another Faculty, typically as a standing member of the Faculty's approval panel/ committee.
- Evidence of consultation with students, typically via a Programme Board or Student-Staff Consultative Forum[101].
- A review of the draft revised Programme Specification to confirm that:

[96] Academic Regulations F2.9
[97] Appendix 5 of the Admissions Policy www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/admissions-policy/.
[98] Excludes Years of Study (Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine) – see 'Modifications to Years of Study' (above).
[99] Changes of module title and code that result from Minor Module Modification do not count towards the credit thresholds noted above except where the academic rationale or intended learning outcomes have also been changed.
[100] Which may have been via Institution-level Periodic Review, Major Programme Modification, standalone re-validation or Minor Modifications Review (see below).
[101] See Chapter 6. Where no Programme Board or Student-Staff Consultative Forum is scheduled, consultation with students should be undertaken through alternative means e.g. by email or the Learning Edge Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

  - the validated Programme Learning Outcomes remain achievable (typically evidenced by the 'mapping' of modules to PLOs).
  - that modifications to joint and major/ minor awards do not undermine the required division of credit.
- A report of the modification's approval to the Faculty Board (or designated committee).
- Updating of the Programme Specification.

Minor programme modifications are notified by the Faculty via the PVM email Group and where applicable to partner delivery organisations, and the status of the updated Programme Specification on E-Val is changed from Validation Draft to Approved. Institutional oversight is by AQEC via receipt of the relevant Faculty committee minutes. Once completed, Faculties notify prospective students of any changes to advertised modules using the designated communication channels[102].

Minor Modifications Review

Faculties are responsible for ensuring that the credit limit placed upon minor programme modifications is strictly observed. Where this limit is about to be breached and further modifications are proposed, the Faculty requests that GQASC convenes a Minor **Modifications Review (MMR)** which considers the totality of modifications made since the programme's previous scrutiny by the Validation and Audit Standing Panel. MMR confirms that the validated award and Programme Learning Outcomes remain intact, valid and achievable. The MMR process, which does not require direct involvement of the programme team, is conducted by two members of VASP nominated by Chair of VASP and may be undertaken via correspondence. The principal evidence for MMR comprises information supplied by the Faculty detailing:

- A list of all in-cycle minor modifications to the programme summarising their nature and dates of Faculty approval.
- Cumulative total of the volume of changed credit and the type of module from which it is derived, i.e. Core, Compulsory or Optional, during the period under consideration.
- Confirmation that students were consulted about the proposed modifications, e.g., via Programme Boards or Student-Staff Consultative Fora.
- Confirmation that the programme's external examiner was consulted about and agreed the proposed modifications.

Supporting evidence to be made available by the Faculty includes:

- The version of the Programme Specification that was in approval at the last formal review point (sourced from E-Val).
- The current Programme Specification (E-Val).

[102] The term **prospective students** may describe (i) potential applicants; (ii) individuals who have applied and received an offer; or (iii) individuals who have applied, received and accepted an offer. For (i) and (ii) communication is normally via the University's online prospectus which is updated frequently to reflect any material course changes. Offer holders are notified by Admissions – see also https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/sr/Communicating+with+prospective+students .

- Relevant Minutes of Faculty approval panels/ committees, Programme Boards and/ or Student-Staff Consultative Fora.
- The most recent external examiner report.

Following consideration by the MMR panel the Secretary (Academic Quality Officer) produces a report for the next available meeting of the Faculty Board (or designated committee) which either:

I. Confirms that all modifications completed since the previous formal review point have followed due process and that the programme aims and learning outcomes remain consistent with the validated award; or
II. Refers the programme for Faculty review and subsequent major modification or standalone re-validation (see below).

Where the outcome is (i), the Faculty may resume making minor modifications to the programme up to the permitted credit threshold of 50% of Core/ Compulsory credit per FHEQ level.

Major Programme Modification

The process of Major Programme Modification is reserved for the consideration of proposed changes to:

- Programme title and award title(s)
- Programme aims
- Programme Learning Outcomes
- Mode of delivery[103]
- Entry Standards, i.e. any change to validated level 2 or 3 entry qualifications[104] (which includes UCAS tariff point ranges[105]) or overall IELTS score[106]

[103] For example, a change from full-time to part-time delivery, or from Present in Person (classroom-based) to blended or distance learning. Changes to *delivery pattern*, e.g., moving a module from one semester to another or changing the pace of module delivery from 'short-fat' to 'long-thin' do not require formal modification. For additional guidance, please consult GQASC.

[104] For example, those justified at validation in addition the minimum entry qualifications specified in section F2 of the Academic Regulations.

[105] **Entry tariff ranges,** in which offers can be made at any point in the UCAS cycle, are set at validation. Once validated, UCAS points ranges may require adjustment, for example to take account of current market conditions. Proposed changes to entry tariff ranges constitute a major modification requiring the approval of APC. Proposals to reduce entry points consider any implications for student induction and academic support, while increases are justified by a suitable market rationale. Heads of Department may use discretion to vary entry requirements during Clearing, based on (i) whether applicants are existing offer-holders requiring compensation or are entering via Clearing; and (ii) any additional support to be put in place by the department.

[106] Any proposed change (increase or decrease) to a validated overall IELTS score is a change to entry standards and therefore constitutes a major modification requiring the approval of APC (following the submission of a rationale and information on student support arrangements). No IELTS score can be lower than the minimum stated in Academic Regulations (see F2.4).

- Modifications to Years of Study (for non-modular curricula)[107].
- **Simultaneous replacement of between half and two-thirds of the Core/Compulsory credit at any FHEQ level**[108].
- The addition of a new pathway award formed out of alternative modules that constitute **no more than a third of the credit at any FHEQ level**[109].

The host department completes an Initial Proposal for Major Modification of an Existing Programme (IPM)[110] which the Faculty submits to APC for approval to proceed to the next available Major Modifications Panel (MMP). Supporting documentation is dependent on the nature and scale of the modification and precise requirements will be advised by GQASC, however in all cases it should include:

- The IPM form, containing a justification (rationale) evidencing the demonstrable benefits of the modification to students and any associated drivers, e.g., changes to national subject benchmarks or professional body (PSRB) standards or feedback from students and/ or industry or individual employers.
- The current and draft revised Programme Specification – to confirm that the validated Programme Learning Outcomes remain achievable (typically evidenced by the 'mapping' of modules to PLOs).
- Any new or amended Module Specifications requiring approval as part of the Major Programme Modification.
- Supporting comments from the programme's external examiner.
- Evidence of consultation with students through a Programme Board or Student-Staff Consultative Forum[111]. This should include letter or email correspondence explaining the change and any corresponding minutes capturing the subsequent discussion and decisions made (see also below).

Where a proposed change of programme/ award title affects current students[112], **written consent must be obtained from all students.** Consultation with students should be presented in a 'student-friendly' style, and contain an overview of the proposed change, the rationale for it and why it is beneficial to students. Written communication should be preceded by classroom discussion, and also at Student-Staff Consultative Fora and/ or Programme Boards where student representatives are in attendance. In all cases, students should be allowed

[107] Proposals to modify Years of Study are triaged by the Head of Quality in advance of APC, and any requirement for an Initial Proposal determined on a case-by-case basis. APC is advised of the recommended process of approval which may include granting Faculties permission to carry out the modification and report the outcome directly to AQEC.
[108] Proposals to change more than two-thirds of the Core/ Compulsory credit at any FHEQ level are managed through standalone re-validation – see 'Re-validation', above.
[109] New pathways formed out of alternative modules that constitute **more than** a third of the credit at each FHEQ level require standalone re-validation – see 'Re-validation', above.
[110] Via E-Val at www.edgehill.ac.uk/services/E-Val/ (EHU staff login required).
[111] Where no Programme Board or Student-Staff Consultative Forum is scheduled consultation with students should be by alternative means, e.g. by email or the Learning Edge Virtual Learning Environment.
[112] Changes of award title are normally introduced on a 'phased' basis so that they do not affect current students.

reasonable time to consider and respond to the proposed change, evidence of which should be available to the MMP on request.

The MMP considers the proposed modification and its impact on the validated programme and either:

- Approves it unconditionally; or
- Approves with conditions and/or recommendations; or
- Refers back to the Faculty for further development. Where the extent of the modification is judged to have exceeded the scope of Major Programme Modification as defined above, standalone re-validation is likely to be advised.

A report of the MMP is produced by the Secretary and received for approval by AQEC at the next available meeting. Approval is notified by the AQEC Secretary via the PVM email group (and by Faculties to partner delivery organisations, where applicable) and the status of the revised Programme Specification on E-Val changed from Validation Draft to Approved. Faculties notify prospective students of any changes to the advertised programme/ award title, entry standards, modules, balance of learning and assessment activities[113], course duration or mode or location of study using the designated communication channels[114].

PROGRAMME CLOSURE

Programme closure is defined as the complete withdrawal of a named award or study route. The decision to close a programme is ultimately an executive matter, guided by collegial and consultative processes and having due regard to the interests of current students. Programme closure may legitimately be preceded by a period in which the programme remains 'live' but has been unable to recruit, or where recruitment has already been suspended[115]. The basis of proposals for programme closure may typically be one or more of the following:

- A decline in student demand over a period of time to the point where the programme's continued viability is at risk;
- A reduction in funding or funded student numbers;
- Documented concerns over academic standards or quality that pose a long-term risk to the programme beyond any immediate action taken to mitigate them.

The full programme closure procedure is described below and culminates in a formal application to the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC).

[113] Any significant shift in the ratio of tutor contact hours to independent study, reduction or removal of student placements/ exchanges or increased use of assessment by written examination.
[114] The term **prospective students** may describe (i) potential applicants; (ii) individuals who have applied and received an offer; or (iii) individuals who have applied, received and accepted an offer. Communication with potential applicants is normally via the University's online prospectus which is updated frequently to reflect any material course changes - see https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/sr/Communicating+with+prospective+students
[115] Where recruitment has been suspended for two complete academic cycles the host Faculty instigates a review before enrolment can re-commence – see Chapter 1, 'Faculty Quality Statements'.

Procedures

Programmes will normally be closed on a phased basis which enables all current students to complete. In such circumstances AQEC will expect to see details of the arrangements and support to be put in place for students. In the rare event that provision is withdrawn while students remain on programme – for example, in the event of early exit by an academic delivery partner – the University will apply a suitable 'teach-out' strategy. Formal closure procedures are not applied to a programme that is being replaced by new cognate provision which is identified clearly in the successor programme's ADC and confirmed at validation.
A proposal to close a programme[116] may originate from discussions during Institutional Periodic Review[117] or Faculty academic planning, or at any stage during the programme's lifecycle. Programme closure normally entails the cessation of recruitment while current students are supported to completion of their studies during a defined teach-out period. The responsible Faculty submits a formal Programme Closure Request Form[118] to AQEC that includes an exit plan demonstrating how it will preserve the continuity of study for affected students and how it will ensure those students continue to receive a high-quality learning experience. Programme closure procedures consist of the following:

a) Completion of a Programme Closure Request Form by the Head of Department, containing:
   - Programme title and programme code.
   - Year of original validation.
   - Rationale for the programme's closure.
   - Expected end-date, i.e., completion of the final cohort (full and/ or part-time)[119].
   - Evaluation of impact on the University's portfolio (where student choice is being reduced).
   - Description of measures to be taken to safeguard programme quality and standards during any teach-out period, including staffing and resources.
   - Implications of closure on the external examiner's period of appointment.[120]
   - Evidence of student and staff consultation (see below).
a) Wider consultation as necessary, e.g., with GQASC or Academic Registry.
b) Consideration of the proposal by the Faculty Quality Committee and/ or Faculty Board with Chair's signature of approval.
c) Consideration and approval of the closure proposal at a full meeting of AQEC.
d) Notification of the programme's closure to new admissions via the PVM email group.
e) Removal of the programme from the University prospectus and UCAS listings.

[116] Specific requirements for the closure of programmes delivered by or with academic partner organisations are detailed in Chapter 5.
[117] See Chapter 3.
[118] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Programme+Closure .
[119] Not including interruptions to study or repeat years without attendance.
[120] A programme may close before the end of an external examiner's period of appointment. In such cases, the examiner will be formally notified by the External Examiners Administrator, acting on advice from the relevant Faculty.

f) Clear communication to current students of the decision to close the programme to new entrants and how programme standards and quality will be maintained during the teach-out period.

In its closure proposal and exit plan the Faculty must also include:

- Consideration of the University's Student Protection Plan[121] and whether the circumstances of the proposed closure will trigger its implementation – where this is the case, the Faculty must provide a details of how the Plan will be implemented including relevant timeframes and student communication plans.
- An assessment of the likelihood of the University's Refunds and Compensation Policy being triggered.

In order to permit sufficient discussion and consultation the minimum time that should elapse between (a) and (d) above is usually four weeks. In normal circumstances, a proposal to close a programme will not be made less than eighteen months before the date when recruitment is intended to cease so that the print prospectus reflects the University's position accurately. However, in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to propose closure of a programme within a shorter timescale. 'Closed' programmes continue to undergo Annual Monitoring/ Periodic Review during teach-out until the final cohort has completed, and Faculties ensure their continuing currency by enacting module or programme modifications as necessary. Where an assessment board has required that a student repeat a year without attendance and their programme has since closed, the relevant modules will remain available for assessment towards the student's intended award. Where a student repeats a year with attendance or returns to study following a period of interruption and their original modules are no longer in delivery, the Faculty ensures that suitable alternative modules[122] are available for the student to complete their intended award.

Faculties keep copies of all written communications about the closure sent to affected students.

Closed programmes are removed from the University's List of Named Awards[123] once the final cohort has completed. Where necessary, prospective students are notified of the programme's closure through the designated communication channels[124].

[121] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/student-protection-plan/.
[122] Which may involve the use of Student-Initiated Credit – see Chapter 7.
[123] See Academic Regulations Appendix 3.
[124] The term **prospective students** may describe (i) potential applicants; (ii) individuals who have applied and received an offer; or (iii) individuals who have applied, received and accepted an offer. Communication with potential applicants is normally via the University's online prospectus which is updated frequently to reflect any material course changes – see also https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/sr/Communicating+with+prospective+students .

PROGRAMME-SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

In certain circumstances validation panels are required to approve programme-specific operational procedures that are guided by, and consistent with, the Academic Regulations; for example, procedures relating to student registration, assessment and progression as described in the operational annexe to the Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) Student Handbook. Such procedures will be included with the validation report and may subsequently be modified using the process described in the Faculty Quality Statement.

NON-CREDIT BEARING PROVISION

All credit-bearing programmes and modules are subject to the procedures for approval described elsewhere in this Chapter. The University may also seek to approve non-credit bearing provision, e.g. uncertificated bespoke training courses developed on behalf of employers. Faculties design and implement their own approval processes for such provision without reference to APC or AQEC, on condition that:

- The approval process is described in the Faculty Quality Statement;
- It contains explicit consideration of course content, aims and outcomes; teaching and learning; student support; staff and resources; organisation and quality assurance; and,
- The Faculty maintains a register of all non-credit bearing provision approved through this process.

HIGHER AND DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

Approval processes for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships do not differ significantly from those utilised for 'mainstream' degree provision as described in this chapter. However, in addition to national academic and professional reference points and the University's own Academic Regulations, apprenticeship programmes must also comply with the wider regulatory frameworks that govern them, most notably the relevant Apprenticeship Standards and Assessment Plan and requirement for independent End-Point Assessment (EPA). Detailed guidance on the approval of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships is provided in Chapter 5 of this Handbook.

Table 3: 'Processes for Module and Programme Approval (simplified)'

Approval of a new module	**Minor Module Modification**	**Addition or replacement of a module(s) in an existing programme (Minor Programme Modification)**[125]
Initial proposal (Faculty)	Proposal for 'Minor Modification to an Existing Module' (Faculty)	Initial Proposal (Faculty)
Documentation: • Module Specification • Module tutor CV(s) • External comments[126]	Documentation: • Module Specification • External examiner comments (level 5 and upwards)[127] • Evidence of consultation with current students[128]	Documentation: • Module Specification(s) • Programme Specification • External examiner comments • Evidence of consultation with current students
Faculty validation	Faculty validation	Faculty validation
Final approval (Faculty) • E-Val updated • PVM email	Final approval (Faculty) • E-Val updated • PVM email	Final approval (Faculty) • E-Val updated • PVM email • Notification to prospective students

[125] Where a new module is being approved for addition to an existing programme the processes for (1) and (3) may be conflated.
[126] An independent subject expert for new provision, or the current external examiner where the module will contribute to an existing programme or portfolio.
[127] Also FHEQ level 3 for STEM Foundation Year, Fastrack: Preparation for HE and the International Foundation Programme and level 4 of Foundation Degrees.
[128] Typically through a Programme Board or Student-Staff Consultative Forum attended by student course representatives. Where no Programme Board or SSCF is scheduled, consultation with students should be undertaken through alternative means e.g. by email or the Learning Edge Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Module re-approval	**Approval of a new programme/re-validation of an existing programme**	**Major Programme Modification**
Faculty review/re-validation	Application for Development Consent[129] (Faculty to APC)	Initial Proposal for Major Modification (Faculty to APC)
Documentation: • Module Specification, including any proposed changes based on student and stakeholder feedback • External examiner comments	Documentation: • Part A Programme Specification; Part B Development & Delivery; Part C Module Specifications • <u>Appendices - to include:</u> • Staff CVs (all modules) • Inventory of course-specific resources (where applicable) • Most recent Periodic Review report • Mapping matrix of PLOs to Subject Benchmark Statement • Evidence of student and employer involvement in development • Sample Marking Criteria • (For partner-delivered provision) Partner Audit Document; Delivery Agreement	Documentation: • Programme Specification • Module Specifications (if applicable) • External examiner comments • Evidence of consultation with current students
	Faculty approval	Faculty approval
	Institutional Validation (VASP)	Major Modifications Panel
Final approval (Faculty); E-Val updated, PVM Email	Final approval (AQEC); E-Val updated, PVM Email, Notification to prospective students.	Final approval (AQEC); E-Val updated, PVM Email, Notification to prospective students.

[129] Including (for re-validation) a written rationale, e.g. to align with changes to national subject benchmarks or professional standards, and justification of the benefits to students.

Appendix: Validation and Audit Standing Panel (VASP)

Overseen by AQEC, VASP supports processes across the university's quality assurance activities such as validations, periodic reviews and internal audits.

Eligibility to serve on the Standing Panel is through self-nomination supported by the Head of Department's[130] endorsement and subject to evidence of the following:

(i) For academic staff, experience (at the University or elsewhere) of:
- Curriculum development and programme management/design, and
- Curriculum or teaching-related research and consultancy, and/or
- Reviewing and enhancing the student learning experience, and/or
- Operating quality assurance processes for taught academic provision.

(ii) For academic-related support staff, experience (at the University or elsewhere) of:
- Relevant management responsibility, and
- Reviewing and enhancing the student learning experience, and/or
- Operating quality assurance processes for taught academic provision.

Panel Chairs are appointed on the additional demonstration of:
- Experience of academic quality assurance out with the University, typically gained by validation and review experience in another UK Higher Education Institution, appointment as an external academic reviewer, engagements with or on behalf of PSRBs, external examining or Ofsted inspection.

Applications are considered for approval by the Chair of VASP and those progressed are required to complete the following:
- Attendance at a Standing Panel Induction session, or appropriate Chair training.
- Observation at a validation event, or for prospective Chairs, shadow an existing Chair at an event.

The terms of membership of the Standing Panel are as follows:
1) The standard period of membership to the Standing Panel is two years.
2) All members of the Standing Panel are expected to actively engage and participate in validation and review activity for the duration of their membership. In practice, this entails making themselves available for a minimum two validation panels or one periodic review panel per academic year.
3) Attendance at the annual Standing Panel Conference is not compulsory, however all members of the Standing Panel are expected to attend where possible to ensure that their knowledge of sector expectations and Institutional practice remains current.

[130] Heads of Department are expected to seek Standing Panel membership as part of their academic leadership role and continuing professional development.

Panels for validation and periodic review are assigned by GQASC and are normally constituted as follows:

- Panel Chair – selected from eligible members of the Standing Panel on the basis of expressions of interest ensuring no conflict with the proposal under consideration.
- Secretary/Review Manager – Academic Quality Officer.
- 2 internal panel members - selected from eligible members of the Standing Panel on the basis of expressions of interest ensuring no conflict with the proposal.
- (For validation) One external academic subject expert who will be employed by a recognised UK higher education provider (see also below).
- (For periodic review) Two external experts of whom at least one will be an academic subject expert employed by a recognised UK higher education provider and one may represent professional or employer interests.

Panels for validation, periodic review or internal audits may be constituted according to specific knowledge and experience[131] and may also include internal co-options and external representation.

External panel members are nominated by proposing departments and approved by the Academic Quality Officer (on behalf of the Chair of VASP) on the basis of a written nomination which describes their employment and experience and affirms no conflict of interest with the proposal under consideration. Academic staff of Republic of Ireland higher education institutions may be considered on evidence of their knowledge and experience of the UK higher education system and familiarity with OfS's Conditions of Registration.

An annual report of VASP membership and activity is provided to AQEC in order to fulfil its oversight responsibility for these processes and procedures.

Articulations Approval Panel (AAP)

The Articulations Approval Panel (AAP) is responsible to AQEC for:

1) Receiving and considering proposals for qualifications/programmes of external awarding organisations to be recognised for the purpose of providing articulation (entry with advanced standing) to Edge Hill University programmes according to procedures described in Chapter 5 of the University's Quality Management Handbook[132].
2) Recommending approval of such proposals based on evidence of curriculum mapping and consideration of the external body's processes for setting and maintaining the academic standards of its own awards.

Constitution:

- Chair – Chair of VASP
- Secretary – GQASC

[131] E.g., experience of digital learning or academic partnerships.
[132] https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/05-academic-partnerships.pdf

- Up to three members of the Standing Panel - one from each Faculty of whom one may deputise for the Chair. At least two must have previous knowledge and experience of the approval of articulation arrangements.

A maximum of three AAP meetings per year are held, timed to report to the next available meeting of AQEC. Because entry with advanced standing is based on the principle of credit exemption rather than the award of credit, no externality is involved in the approval of articulation arrangements.

Major Modifications Panel (MMP)

The Major Modifications Panel (MMP) is responsible to AQEC for:

1) Receiving and considering proposals for major modification of existing validated programmes according to procedures described in Chapter 4 of this Handbook.
2) Recommending approval of such proposals based on close scrutiny of programme specifications and other evidence to ensure that the standards set at validation are being maintained.

Constitution:

- Chair – selected from eligible members of the Standing Panel on the basis of expressions of interest ensuring no conflict with the proposal under consideration.
- Secretary – GQASC.
- Two members of the Standing Panel - selected on the basis of expressions of interest and ensuring no conflict of interest.

One MMP meeting will be held termly although this does not preclude the scheduling of further meetings to manage additional business. Externality is provided through the submission of written comments of external examiners.

Chapter 5
Academic Partnerships

Updated October 2021

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 4
THE TAXONOMY OF ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS 4
Table 1: Taxonomy of partnership arrangements according to risk profile 5
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES 6
Faculty Partnership Lead 7
Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor 7
Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework (GQASC) 8
The International Office 9
The Compliance Team 9
CATEGORY A PARTNERSHIPS EXPLAINED 10
Category A1-4 Processes 10
Placements (A1 and A4) 10
Study Abroad (A2 and A3) 11
Study Abroad (other overseas territories) (A3) 12
Categories A1-4 Approval Processes 13
Table 3: Partner approval periods in category A arrangements 13
Review Processes for Category A1-4 Partnerships 15
Closure Processes for Category A1-4 Partnerships 15
Category A5 Processes 16
Degree and Higher Apprenticeships 16
Approval of Apprenticeships 16
Reviewing Apprenticeship Programmes and Delivery Arrangements 18
Terminating Apprenticeship Delivery 19
CATEGORY B PARTNERSHIPS EXPLAINED 19
Approval processes 19
Table 4: Partner approval periods for category B arrangements 20
Review processes 20
Definitions of category C+ partnerships 20
Category C partnerships 21
Category D partnerships 22
Category E partnerships 22
Category F partnerships: 24

School Direct partnerships 28
Category C+ Processes 28
Approval 28
Business Approval 29
Initial Academic Approval 30
Delivery Approval 30
Re-approvals 32
Table 5: Partner approval periods for category C + arrangements 32
Contractual Arrangements 33
Annual Review 34
Closure 36

INTRODUCTION

Edge Hill University develops academic partnerships with a wide range of third-party organisations, from UK-based employers, colleges and awarding bodies to overseas higher education providers, for the delivery of modules or programmes leading to the award of University credit or qualifications, or the provision of learning opportunities including student work placements, international exchanges and arrangements for entry with advanced standing (articulation). The University's procedures for managing the academic standards and quality of its academic partnerships address the Office for Students' (OfS) General Ongoing Conditions of Registration[1] as specified in Figure 1 and is informed by the Advice and Guidance contained within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018)[2].

Figure 1: The ongoing conditions for Quality (B1 to B4) and Standards (B5) pertinent to the effective management of Academic Partnerships.

The provider must:	
B1	Deliver well designed courses that provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed
B2	Provide all students, from admission through to completion, with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education
B3	Deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers and/or enable further study
B4	Ensure that qualifications awarded to students hold their value at the point of qualification and over time, in line with sector recognised standards
B5	Deliver courses that meet the academic standards as they are described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications [FHEQ] at level 4 or higher

Faculties develop academic partnerships in line with University strategies[3] and ensure that planning proposals receive the required Faculty scrutiny, supported by due diligence and a business case as appropriate to the type (category) of partnership being considered. The following pages describe the principles associated with the approval, review and closure of different types of academic partnership. Ore detailed information on the operational processes and paperwork requirements can be found in the Guide to Academic Partnerships[4].

THE TAXONOMY OF ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

Academic partnership entails the delegation of certain activities normally conducted by the University to another organisation, most notably teaching, assessment and student support, although in all cases Edge Hill as the awarding body is ultimately responsible for academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities. The following categories of academic partnership have been established for which different approval, monitoring and

[1] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/.
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Revised-UK-Quality-Code-for-Higher-Education.pdf.
[3] Including the Curriculum Strategy 2020-25 and International Strategy International Strategy 2020-25.
[4] Accessible by Edge Hill University staff within the relevant Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework WIKI: https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/agqa

review processes have been developed to mitigate the associated levels of academic and business risk:

Table 1: Taxonomy of partnership arrangements according to risk profile

Category		Sub-Category		Risk Level (Low, Medium, High; Variable)
A	**Placements and Study Abroad**	A1	School-based training and other placements (ex. clinical) (UK)	L
		A2[5]	Study Abroad and work placements (Erasmus)	L
		A3	Study Abroad and work placements (Overseas)	M
		A4	Clinical placements (UK)	V
		A5	Higher / Degree Apprenticeships	L
B	**Outreach Learning Venues**	B1	Outreach Learning Venues (UK)	L
		B2	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) venues	L
		B3	Outreach Learning Venues (Overseas)	L
C	**Outreach Supported Learning Centres**	C1	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Education providers (UK)	M
		C2	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Non-education providers (UK)	M
		C3	Outreach Supported Learning Centres (Overseas)	H
D	**Credit-rating**			M
E	**Articulations**	E1	Qualification recognition	M
		E2	Qualification recognition with a progression agreement	M
F	**Delivery with a third party (including overseas delivery)[6]**	F1	Franchise (single modules)	H
		F2	Co-delivery	H
		F3	Franchise (whole programmes)	H
		F4	Validation	H
		F5	Joint awards	H
Schools Direct				H

[5] This category will no longer be required from May 2022 when the UK's ERASMUS agreement expires.
[6] Modules or programmes delivered under a **franchise** arrangement are developed by the University for delivery wholly by a partner organisation. Modules or programmes within a **co-delivery** arrangement are developed by the University for joint delivery by the University and a partner organisation. Modules or programmes within a **validation** arrangement are developed and delivered wholly by a partner organisation but validated by the University, leading to the award of EHU credit and/ or qualifications.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities related to the development and support of Academic Partnerships. Primary responsibility for partnerships resides with the relevant Faculties, with expert input from other areas of the University as detailed below.

Table 2: Roles and responsibilities by partnership category

Category		Sub-category		Responsible Area(s)
A	**Placements and Study Abroad**	A1	School-based training and other placements (ex. clinical) (UK)	Faculties
		A2	Study Abroad and work placements (Erasmus)	Faculties / International Office
		A3	Study Abroad and work placements (Overseas)	International Office
		A4	Clinical placements (UK)	Faculties
		A5	Higher and Degree Apprenticeships	Faculties / Compliance Team
B	**Outreach Learning Venues**	B1	Outreach Learning Venues (UK)	Faculties
		B2	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) venues	Faculties
		B3	Outreach Learning Venues (Overseas)	Faculties / International Office
C	**Outreach Supported Learning Centres**	C1	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Education providers (UK)	Faculties / GQASC[7]
		C2	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Non-education providers (UK)	Faculties / GQASC
		C3	Outreach Supported Learning Centres (Overseas)	Faculties / International Office / GQASC
D	**Credit-rating**			Faculties / GQASC
E	**Articulations**	E1	Qualification recognition	Faculties / GQASC
		E2	Qualification recognition with a progression agreement	Faculties / GQASC
F	**Delivery with a third party (including overseas delivery)**	F1	Franchise (single modules)	GQASC / Faculties / International Office
		F2	Co-delivery	GQASC / Faculties / International Office
		F3	Franchise (whole programmes)	GQASC / Faculties / International Office
		F4	Validation	GQASC / Faculties / International Office
		F5	Joint awards	GQASC / Faculties / International Office
School Direct				Faculties

[7] Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Case work team.

It is the responsibility of the proposing Faculty to identify an appropriate resource to support its academic partnerships, and this is normally in the form of an Academic Partnership Lead (based centrally within each Faculty), and Academic Partnership Liaison Tutors (based in the appropriate Department where the partnership provision is located).

Faculty Partnership Lead

The role of the Faculty Partnership Lead, identified by the PVC Dean, includes the following:

- Determining processes for the approval, review and closure of category A and B partnerships[8].
- Providing expert advice on partnership processes to academics developing partner provision and other colleagues as appropriate.
- Overseeing the operation of partnership provision in the Faculty, supporting Academic Partnership Liaison Tutors to fulfil their duties and arranging any training or advice as needed.
- Co-ordinating the required documentation for academic and business approval including arranging for the completion and signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.
- Co-ordinating the documentation required for delivery approval / validation events.
- Maintaining comprehensive records of all partnerships, including any correspondence with partners or students and a record of current Academic Partnership Liaison Tutors.
- Negotiating with proposed partners in relation to their contract, with input from the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Faculty, or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- Arranging the completion of relevant contractual documentation, including authorising signatures.
- Leading on the monitoring of partnerships, particularly through the Annual Review processes, identifying areas of risk and escalating or resolving these as appropriate.
- Supporting and organising Site Assessment and Site Visits
- Monitoring closure plans and associated actions, ensuring updates to the Faculty Quality Committee are submitted until all students complete.
- Supporting the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor to fulfil their role.
- Attending partner or delivery approval validation events where appropriate.

Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor

A role usually fulfilled by the relevant Programme Leader[9], Academic Partnership Liaison Tutors (APLTs) are required for partnerships at category C and above and undertake the following responsibilities:

[8] These are detailed in the Faculty Academic Quality Statement – see Chapter 1.
[9] With the exception of category F4 where there is no equivalent EHU programme and therefore a separate Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor is required.

- Being the primary contact for liaison with the partner, fielding queries, resolving issues, ensuring that any course changes are communicated appropriately with the partner and ensuring that partner staff are informed of expectations for all aspects of delivery and assessment.
- Completing Site Visits and Site Assessment as required
- Ensure delivery of the partnership provision remains appropriately aligned to the approved programme specification and Delivery Plan.
- Completing relevant documentation for initial approval and validation of a partner and any reapprovals and attending the relevant validation event.
- Completing the Annual Review form, in conjunction with other stakeholders and providing it to the partner for their comments.
- Completing the Closure Plan, negotiating a smooth and appropriate exit with the partner.
- Working closely with the Faculty Partnership Lead, seeking advice and support where necessary in the fulfilment of the role.
- Liaising with other relevant Programme Leaders where the partner's portfolio includes multiple programmes[10].
- Where required, serving as a 'critical friend' to teaching staff, providing advice and support on University processes, teaching and assessment operations, student consultation and feedback, academic/ pastoral student support etc.

In the case of more complex or high-risk provision, an Internal Verifier may be appointed by the Faculty to support the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor and provide additional assurance. Where a subject is being delivered for which there is no direct equivalent within the University's portfolio, an External Verifier with appropriate discipline expertise may be appointed and remunerated by the Faculty (**Note:** this does not replace the requirement for an independent external examiner).

Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework (GQASC)

Oversight responsibility for the range of academic partnerships at the University resides with the Administration Manager (Quality and Governance) who is responsible for:

- Providing oversight of delegated partnership process responsibilities and operations in Faculties, particularly for those partnerships identified as presenting a higher risk
- Advising on partnership quality assurance processes (category C+)
- Maintaining the Register of Academic Partnerships[11].
- Supporting Site Assessment and Partner Visits as required
- Organising a central repository for Academic Partnership documentation including contracts.
- Providing advice related to processes to support proposals brought forward for institutional approval, ensuring they align with institutional strategy

[10] Only one Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor is normally required per partner, with the expectation that they will liaise accordingly with other colleagues in the completion of the Annual Review paperwork.
[11] Available at www.edgehill.ac.uk/aqdu/academic-partnerships/.

- Co-ordinating the business and academic approval[12] of category C+ partnerships.
- Reporting to Academic Board Committees and the Board of Governors with appropriate updates on the academic partnership portfolio.
- Producing the Institutional Annual Review Overview Report for Academic Partnerships[13] to provide assurance regarding the ongoing quality and standards of partner provision, and to highlight any risks or institutional action required.
- Leading on the Annual Process Review[14] for this chapter to determine any changes required to processes.

The International Office

The International Office, working in conjunction with Faculties, support the development and delivery of academic partnership provision and is responsible for:

- Managing the Study Abroad portfolio and all associated processes.
- Providing expert advice on international contexts, visas, contracts etc. to support the development of new partnerships and monitoring of existing partnerships
- Production of country intelligence reports for overseas approval events
- Completing initial due diligence checks for international partners, followed by more in-depth and comprehensive due diligence reports at a later stage which explicitly identify and categorise risks
- Supporting Site Assessments as required

The Compliance Team

The Compliance Team, based in Academic Registry, are responsible for supporting degree and higher apprenticeship provision (category A5). Their specific responsibilities include:

- Ensuring university compliance with the relevant central bodies, including the ESFA and Ofsted, in relation to validated apprenticeship provision
- Maintaining a central Register of Apprenticeship-Approved Employers.
- In conjunction with GQASC, overseeing the approval process for new apprenticeship-approved employers
- In conjunction with GQASC, overseeing processes for the monitoring of apprenticeship delivery arrangements.
- Completing the appropriate due diligence checks for potential domestic partners, including approved Apprenticeship Employers
- Supporting the Institutional Apprenticeship Group in its operation and implementation of the University Apprenticeship Strategy
- Arranging the completion of relevant contractual and delivery documentation with Approved Apprenticeship Employers.

[12] Submission to the Academic Planning Committee.
[13] This is jointly authored by the Faculty Partnership Leads, drafted by the GQASC, and will be received by the relevant Committee for approval.
[14] See Chapter 1.

CATEGORY A PARTNERSHIPS EXPLAINED

A	Placement and Study Abroad	A1	School-based training, clinical and other placements (ex-clinical) (UK)
		A2	Study Abroad and work placements (Erasmus)
		A3	Study Abroad and work placements (Overseas)
		A4	Clinical placements (UK)
		A5	Degree and Higher Apprenticeships

This category covers placements, Study Abroad arrangements, including sandwich years and student exchanges, and the delivery of degree and higher apprenticeships (including foundation awards such as the FDSc Nursing Associate programme). Here the University delegates to a partner organisation limited responsibility for student learning, assessment and the student experience for which Faculties hold significant responsibilities. This generally takes place within a work-setting within designated parameters outlined in agreements with the employer. Responsibility for the determination of appropriate processes for the approval, review and closure of partnerships which fall under category A resides with the Faculties, International Team and Compliance Team.

Category A1-4 Processes

Placements (A1 and A4)

Placements form an important part of the University's curriculum and emphasis upon employability. Many awards provide curricular (credit-bearing) and/ or extra-curricular placements whereby students acquire knowledge and experience that help them to achieve the Programme Learning Outcomes and enhance their employability. Examples include:

- **Statutory placements** – trainee teachers and healthcare practitioners complete statutory placements as part of their professional training;
- **Placement Leaning / Work-Based Learning (WBL)** – placements developed and delivered in association with employers, and one of the defining characteristics of some non-professional awards such as a Foundation Degrees[15].
- **Sandwich Years** – enable students to undertake at least 32 weeks of supervised work experience for which they receive academic credit that contributes to their final award[16]. Sandwich years may be added to certain undergraduate degrees using the process described in Chapter 4 of this Handbook.

[15] See Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement (QAA, 2015). The University's Academic Regulations require at least a quarter of students' learning to be experienced in the workplace, either through discrete work-based learning modules or embedded across the curriculum.

[16] See Academic Regulations for further details https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/academic-regulations-2021-22/.

Placement learning and work-based learning can be differentiated as follows[17]:

- ***Placement learning*** is where the learner might be considered as a student first, employee second; i.e. they came to the placement experience by virtue of their studies.
- ***Work-based learning*** is when the learner might be considered as employee first, student second; i.e. they came to the Higher Education experience by virtue of their employment or employer.

Despite the above distinction, for quality assurance purposes, placement learning and work-based learning are considered collectively as a category A placement, sharing the same approval, review and closure processes.

Study Abroad (A2 and A3)
Undergraduate students may undertake a period of study abroad, either through the university's exchange programme or as negotiated with an individual overseas provider. Study abroad is normally undertaken as an additional year located between levels 5 and 6 (i.e., third year of four) or exceptionally, a single semester replacing part of level 5. Where taken over one year, an additional 120 ungraded level 5 credits are awarded which appear on the student's transcript but do not contribute to their final degree classification. Where taken as a single semester, study abroad contributes 60 ungraded credits (to the required 120) and is excluded from the degree classification.

Erasmus (A2)
Faculties are responsible for developing appropriate processes for the consideration and approval of Erasmus partnerships. Processes are described in Faculty Academic Quality Statements[18] and consider:

- Student support arrangements; and,
- Curriculum alignment between the two HE Providers.

The International Office, as part of its own due diligence[19], reviews students' chosen institutions (which must be chartered Erasmus providers) to ensure that their individual learning needs will be met.

For Erasmus and other study abroad within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the EHEA's First Cycle qualification descriptor[20] provides a reference point for judging an overseas programme's equivalence to a UK undergraduate degree as defined within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications[21] (FHEQ). When selecting the modules to be taken abroad the academic department (with advice from the external examiner) determines the stage of

[17] *'ASET Good Practice Guide for Work based and Placement Learning in Higher Education'*, ASET Work Based and Placement Learning Association, 2013), p.8 www.asetonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/ASET-Good-Practice-Guide-eWBPL.pdf.
[18] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities.
[19] This complements the standard due diligence completed by the EU before granting an institution's Erasmus Charter.
[20] http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/77/8/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixIII_952778.pdf
[21] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks

the overseas provider's programme that equates most closely to the FHEQ level at which the student is to be assessed (typically level 5) and the alignment of module content and learning objectives with the relevant Edge Hill programme aims and learning outcomes. The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) enables direct transfer of credit from an EHEA awarding institution where 1 ECTS credit equals 2 UK HE credits. **ECTS credit imported from Erasmus study exchanges does not contribute to degree award classification which negates any requirement for the scaling of marks.** While the default position is to import ungraded ECTS credit directly into students' profiles, for those who have failed assessment at the partner institution and have since returned to the UK a series of validated 'shell' modules of different credit values is available as a vehicle for re-assessment at Edge Hill University. Because the credit gained through Erasmus exchanges is ungraded and excluded from the calculation of students' degree classifications, these shell modules are similarly excluded and will be assessed as 'Pass/ Fail only'.

Study Abroad (other overseas territories) (A3)

For study outside the EHEA, the proposing department assesses the suitability of the placement, accompanied by a health and safety audit. UK ENIC provides a service which compares overseas and UK higher education qualifications, and when selecting the modules to be taken abroad the academic department (with advice from the external examiner) determines the stage of the overseas provider's programme that equates most closely to the FHEQ level at which the student is to be assessed (typically level 5), and the alignment of module content and learning objectives with the relevant Edge Hill programme aims and learning outcomes. In addition to level, the department establishes broad equivalence between the volume of learning and assessment to be undertaken and the Notional Learning Hours for which Edge Hill credit is to be awarded (where 1 credit = 10 NLHs). **Credit imported from study abroad exchanges does not contribute to degree award classification which negates any requirement for the scaling of marks.** While the default position is to import ungraded credit directly into students' profiles, for those who have failed assessment at the partner institution and have since returned to the UK a series of validated 'shell' modules of different credit values is available as a vehicle for re-assessment at Edge Hill University. Because the credit gained through exchanges is ungraded and excluded from the calculation of students' degree classifications, these shell modules are similarly excluded and will be assessed as 'Pass/ Fail only'.

Study Abroad - Agreements

Study abroad arrangements are supported by **signed agreements** that describe the roles and responsibilities of the University, overseas provider and EHU student; how the student will be taught, supported and assessed; and how complaints or disciplinary issues, that may arise while the student is abroad, will be managed. For Erasmus exchanges, a standard Erasmus agreement is used which is signed by the University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor, however for specific relationships between Erasmus institutions relating to student mobility, a separate bilateral agreement is also signed prior to students embarking on any exchanges. Where they occur, study abroad opportunities are evaluated within programme monitoring and as part of departmental annual monitoring and periodic review.

Categories A1-4 Approval Processes

For partnerships within the sub-categories A1-4, partner and delivery approval are combined and responsibility for determining these processes resides mainly within Faculties[22] with some responsibilities shared with the International Office. Approval of such arrangements may include:

- Due diligence checks; including legal and financial.
- Consideration of any relevant country or partner intelligence.
- Consideration of the business case and any appropriate costings.
- Completion of clear, signed agreements with the partner which confirm the responsibilities of each partner.
- Completion of an appropriate health and safety check or risk assessment of the setting.
- (Placements and apprenticeships only) Completion of 3-way learning agreements[23] between the student, HE provider and employer, before placements commence.
- (Apprenticeships only) Consideration of the extent to which the proposed apprenticeship arrangement aligns with the University Apprenticeship Strategy.

Category A arrangements are approved for varying periods (between 1-3 years). See Table 3 below.

Table 3: Partner approval periods in category A arrangements

	Category	Sub-category		Period of Partner Approval
A	**Placements and Study Abroad**	A1	School-based training and other placements (ex. clinical) (UK)	Up to 3 years per provider
		A2	Study Abroad and work placements (Erasmus)	In accordance with Erasmus contracts
		A3	Study Abroad and work placements (Overseas)	1 year
		A4	Clinical placements (UK)	Ongoing but subject to 2- yearly review
		A5	Degree and Higher Apprenticeships	Ongoing - subject to annual review activity

[22] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities.

[23] These typically cover:

- The roles, responsibilities and obligations of the University, the placement provider and the student.
- Employer's liability and compliance with statutory obligations e.g., concerning equality, data protection, freedom of information, health and safety, and environmental law.
- Ownership of copyright and intellectual property rights for work produced by the student while on placement.
- Provisions that enable the University or placement provider to suspend or withdraw from the agreement if any party fails to meet its obligations.

When approving programmes containing either work-based or placement learning, the following guidance may be utilised:

1. (Where the student is not already in relevant employment) The identification of placement opportunities which offer a learning experience that meets the needs and expectations of students and enables achievement of the relevant learning outcomes. Validation panels consider whether students will source their own placements (with support) or have placements provided for them and where such responsibility is located.
2. (Where the student is already in employment) How the appropriateness of the student's own work setting to the learning aims and outcomes is established.

Possible questions:

- Who sources or organises the placements?
- What is the structure and duration of the placement?
- What is the purpose of the placement (e.g., to meet compulsory requirements of the programme; an employability opportunity; to develop certain skills/ to gain certain experience)?
- Is credit attached to the placement/ is the student assessed for competency?
- Details of potential placement partners, including any overseas arrangement.
- What funding is provided for the placement provider?

3. Quality assurance and risk assessment of placement settings and formal agreements with placement providers.

Possible questions:

- Who has responsibility for identifying and organising placement opportunity?
- Who approves this?
- Who monitors and evaluates the placement?
- If overseas, is there clear process outlining the relationship between the International Team and Faculty?
- How do different role holders liaise and share information?
- Are there clear definitions of who has responsibility for different parts of the process?
- Is a risk assessment necessary? By whom is it conducted?

4. Preparation and support for students before, during and after their placements.

Possible questions:

- How are students prepared in advance of the placement commencing?
- What support is available to students during the placement, both from EHU and placement provider?

5. Assessment and evaluation of placements.
6. Recruitment, development and support of employer-mentors including their preparation for assessment (where this applies).
7. Arrangements for managing incomplete or unsatisfactory placement experiences[24].
8. Managing student or employer complaints or disciplinary issues that arise whilst a student is on placement.

Possible questions

- How is assessment carried out? Who is responsible for this?
- How do the students evaluate their experience and articulate skills acquired?
- How is feedback gathered from the placement provider on the student?
- How is feedback gathered from the placement provider on Edge Hill's placement management?
- Does feedback go to a committee or panel?
- How is the feedback loop closed?
- How does this evaluation feed into planning for next year?

Review Processes for Category A1-4 Partnerships

Faculties are responsible for maintaining a database of approved placement providers, whilst the International Team is responsible for maintaining a register of study abroad respectively. These records include their period of approval and expiry for review purposes. Faculties describe their processes for the review of category A1-4 partnerships in their Faculty Academic Quality Statements[25].

The outputs of the review activity undertaken is considered by the relevant Faculty committee, the purpose of which is to identify any risk for discussion, and to provide assurance of the ongoing quality of category A arrangements.

Closure Processes for Category A1-4 Partnerships

Appropriate arrangements for the termination of placement arrangements and study abroad agreements are determined by the Faculty or International Team, depending on who is responsible for the arrangement (see Table 2 above). These processes however must include consideration of the University Student Protection Plan[26], adherence to the Office for

[24] Where a substitute placement cannot be provided and an alternative mode of assessment is required, course teams describe this in the Additional Assessment Information section of the relevant Module Specification. In all circumstances, alternative assessment must be capable of testing the Intended Learning Outcome(s).

[25] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities.

[26] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/student-protection-plan/.

Students' Conditions of Registration C1-3 related to student protection[27] and any implications for the student experience during teach out[28].

Category A5 Processes

Degree and Higher Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships integrate work and learning and typically lead to a qualification; some may also lead to recognition by one or more professional bodies. Apprenticeships are a key vehicle by which the UK is seeking to ensure that public and private sector employers can recruit and develop the workforce they need. Requirements and specifications for Apprenticeships are set out in Apprenticeship Standards[29], developed by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education[30] (IfATE).

Programmes for delivery as **Higher Apprenticeships** terminate in a FHEQ level 5 or 6 award, e.g., Foundation Degree or Graduate Certificate, whilst **Degree Apprenticeships** terminate at levels 6 & 7, i.e., Undergraduate and Masters Degrees. Under these arrangements, Approved Apprenticeship Employers work with the University to deliver an apprenticeship programme to their employees, who then become designated as apprentices. Delivery by the Approved Apprenticeship Employer is very limited to areas such as supervision within the workplace environment and limited involvement in some assessed elements. The University is responsible for all other aspects of the apprenticeship programme delivery.

The university utilises the QAA Characteristics Statement for Higher Education in Apprenticeships (July 2019)[31] as part of its design of new apprenticeship programmes; for more information, please see Chapter 4 of this handbook.

Approval of Apprenticeships

Programmes intended for delivery as **Higher Apprenticeships** and **Degree Apprenticeships** are validated using the approval processes described in Chapter 4 of this Handbook. However, in addition to the standard validation questions, panels also consider whether there is:

- Demonstrable alignment with the relevant Apprenticeship Standards through mapping of Programme Learning Outcomes and content (modules) to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) of the relevant Apprenticeship Standard.
- An appropriate balance of 'on-the-job' and 'off-the-job' learning[32];
- An appropriate arrangement for programme monitoring and review that also considers the progress of individual apprentices;

[27] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/.
[28] Including consideration of any potential implications of such a closure for compliance with Competition and Markets Authority guidance. See UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law (CMA, 2015).
[29] Apprenticeship Standards, developed by Trailblazer groups made up of employers in a particular industry sector, specify the KSBs required to demonstrate full occupational competence in the relevant job role.
[30] https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/.
[31] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/characteristics-statement-apprenticeships.pdf
[32] Most learning takes place 'on-the-job', however at least 20 percent of an apprenticeship must involve 'off-the-job' learning delivered through scheduled learning activities.

- Evidence of employer involvement in programme design and development[33].
- Assurance that programme admission processes satisfy the entry requirements set within the relevant Apprenticeship Standard and the University's own minimum entry requirements, including any opportunity for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)[34].
- Evidence of how programme delivery and assessment schedules will accommodate the circumstances of apprentices in the specific employment setting (in the 'Student Learning Journey' section of the programme specification), with a minimum of 20% 'off-the-job' learning.
- Compliance with the relevant **Apprenticeship Assessment Plan**[35];
- A confirmed arrangement for an **End-Point Assessment** (EPA), in accordance with the relevant Apprenticeship Assessment Plan, i.e., *integrated* within the programme or *non-integrated*. The latter being conducted by a third-party End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), endorsed by the employer and supported by a separate agreement between the University and EPAO. Where EPA is non-integrated, proposers describe how students will be prepared and supported to undertake it. For programmes with integrated EPA, proposers evidence relevant practice-based expertise and experience among academic delivery staff and external examiners[36].

The approval of a new apprenticeship programme and its associated curriculum is subject to final approval by AQEC, as per standard validations. Following approval, the Compliance Team submits a completed **Higher Education Learning Aim Request Form** to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) accompanied by a letter, signed by the Chair of the Validation and Audit Standing Panel confirming that the qualification has completed internal validation and authorising it to be included within the **Learning Aims Reference Service** (LARS) for prescribed Higher Education qualifications.

Where an employer expresses an interest in having the University deliver its apprenticeships to their employees, this is detailed in an **Apprenticeship Proposal form**. This form provides details regarding the proposed employer, the apprenticeship programmes (and standards) for delivery, the timescales and rationale for the delivery with this new employer. Any risks or concerns identified from the Due Diligence Report shall also be included in this Proposal form. The Due Diligence Report and Apprenticeship Proposal form are submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for business approval before submission to the Chair of the Institutional Apprenticeship Group. The decision regarding where apprenticeship programmes shall be delivered and which employers wish to engage with the university on our apprenticeship programmes, resides with the Institutional Apprenticeship Group (most commonly via Chair's Action taken by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for External Relations). Once

[33] Employers are situated as the main driver in the development process for apprenticeships that involve higher education qualifications. See '*Quality Assuring Higher Education in Apprenticeships: Current Approaches*', QAA 2nd edition, July 2018, section 3.1.
[34] Unless specifically prohibited by the relevant Apprenticeship Assessment Plan.
[35] Apprenticeship Assessment Plans, devised by Trailblazer groups, outline how the KSBs are to be assessed through End-Point Assessment which is conducted at the final stage of the apprenticeship and includes at least two assessment methods, e.g., a work or practice-based project. Assessment Plans indicate whether EPA may be *integrated* within the programme or must be conducted through a standalone process (*non-integrated*).
[36] As stipulated by the relevant Apprenticeship Assessment Plan.

approved by the Chair, contracts and compliance activity will take place to arrange delivery with the employers.

Any existing Approved Apprenticeship Employers who wish to add additional programmes to those they already receive from us are agreed through the same process described above. However, where additional cohorts are to be added to an existing apprenticeship programme, no separate academic approval process is necessary, although the Chair of the Institutional Apprenticeship Group must be consulted in advance and any additional Apprenticeship Programme agreements must be executed.

As referenced in Table 3, approval periods for apprenticeship partners are ongoing and this is refreshed through the annual review activity. This provides regular opportunity to identify any issues with the partnership or delivery with a partner which can then be addressed.

All apprenticeship delivery is underpinned by formal written contracts (agreements) between:

- The University (Provider) and the Approved Apprenticeship Employer;
- The Approved Apprenticeship Employer and the Apprentice;
- The University and any EPAO; and,
- A tripartite agreement between the University, the Approved Apprenticeship Employer and the Apprentice (referred to as a **Commitment Statement**). These contracts run for a period of five years and will be renewed or terminated after this date.

A central record of all apprenticeship arrangements is maintained by the Compliance Team.

Reviewing Apprenticeship Programmes and Delivery Arrangements

Category A5 (degree and higher apprenticeships) are subject to a full review of the apprenticeship programme's performance and this includes delivery with the various approved Apprenticeship Employers. The **Apprenticeship Programme Review** forms provide an opportunity to assess the health of the partnership arrangement as well as the ongoing student experience for the apprentices. They collect programme-level information and evaluate the effectiveness of the apprenticeship programme through scrutiny of a host of data and evidence (as per standard partner Annual Reviews).

The content of the reviews ultimately informs the **Self-Assessment Review** and **Quality Improvement Plan** for Ofsted and serve to ensure compliance with ESFA requirements for an annual review of apprenticeships. These review forms are submitted to the Institutional Apprenticeship Group for discussion and approval, prior to submission to AQEC. AQEC considers any areas of institutional risk or concern regarding academic standards or quality and, if applicable, commissions appropriate action.

The annual review of apprenticeship programmes and their delivery with partners provides ongoing approval of the partnership, whilst contracts require review and resubmission every five years.

Terminating Apprenticeship Delivery
The decision to cease delivery with an Approved Apprenticeship Employer is agreed at the Institutional Apprenticeship Group in accordance with the **Withdrawal Process** and **Partnership Exit Strategy**. Due consideration is given at this stage to the impact on any existing apprentices on programme, and discussions are held regarding teach-out arrangements to protect the student experience as the partnership comes to an end.

CATEGORY B PARTNERSHIPS EXPLAINED

B	Outreach Learning Venues	B1	Outreach Learning Venues (UK)
		B2	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (UK)
		B3	Outreach Learning Venues (Overseas)

In this category all teaching, assessment and student support are provided by Edge Hill University staff and the responsibility of the external venue provider is limited to the supply of teaching accommodation, including basic IT and display equipment[37].

Approval processes
Responsibility for the approval of category B venues resides with Faculties and their approach is outlined in their Faculty Academic Quality Statements[38]. The following documents require completion for the proposal of a new venue:

- **Academic Partnership Venue Proposal** form[39]; normally completed by the Faculty Partnership Lead.
- **Health and Safety Checklist**; normally completed by an appropriate health and safety representative (member of EHU staff such as a local health and safety representative). Advice can be sought from the central Health and Safety team. A visit to the venue is normally required to enable completion of this assessment, however virtual completion with input from the venue and others who have knowledge of the site may be acceptable. Any actions required as part of the risk assessment should be addressed and detailed in the Academic Partnership Venue Proposal form.
- A copy of the **Public Liability Insurance**; retained in the central Y Drive files.

The payment of any **fees** is the responsibility of the Faculty to arrange and record in the appropriate budget line.
The process for approval of new venues is as follows:

1. Proposal and documentation completed and submitted to the appropriate Faculty Quality Committee, which is responsible to Faculty Board and Academic Quality Enhancement Committee.

[37] Where more extensive use of learning resources is required an Outreach Supported Learning arrangement may be more appropriate - see 'Category C', below.
[38] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities.

[39] Template available on the GQASC WIKI page.

2. An appropriate **Venue/Room Hire Agreement** is completed and signed by the relevant parties.
3. Notification should be made to the GQASC and central category B Register updated.
4. An annual list of all category B venues in approval shall be received by Academic Planning Committee[40], which has the responsibility for oversight of academic partnership activity.

Venues are reviewed annually by the Faculty in a process described in the Faculty Quality Statement. This normally includes reviewing the currency of the information in the Academic Partnership Venue Proposal form, along with the health and safety assessment. A revised copy of the public liability insurance should be received for the record.
Faculties may determine an appropriate process to close or terminate their use of a venue, however most venues operate on a rolling annual approval.

All learning venues must have been approved prior to the start of a programme or module's delivery. As detailed in Table 4 below, venues are approved on a rolling annual basis and therefore do not require any formal closure process.

Table 4: Partner approval periods for category B arrangements

	Category	Sub-category		Period of Partner Approval
B	**Outreach Learning Venue**	B1	Outreach Learning Venues (UK)	1 year
		B2	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) venues	1 year
		B3	Outreach Learning Venues (Overseas)	1 year

Review processes
A list of the venues used within an academic year is part of the evidence base considered at Departmental Annual Monitoring[41]. Venues are also subject to review and re-approval as noted above and these processes are described in Faculty Academic Quality Statements.

Definitions of category C+ partnerships

As the level of risk and business opportunity varies across the taxonomy of partnerships, different processes are in place for different categories and sub-categories of academic partnerships. This is to ensure they are proportionate to the potential opportunity for Edge Hill University whilst ensuring they are robust for partnerships which present a greater academic or business risk. The following sections provide additional information on the nuanced processes for the different partnership categories above the standard processes

[40] Normally at its first meeting of the academic year.
[41] See Chapter 3 for further information on Annual Monitoring www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/03-annual-monitoring-periodic-review-and-internal-audit.pdf.

described in the earlier sections. More information on the approval processes and paperwork specifically can be found in the appendix.

Category C partnerships

C	Outreach Supported Learning Centres	C1	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Education providers (UK)
		C2	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Non-education providers (UK)
		C3	Outreach Supported Learning Centres (Overseas)

In this category Edge Hill University staff conduct all teaching and assessment elements of a programme or module, while the partner organisation provides the venue, learning resources and some support services subject to individual negotiation (in respect of Category C3, this may include in-country support for Edge Hill programmes delivered via Blended or Distance Learning). Support services may include academic or pastoral support, exam invigilation, lab supervision and more.

For new category C partners (or re-approval events) a Site Assessment must be conducted to inspect the partner facilities, learning resources, and safety regulations. These facilities and resources are inspected to provide assurance to the approval panel they are of an equivalent standard and quality to those of the University. However, external panel members on the approval panel shall be responsible for confirming the subject specific resources provided for the course are appropriate and broadly consistent with those at Edge Hill University campuses. More information on Site Assessments, including who completes them, is available in the appendix.

In the rare circumstance where a Site Assessment cannot be completed in advance of the approval event, virtual tours or similar may be considered however, normally delivery with a partner will not commence until a full, on-site visit has taken place to the satisfaction of the independent officer and/or the validation panel. Advice will be provided by the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework team relating to the approval visit requirement following approval of any partnership proposals by the Academic Planning Committee. In exceptional circumstances the validation event for a partner may be held at the partner's site to enable further inspection of facilities by the approval panel.

For category C partnerships particular attention should be paid in the review to the quality and availability of the learning and support resources provided by the partner in the agreement, to ensure there has been no significant change from the original approved agreement. This is normally verified, in part, by a Partner Visit undertaken by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor.

Category D partnerships

D	Credit rating

This category typically covers short courses hosted by UK-based employers or non-educational training organisations and enables their recognition for the award of Edge Hill University academic credit through the approval of Intended Learning Outcomes appropriate to the required FHEQ level accompanied by a suitable assessment strategy. Assessment is subject to internal moderation by the host Edge Hill department and an external examiner is appointed to provision at level 5 and above.

Following business approval and initial approval by the Academic Planning Committee, validation is completed via the Faculty Module Approval process described in the Faculty Academic Quality Statement[42], supported by the following documentation:

- Partner's course materials (in their original format) describing the course aims, learning objectives, indicative content and teaching strategy.
- Partner Overview Document, with relevant sections completed.
- Draft Delivery Plan.
- A Credit Rating Coversheet[43] completed jointly by the host department and partner, detailing:
  - The FHEQ level and credit volume to be assigned;
  - Intended Learning Outcomes and assessment strategy (mapped by ILOs).
  - Supporting external examiner comments (level 5 and above).

The Module Approval process should give particular attention to the partner's preparedness to conduct assessment at HE level and the support to be provided by the host Edge Hill department over and above the standard provision of internal moderation. Final approval of Category D provision is via a recommendation (report or minutes) to Faculty Board or the appropriate delegated Faculty Committee. Processes for re-approval are as described in the Faculty Academic Quality Statement.

Partnerships in this category are subject to the standard Annual Review led by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor. The purpose of these reviews is to assess the continued health of the partnership and to confirm that there has been no change to the partner's course content, assessment, learning outcomes or teaching strategy.

Category E partnerships

E	Articulations	E1	Qualification recognition
		E2	Qualification recognition with a progression agreement

[42] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Faculty+Quality+Processes+and+Responsibilities (EHU staff login required).
[43] Available at https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/aqdu/Template+Documents.

Articulation arrangements are non-binding, non-exclusive agreements with other educational institutions or awarding bodies, including overseas, whose programmes or qualifications are recognised for entry to an Edge Hill programme after the normal start-point ('entry with advanced standing'), typically at level 5 or above. Articulation arrangements are based on credit exemption[44] as distinct from the importation of another organisation's credit or the award of Edge Hill credit.

Category E1 provides recognition of an awarding body's qualification where no individual delivery instance, centre or cohort is specified, and anyone holding the recognised qualification may be considered for advanced entry to the Edge Hill programme to which articulation has been approved. Category E1 usually applies to (professional) qualifications of awarding organisations rather than the programmes/ qualifications of individual HE providers or institutions (see E2, below). Articulating students apply to Edge Hill individually and meet normal programme entry requirements including English language proficiency for international students.

Category E2 provides recognition of a programme or qualification for articulation by a specific cohort, e.g. students of University (X)'s diploma programme articulate into the final year of a specified Edge Hill degree. Category E2 arrangements may be accompanied by formal Progression Agreements, nevertheless students must meet all Edge Hill entry requirements including English language proficiency for international students.

In so far as an articulation arrangement recognises another awarding body or education provider's qualification for advanced entry, and no Edge Hill programme is being delivered or credit awarded, due diligence is likely to focus upon:

- any relevant regulation governing the external programme or qualification, typically Ofqual or the Scottish Qualifications Authority for UK-based awarding bodies, or national regulators of overseas providers;
- how the awarding body meets its regulator's requirements, particularly in relation to processes for marking and moderation including independent (external) verification[45] of assessment.
- (For category E2) The financial, legal and reputational standing of the organisation with which the University seeks to enter into an articulation agreement.

Following business approval and initial approval by the Academic Planning Committee, the proposed Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor completes the relevant paperwork submitted to the institutional Articulation Approval Panel. This panel is assembled from experienced members of the Validation and Audit Standing Panel who consider the paperwork, including detailed mapping, and make a recommendation to the Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee which is responsible for final approval of all validation and partner approvals.

[44] See Academic Regulations s. C7.4.
[45] UK awarding organisations appoint external verifiers (moderators) to review marking and internal moderation undertaken in delivery centres, typically further education or private colleges.

For articulation partners, the Annual Review also serves as the verification process for the ongoing validity of the curriculum mapping. In these bespoke templates, particular emphasis is given to reflection on the continued appropriateness of the articulation route in the context of progressing students' attainment, and any curriculum drift which may impact on the mapping. Due to the nature of articulations and the timing of annual reviews, Academic Partnership Liaison Tutors will need to maintain close contact with the partner organisation in advance of recruitment windows and should confirm on an ongoing basis that there has been no curriculum change at the partner. Similarly, where minor module or programme modifications are progressed at Edge Hill and impact on the programme which has a live articulation route, this should be a key consideration at the relevant Curriculum Approval Panel (Module Approval Panel).

An Annual Review is required even where no students have articulated, to provide confirmation of the route's continued appropriateness and viability. Routes which have not recruited for two academic years require review by the appropriate Faculty Quality Committee to verify that they remain viable from a business perspective and a decision should be taken for their continuation or closure. The review may identify actions to stimulate articulation and should the review confirm the continuation of the partnership, the partner expiry period is unaffected.

Where there have been changes to the curriculum at Edge Hill University or at the partner, the following action is required:

- When the **Edge Hill curriculum** changes, re-mapping is confirmed in the Annual Review form for the following academic year. Where these timings do not align, the Articulations Approval Panel may receive a direct request to review the new mapping
- When the **partner's curriculum** changes, an Academic Partnership Proposal form[46] and curriculum mapping document may be submitted directly to the Articulations Approval Panel to consider[47], bypassing the initial approval stage.

Category F partnerships:

F	Delivery with a third party (including overseas delivery)	F1	Franchise (single modules)
		F2	Co-delivery
		F3	Franchise (whole programmes)
		F4	Validation
		F5	Joint awards

In this category, another educational organisation is approved to deliver Edge Hill modules or programmes under a franchise or co-delivery arrangement or brings forward its own

[46] This form does not need to be submitted to APC for initial approval and proceeds directly to the VASP articulation approval (via GQASC).
[47] The Panel will still report a recommendation to AQEC which has ultimate authority for these partnership arrangements

provision for validation leading to the award of an Edge Hill qualification or credit. While significant responsibilities for managing academic standards and the quality of teaching, assessment and student support are delegated to the delivery organisation, ultimate responsibility for both remains with the University as awarding body.

Each sub-category represents a nuanced approach to joint delivery of Edge Hill University credits with an academic partner either in the UK or overseas. Within all these sub-categories, Edge Hill University is the sole awarding body of credit, with the exception of F5 joint awards which may include dual or double degrees where the partner may also award credit.

The sub-categories can be defined as follows:

- F1 Franchise (single modules)

The delegation through formal agreement with a partner, to deliver entire Edge Hill University modules (taught or research) by staff within the partner or a third party. Responsibility for all elements of delivery, assessment, teaching and learning resources are designated to this partner, along with responsibility (with supervision) for the student experience.

- F2 Co-delivery

An agreement between Edge Hill University and a partner to jointly deliver teaching, assessment etc. of an EHU programme or module through a shared arrangement of responsibility.

- F3 Franchise (whole programme)

The delegation through formal agreement with a partner, to deliver entire Edge Hill University programmes (taught or research) by staff within the partner or a third party. Responsibility for all elements of delivery, assessment, teaching and learning resources are designated to this partner, along with responsibility (with supervision) for the student experience.

- F4 Validation

The recognition and formal validation (approval) of a partner or a third party's programme, which shall then receive Edge Hill University credits and ultimately, an Edge Hill University award, and the delivery of this programme by the partner. These programmes are generally established programmes delivered by the partner already and Edge Hill University shall have no input in its design.

- F5 Joint awards

Provision whereby Edge Hill University and one or more UK HE awarding bodies together design and/or deliver a programme leading to either single or multiple award made jointly or individually by all parties.

There are various models for joint awards and the term **joint degree** describes a collaborative arrangement in which two (or more) awarding institutions together validate[48] and deliver a programme of study which results in a single joint award of both (all) institutions. The development of such an arrangement requires detailed negotiation between the partner(s) and the development of a bespoke set of common regulations.

Key characteristics of a joint degree are:

- The programme has one Programme Specification including a single set of Programme Learning Outcomes.
- Modules are delivered by different partners, and students may study at one or more of the institutions working together in relation to the joint programme.
- Completing students receive one degree certificate authorised by both (all) partners involved in its delivery.
- One external examiner is appointed for the degree.

Whereas the term **double degree** (or 'multiple degree' where there are more than two partners) applies to a programme otherwise conceived, designed and delivered as a joint degree but where local legal or regulatory conditions prohibit the award of a single certificate. In these circumstances, students receive separate certificates/ transcripts/ diploma supplements from each awarding body which reference the others' existence and that students have completed a single, jointly conceived course.

Finally, the term **dual degree** describes a collaborative arrangement in which two awarding organisations design, validate[49] and deliver a course of study, however students receive separate degrees from both partners. Each is responsible for making its own award under its own regulations, however the programme's components form a single package requiring elements of joint management and oversight.

Key characteristics of a dual degree are:

- The overall study period and volume of learning is typically greater than for a single degree but smaller than if the two degrees were studied separately.
- Each partner develops its own Programme Specification, including Programme Learning Outcomes.
- Modules are delivered by both partners, often at different stages (years) of the programme, however each will generally deliver a substantial proportion at the level of the qualification it awards.
- Completing students receive separate certificates from each partner under its own regulations.
- Each partner makes its own arrangements for external examination (or other independent verification).

[48] To facilitate this, a Lead Partner may be nominated to host Institutional validation with other partners in attendance to include representatives of academic quality and registry functions.

[49] In this arrangement, each partner is responsible for taking the programme through its own Institutional approval (validation) process.

Joint/ double and dual degrees should be developed with cognizance of the QAA's Characteristics Statement for qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body[50].

For new category F partners (or re-approval events) a Site Assessment must be conducted to inspect the partner facilities, learning resources, safety regulations, and to meet with relevant staff to discuss the partnership expectations and arrangements. Meetings with delivery staff for the programme provide a useful opportunity to discuss how delivery will work and provide assurance of these details to the approval panel. Facilities and resources are inspected to provide assurance to the approval panel they are of an equivalent standard and quality to those of the University. However, external panel members on the approval panel shall be responsible for confirming the subject specific resources provided for the course are appropriate and broadly consistent with those at Edge Hill University campuses. More information on Site Assessments, including who completes them, is available in the appendix.

In the rare circumstance where a Site Assessment cannot be completed in advance of the approval event, virtual tours or similar may be considered however, normally delivery with a partner will not commence until a full, on-site visit has taken place to the satisfaction of the independent officer and/or the validation panel. Advice will be provided by the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework team relating to the approval visit requirement following approval of any partnership proposals by the Academic Planning Committee. In exceptional circumstances the validation event for a partner may be held at the partner's site to enable further inspection of facilities by the approval panel.

For category F partnerships the standard Annual Review process applies with the additional requirement to confirm staffing arrangements prior to delivery each year, with any new staff proposed for delivery of Edge Hill University credits being subject to approval by the relevant Faculty Quality Committee (through submission of their CV which details their experience and ability to deliver curriculum at the appropriate FHEQ level). Attention should be paid in the review to the quality and availability of the learning and support resources provided by the partner in the agreement, to ensure there has been no significant change from the original approved agreement. This is normally verified, in part, by a Partner Visit undertaken by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor.

Additionally, the external examiner appointed for category F programmes at FHEQ level 5 and above (level 4 for Foundation Degrees) may be asked to visit the partner to provide input into the Annual Review. As far as possible, external examiners allocated to partnership provision (category F) shall have experience of partnership delivery or transnational education in Higher Education. For category F partnerships, external examiners clearly differentiate between delivery centres and student cohorts in their annual reports and this is one piece of evidence used in the Annual Review. More information on external examining at Edge Hill University can be found in Chapter 2.

[50] www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-involving-more-than-one-degree-awarding-body.pdf?sfvrsn=4cc5ca81_10.

School Direct partnerships

The University operates School Direct provision under two models[51]:

1. School Direct Placement model
2. School Direct Hubs

The School Direct Placement model fits into Category A whereas School Direct Hubs fit within the separate School Direct category which relates to the direct delivery of PGCE awards through a joint approach between Edge Hill and the Hub.

In this latter category the University works with a third-party School Direct Hub to deliver PGCE with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) programmes, with the partner responsible for those parts of the programme that have direct relation to QTS and professional practice.

Approval processes follow those detailed for Category F provision above, with Hub approval covering all participating schools which complete a spreadsheet containing details of teaching staff's roles, length of service, qualifications and experience in lieu of individual CVs. Academic liaison between the University and School Direct Hub is provided by the Edge Hill Programme Leader.

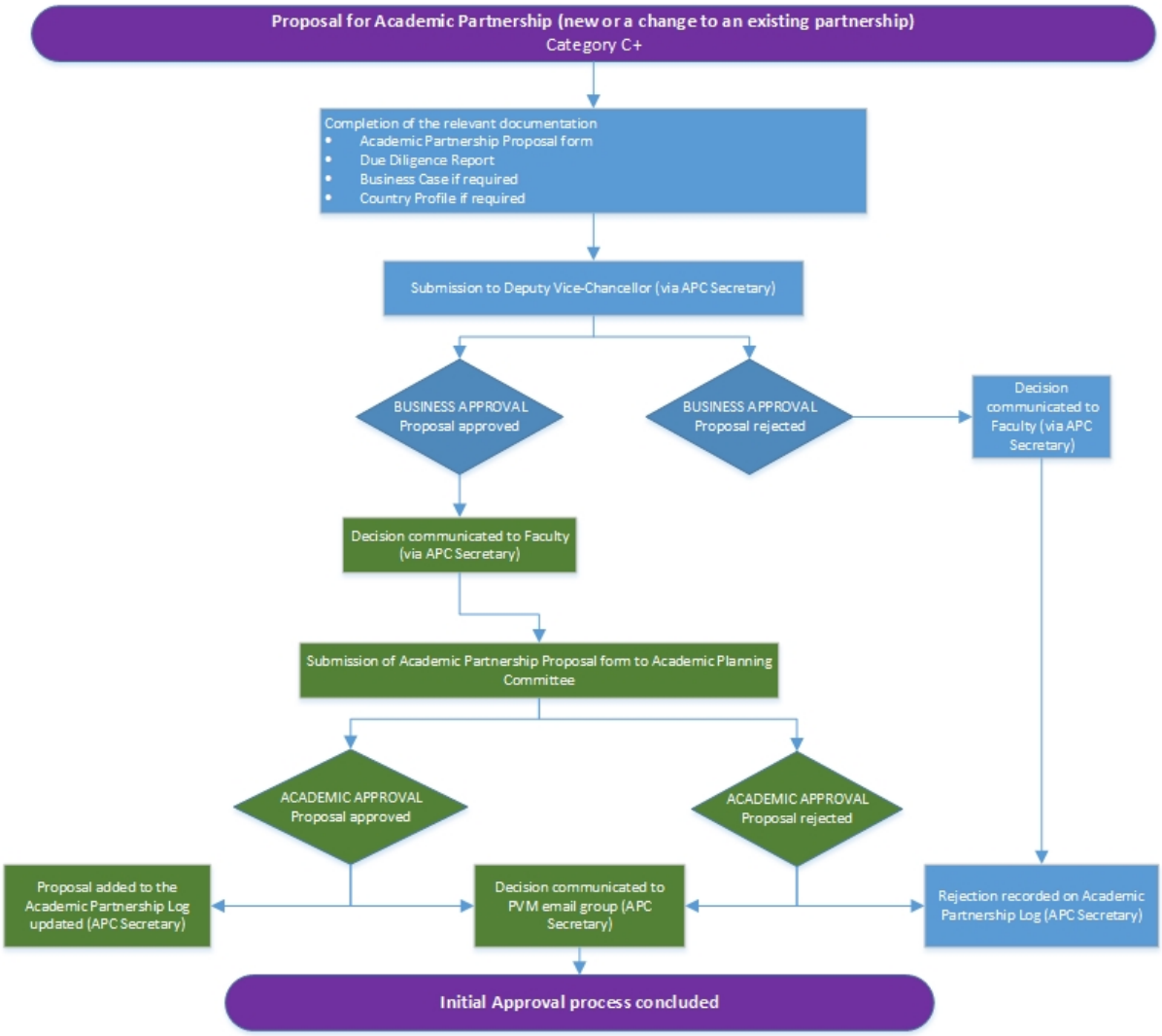
The standard Annual Review process operates for these partners.

Category C+ Processes

Approval

For Category C and above partnerships which represent a higher level of risk for the university, the following approval process usually applies.

[51] For further information see the AQEC minute reference 092/AQC/15.



Further details on the different categories and nuanced processes can be found later in this chapter.

Business Approval

Recognising the financial commitment and potential risk of entering into academic partnerships, some categories of partnership require business approval at the start of planning for a new partnership. This process applies to the following categories of partnership:

- A5- Degree and Higher Apprenticeships
- C1- Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Education providers (UK)
- C2- Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Non-education providers (UK)
- C3- Outreach Supported Learning Centres (Overseas)
- D- Credit-rating
- E1- Qualification recognition (articulation)
- E2- Qualification recognition with a progression agreement (articulation)
- F1- Franchise (single modules)

- F2- Co-delivery
- F3- Franchise (whole programmes)
- F4- Validation
- F5- Joint awards
- Schools Direct

Business approval is granted on request to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or his delegate. The purpose of this stage is to provide early opportunity to identify risks (financial, reputational, legal or academic) and to consider the appropriateness of partnership and its business case. The following paperwork requires submission via the Academic Planning Committee Secretary:

- Academic Partnership Proposal form
- Initial due diligence report[52]
- Full business case[53] (for any private sector providers (UK or overseas), any international partnership in category C or F, or where requested by the Deputy Vice Chancellor
- Country profile (for any international partnerships)

More information on this paperwork, its purpose and who completes it, is detailed in the appendix guide.

Where granted, business approval does not have an expiry date however proposals are normally expected to proceed to validation (delivery approval) within 12 months of business approval being granted.

Initial Academic Approval

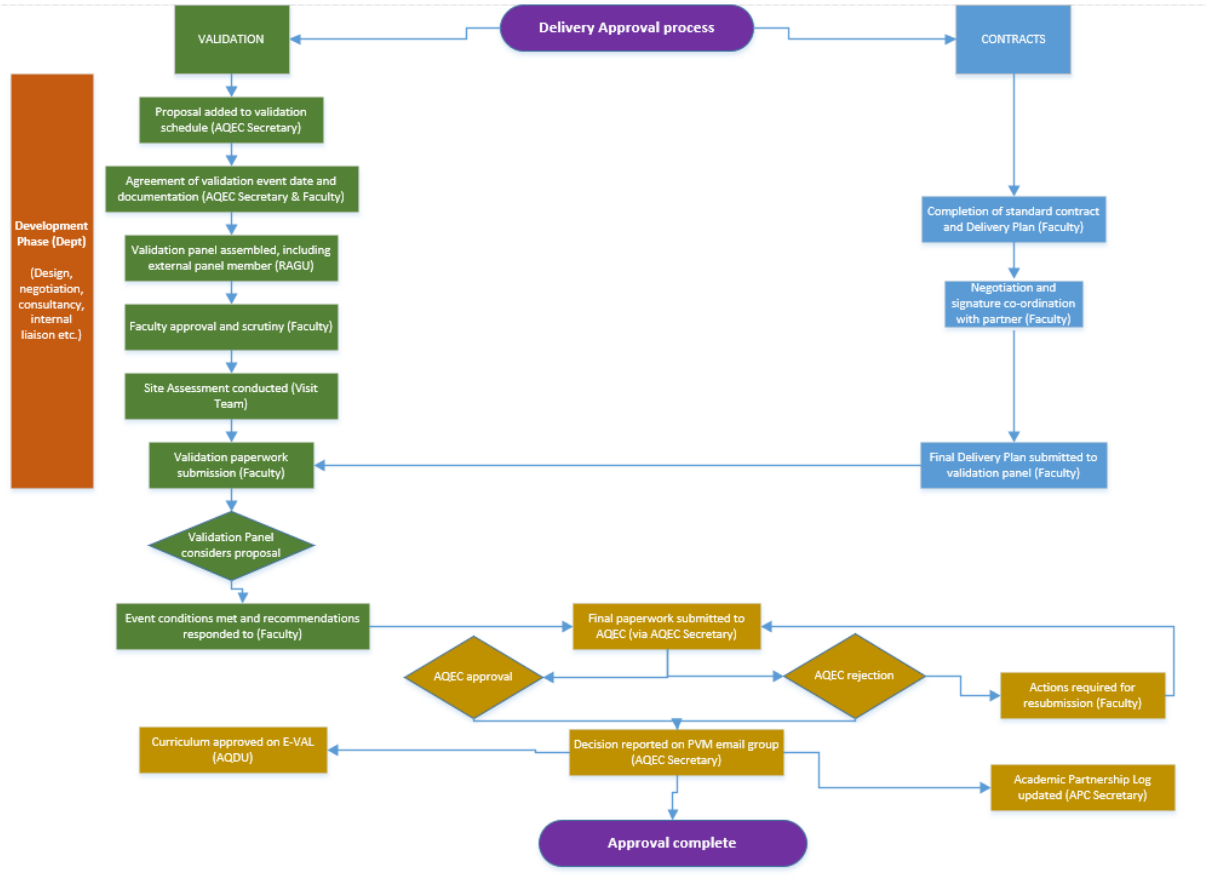
Academic Planning Committee is responsible for considering proposals for new category C+ delivery arrangements or re-approvals. It considers the fit with the University's International and Curriculum Strategies. It may also outline areas for exploration by the Site Assessment Team or validation approval panel.

Delivery Approval

Delivery approval takes place after the initial approval process and the paperwork, timescales and process varies according to the category of partnership. The standard process for category C and F partnerships is shown in the flowchart below (different processes apply for articulations):

[52] A full due diligence report is completed during development of the partnership paperwork and any identified risks shall be escalated appropriately to Directorate to consider.

[53] The Academic Partnership Proposal form includes a section for the description of the business case for partnerships, however a more detailed business case with anticipated income and expenditure is provided on a separate template.



During the development phase the proposing team should ensure they consult closely with the different internal Departments and Services such as Learning Services, Academic Registry etc. to ensure the design and delivery proposed is robust and achievable.

Processes are broadly based upon scrutiny of evidence of the partner's staffing and resources by an expert panel to ensure delivery can commence with partner to a high standard. An approval panel is assembled from the VASP membership which considers relevant paperwork from the proposing team. Site Assessments must be conducted for all category C+ partners and form a key part of the evidence base for the panel. No delivery with a partner may commence without the completion of a satisfactory Site Assessment. Paperwork requirements for the different categories of partner are detailed in the appendix guide.

Where a proposal is submitted to add additional provision at an approved partner where the category of approved provision is different, the highest category of partnership will have primacy in determining the required process. However, a proportionate approach to documentation and processes will be applied and should be discussed as early as possible with the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework team.

Existing, approved partnerships may have additional modules added to their delivery portfolio and this can be done by Faculties in accordance with their module approval processes (see Chapter 4 of the Quality Management Handbook). In considering adding any provision to the partnership the appropriateness and availability of resources (including

staffing) must be confirmed and the current Delivery Plan must also be reviewed to ensure it remains valid for the delivery of any new modules. However, minor programme modifications to franchise or co-delivery programmes should be considered carefully before progression and may require an institutional approval event (depending on the nature and scale of the change). Early advice should be sought from the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework to discuss changes to franchise or co-delivery programmes.

Re-approvals

The Annual Review process serves to renew individual delivery approval arrangements each year and includes the ongoing verification of resources as well as contract contents. All partners with Edge Hill University are approved for a defined period of time which, upon expiry, may be renewed. Standard periods of approval are detailed below, any changes to them requiring consideration via the Annual Process Review:

Table 5: Partner approval periods for category C + arrangements

	Category	Sub-category		Period of Partner Approval
C	**Outreach Supported Learning Centres**	C1	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Education providers (UK)	5 years
		C2	Outreach Supported Learning Centres: Non-education providers (UK)	5 years
		C3	Outreach Supported Learning Centres (Overseas)	5 years
D	**Credit-rating**			5 years
E	**Articulations**	E1	Qualification recognition	5 years
		E2	Qualification recognition with a progression agreement	5 years
F	**Delivery with a third party (including overseas delivery)**	F1	Franchise (single modules)	5 years
		F2	Co-delivery	5 years
		F3	Franchise (whole programmes)	5 years
		F4	Validation	5 years
		F5	Joint awards	5 years
School Direct				5 years

Category C+ partners are approved for a standard five years and, at the point of renewal, may be extended and new contracts issued. Additional delivery approvals may take place at any point however (to add new provision to the partnership) and this extends the partner's approval period by five years. Contracts should be reviewed at their original expiry and re-issued as appropriate but this should not change any agreed delivery arrangements as this would trigger a formal re-approval of the partnership.

Where changes occur to programmes or modules delivered with a partner, a delivery re-approval for individual partnership arrangements may be required. Where no new delivery approvals have been granted, for category C and F only, these partnerships shall be subject to a standalone partner re-approval which looks at all provision delivered with that partner. Reapproval events include all standard documentation, with the addition of student feedback to inform the review.

Where a partnership programme does not recruit its first cohort within 2 years of the intended start date, or recruitment has been suspended for two consecutive cycles, re-commencement of delivery is subject to a formal review by the host Faculty of the Programme Specification and Delivery Plan to identify any changes that may affect delivery, particularly in relation to staffing and resources.

Contractual Arrangements

Final approval of category C+ provision is via panel recommendation to AQEC (validation report) and is contingent on the signing of a formal Contract between the University and partner organisation. For partnerships in category D and E, a straightforward agreement is produced following the approval panel's recommendation and AQEC sign off, to confirm the arrangements agreed for the partnership. A Memorandum of Articulation template is available for Faculties to use to issue to approved category E partners as standard.

For category C, F and School Direct Partners however, a full contract requires completion by Faculties and submission to the partner with relevant schedules. The contractual paperwork should be developed alongside the validation paperwork to ensure continual alignment and the appropriate Departments must be consulted in its development. This includes but is not limited to, Learning Services, Student Recruitment, Academic Registry, Admissions, GQASC and SPPU. Prior to sign-off by AQEC, the final contract and schedules which reflects the final version of documents from the approval event must be signed by all parties.

A standard **Contract** template and guidance for its completion is available on the Academic Partnerships Y Drive. All partnerships must be accompanied by the relevant schedules to the contract. These schedules may be reissued annually or as required by changes without impact on the core contract terms. The Delivery Plan schedule provides the detailed division of responsibilities for each programme or module delivered in partnership and may be updated and reissued where required. Responsibility for co-ordinating the completion of an appropriate contract for academic partnerships resides with the Faculty Partnership Lead, with ultimate responsibility residing with the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Faculty.

Advice for Faculties to support the completion or negotiation of contracts can be sought from colleagues across Edge Hill University, including but not limited to:

Fees and financial terms or clauses	Director of Finance
Staff terms or support	Head of Human Resources
GDPR and data handling	Director of the Strategic Policy and Planning Unit
Curriculum, quality and standards	Director of Governance and Assurance

Learning resources or facilities	Director of Learning Services
Student record or award administration	Head of Academic Registry
Health and safety	Director of Facilities Management

Where internal expertise is exhausted in relation to a contractual query, bespoke legal advice may be authorised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on request.

Delivery operations

Primary responsibility for oversight of the ongoing success of the partnership and its delivery lies with the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, in conjunction with the Faculty Partnership Lead. This includes troubleshooting any delivery issues and liaising closely with the partner. Where multiple programmes are delivered, multiple APLTs may be identified however they must work together and collaborate to complete Annual Reviews and Partner Visits.

Prior to the start of each academic year or term where appropriate, the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor should liaise with the partner and confirm delivery arrangements and details for the coming term. Any emergent issues from the Annual Review, student feedback, site visit reports or external examiner reports should be addressed as soon as possible and reported to the Faculty Partnership Lead. For category F provision the following must be confirmed with the partner prior to delivery each year:

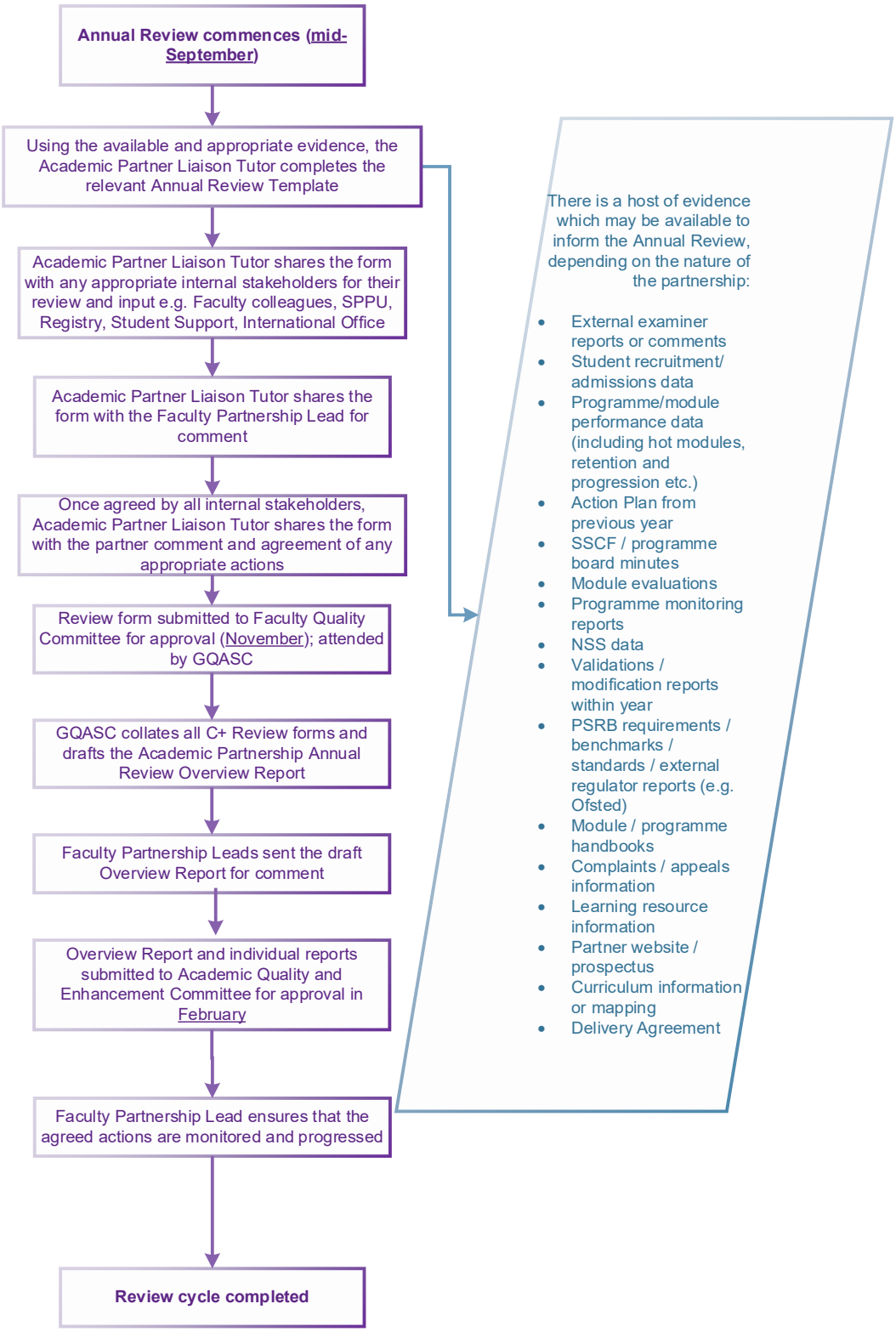
- Details of the teaching team e.g. names and CVs if these have changed (these will require approval by the Faculty Quality Committee)
- Any changes to the curriculum or assessments (the partner should be provided with all of the relevant course materials and specifications)
- Assessment procedures have been set up appropriately and there is clear mutual understanding of how they will operate
- Appropriate student enrolment and induction arrangements are in place

It is the responsibility of the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor to ensure the partner has all of the information they require, as discussed at validation, to deliver any agreed aspects of the Edge Hill curriculum or student experience. Determining processes to support them in this role are the responsibility of the Faculty Partnership Lead.

Annual Review

An Annual Review process operates for all approved partners at category C+ and is required regardless of whether any students have been recruited. The Annual Review of academic partnerships is an opportunity to review and monitor the currency and effectiveness of academic partners and their associated delivery of Edge Hill provision. It serves as a delivery re-approval for individual arrangements with each partner and is separate from the partner's overall approval period (normally five years), although new delivery approvals granted extends the partner approval period in most cases. This process operates in

conjunction with Departmental Annual Monitoring and programme monitoring but is a separate process. The Annual Review provides an opportunity to focus on the performance of both the academic partnership, and the provision delivered within it from the University's perspective and from a student experience and outcomes viewpoint. The process for reviewing category C+ partners is as follows:



The **Annual Review form** completed at the start of each new academic year considers any provision delivered in the previous academic year. This is usually completed by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, with support and input from the Faculty Partnership Lead and any other related Programme Leaders who can provide peer support and review where required. The Annual Review requires the consideration of a host of available evidence as shown above, including external examiner reports[54], retention, recruitment and other performance data, student feedback (formal and informal) and evidence[55].

A Partner Visit by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor shall normally form part of the evidence for annual reviews and is an opportunity to confirm the ongoing currency of facilities as well as discuss performance of the partnership or potential developments.

The Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor should also use the Annual Review exercise to review the programme Delivery Plan to ensure its ongoing appropriateness. Any required changes can be made in agreement with the partner but must not affect the division of approved responsibilities; any major changes would require formal delivery re-approval.

For category F arrangements, the Annual Review also provides a trigger point to consider any partner staffing changes and confirm plans for the upcoming year. The CVs of any new partner staff must be submitted for approval to the relevant Faculty Quality Committee in advance of any delivery in this category.

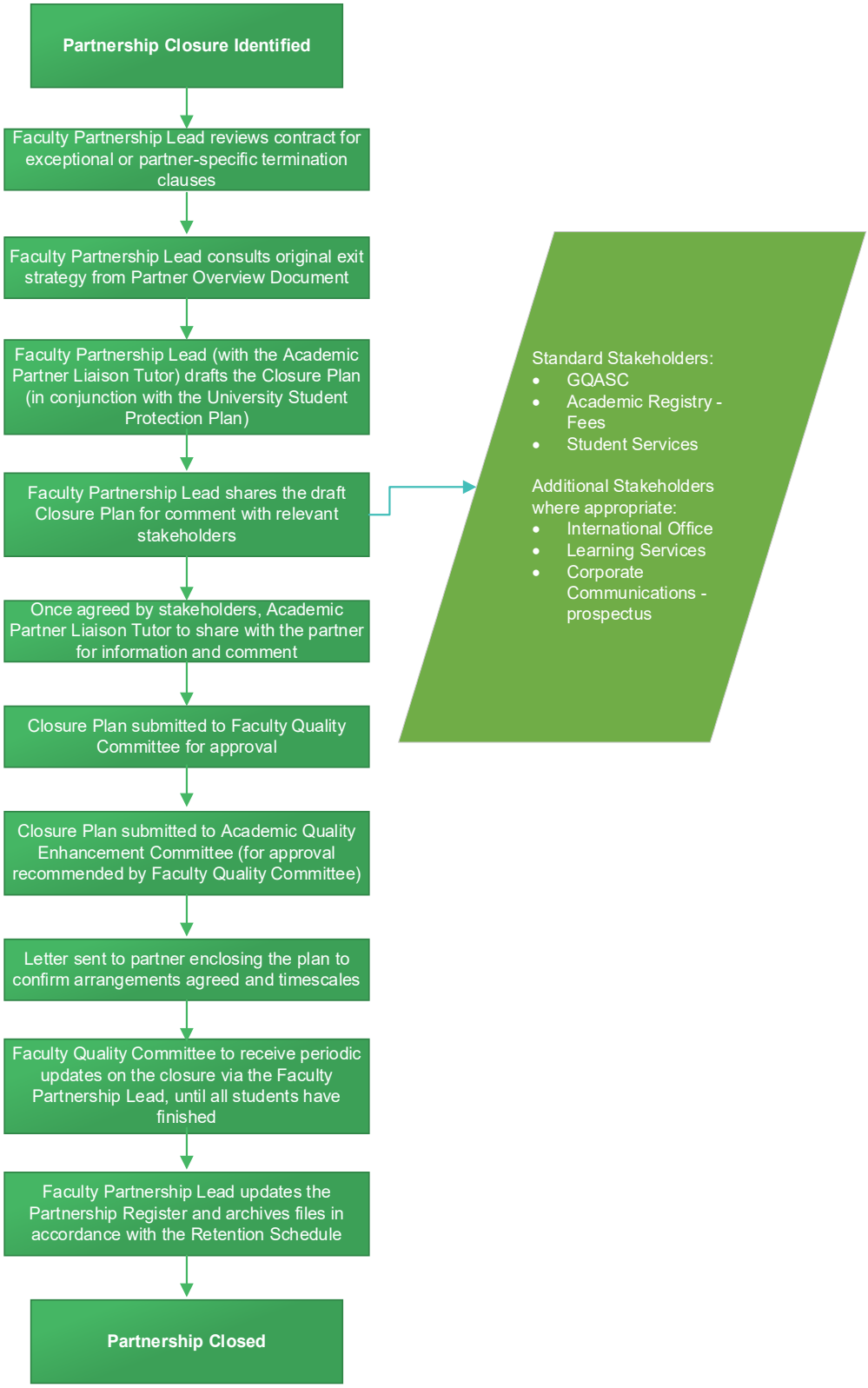
Annual Reviews of more complex and involved arrangements for category F partners, for example those with overseas partners, should be completed collaboratively with key internal stakeholders. This might for example include Academic Registry for reflection on operational matters with the partner over the previous year, GQASC regarding curriculum matters or international strategy, and Learning Services for learning resources and engagement with the partner.

Closure

The standard process for a closure of a category C or F partner is described in the flowchart below:

[54] External examiners are appointed to provision at FHEQ level 5 and above (level 4 for Foundation Degrees) and where a programme is being delivered on multiple sites external examiners differentiate clearly between delivery centres and student cohorts

[55] See the internal standalone Guide to Academic Partnerships for a full list and a process flowchart.



Upon identification of a required closure of either a partnership (and all its associated provision) or specific provision delivered with a partner (where the partnership is to

continue), a **Closure Plan** requires completion for category C+ partnerships[56]. This is normally undertaken by the Academic Partnership Liaison Tutor, with input from other stakeholders from across the University such as Learning Services. This plan is based upon the exit strategy information from the latest available version of the Partner Overview Document, updated with additional details where appropriate. The Closure Plans are developed with consideration of the University Student Protection Plan[57], adherence to Office for Students' Conditions of Registration C1-3 related to student protection[58] and due consideration of the impact on students.

Faculty Quality Committees are responsible for approval of the plan and the ongoing monitoring of any actions identified through closure and teach out (this should remain on the committee's agenda until the final student cohort has completed). The Academic Quality Enhancement Committee also receives the Closure Plans for approval, recommended from the Faculty Quality Committee.

Academic Partnerships which are in closure (i.e. teach-out is ongoing) still require completion of the Annual Review process until the final student cohort has completed.

[56] This Closure Plan is distinct from the standard closure proposal paperwork completed for non-partnership provision.
[57] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/student-protection-plan/.
[58] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/.

Chapter 6
Quality Assurance of Learning and Teaching

Updated October 2021

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 3
QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHING STAFF 4
Responsibilities 4
Staff qualifications and experience 5
Research and scholarly activity 5
Induction, supervision, mentoring and development 6
Teaching Observation and Peer Review 7
Learning and Teaching Fellowship and SOLSTICE Fellowship 9
Categories of Fellowship 9
External Examinerships 11
APPENDIX: Framework for Quality Assurance of Blended and Fully Online Study 12
Aims 12
Content 12
Benchmarks & Foci for reflection 13

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the University's approach to the quality assurance of learning and teaching and is aligned with the Office for Students' (OfS[1]) Regulatory Framework,[2] specifically the B Conditions of Registration for Quality and Standards. The following B Conditions have particular relevance to learning and teaching, in that providers must:

B1 - Deliver well designed courses that provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

B2 - Provide all students, from admission through to completion, with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

This chapter is also informed by the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA[3]) UK Quality Code's supporting Advice and Guidance on Learning and Teaching (November 2018)[4].

The calibre of academic staff and the quality of their practice are pre-conditions for the assurance of quality and standards in higher education. The **Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework** (TEF)[5] aims to incentivise excellent teaching beyond minimum baseline expectations of quality. The OfS uses this Framework to recognise providers that can demonstrate commitment to, and success in, maximising student satisfaction, attainment and employability. The **Statement of Findings**[6] from the **University's TEF Gold award** of June 2017 specifically acknowledged the "professional experience of teaching staff" and a "strategic and embedded institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching, as exemplified by the appointment of University Learning and Teaching Fellows, annual student-led staff awards and the celebration of exceptional teaching at degree ceremonies".

Academic staff are responsible for improving and enhancing their own practice, i.e., the teaching and academic support of students. Academic managers are also accountable to the University for ensuring that the monitoring, review and development of academic staff, both individually and collectively, operate comprehensively, consistently and in an effective way.

---

[1] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/.
[2] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/securing-student-success-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/
[3] www.qaa.ac.uk/.
[4] www.qaa.ac.uk//en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/learning-and-teaching.
[5] See Government White Paper Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice, Department for Business Innovation & Skills (May 2016).
[6] *"Teaching Excellence Framework Year Two: Statement of Findings - Edge Hill University"* (June 2017) www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-outcomes/#/tefoutcomes/provider/10007823.

Academic departments support their staff to experience and deliver good practice through engagement with staff development and appropriate externality, for example membership of academic subject and professional communities, achievement of Higher Education Academy Fellowship[7] and applying for external examiner positions with other higher education providers.

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[8].

Responsibilities

- **All staff** engaged in delivering programmes of study share responsibility for maintaining academic standards and enhancing the quality of students' learning opportunities.
- **Heads of Department** (HoDs) and **Programme Leaders** are accountable to PVC Deans of Faculty for developing and implementing local arrangements for assuring teaching quality.
- **PVC Deans of Faculty** are accountable to the Academic Board[9] for their implementation and ensuring that staff are adequately supported.

Faculties and their departments 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 during pre-entry and induction, and guidance for their transition between academic 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 programme and module surveys, 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, interruption of studies and appeals.

[7] www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/professional-development/edge-hill-university-cpd-scheme-ukpsf/.
[8] https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/humanresources/Forms%2C+Policies+and+Documents.
[9] Via its committees for Learning and Teaching and Academic Quality Enhancement - see Chapter 8.

i) Point of contact for programme-related complaints.
j) Producing programme handbooks and reviewing and updating module and programme specifications and handbooks to reflect curriculum modifications (minor and major).
k) Contributing programme-level evaluation to departmental annual monitoring and Critical Review submissions for periodic review.

Where no single programme leader is in place and the functions of programme leadership are distributed among staff holding specific department-wide responsibilities, e.g., for teaching or the student experience, (a) to (k) should be met collectively by the programme team. Staff participation in department-level committees and workgroups enables good practice to be identified and shared, while Faculty and University committees, the University 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. When considering the profile of programme teams at validation, panels will expect to see a 'critical mass' of individuals with appropriate academic qualifications and previous teaching experience. There is a general expectation that teaching staff are qualified to at least the same level as the qualification they are teaching, if not a level higher. In addition to academic qualifications, it is expected that they will hold a Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship[10], either through completion of the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education[11] or the Institution's HEA-accredited CPD Scheme. Staff may also possess relevant professional qualifications and/ or industry experience which can be a valuable supplement to teaching. For programmes delivered with academic partner organisations, Faculties via their departments are responsible for approving all individuals who teach on modules or programmes that lead to the award of Edge Hill University credit or qualifications[12].

Research and scholarly activity

The Statement of Findings from Edge Hill's TEF Gold award of June 2017 recognised the University's 'consistent student engagement with developments at the forefront of scholarship and practice through research-informed curriculum design'[13]. Staff delivering on programmes leading to Edge Hill awards are expected to maintain their knowledge and

[10] The HEA is now part of 'Advance HE', along with the Equality Challenge Unit and Leadership Foundation, however Fellowships will retain HEA in their titles.
[11] www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/professional-development/.
[12] See Chapter 5.
[13] *"Teaching Excellence Framework Year Two: Statement of Findings - Edge Hill University"* (June 2017) www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-outcomes/#/tefoutcomes/provider/10007823.

understanding of subject-related scholarship and research commensurate with the level of teaching in which they are engaged. For delivery at **FHEQ[14] 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:

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

At **FHEQ 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:

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

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 staff who are inexperienced 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 which also delivers HEA Fellowship (D2). For more established staff, an HEA-accredited CPD Scheme[15] offers the opportunity to acquire Fellowship through demonstration of knowledge, understanding and experience mapped to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) Dimensions of Practice[16]. Staff with demonstrable experience of educational leadership may seek Senior (D3) or Principal (D4) HEA Fellowship, and Edge Hill staff currently include several

[14] Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (QAA, 2014).
[15] www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/professional-development/edge-hill-university-cpd-scheme-ukpsf/.
[16] www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf.

National Teaching Fellows (NTF)[17]. All 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 (part-time) lecturers.

Teaching Observation and Peer Review

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

- Identify good practice for wider dissemination[19].
- Identify poor practice and facilitate its improvement through opportunities for support, challenge and professional development.
- Identify excellent practitioners with potential for further professional development including application for internal Learning and Teaching Fellowship and National Teaching Fellowship and solicit their input to the development of other staff through delivery of CPD seminars and contribution to staff conferences and Learning and Teaching Days.
- Provide evidence to the OfS, QAA, Ofsted[20] and other external agencies including Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies of the University's commitment to enhance learning, teaching, assessment and other practices linked to students' learning.

Observation of teaching is invariably most productive when it is carried out in a developmental fashion by academic peers. It is also most effective in achieving the above aims if it includes all of those who teach students, which may include staff in appropriate learning support roles. It is important that observers have the necessary knowledge and skills to make sound judgements about the quality of teaching and be able to give high-quality and developmental feedback; wherever possible, teaching observation should be constructive with areas of commendation or improvement highlighted. It is not the reviewer's role to tell staff how to teach or to impose their own working methods, but rather to engage in developmental dialogue before and following observation. To make this process effective, training and guidelines should be available to all staff involved in peer review activity.

HoDs are ultimately responsible for teaching quality and staff development. Consequently, their receipt of teaching observation records is valuable both for the advancement of taught provision within the department and for the individual and collective development of staff. **To protect the quality of the students' learning experience**, HoDs use feedback from

[17] www.heacademy.ac.uk/recognition-accreditation/national-teaching-fellowship-scheme-ntfs.
[18] 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 may typically include professional associations, journal publication and conference attendance, etc.
[20] www.ofsted.gov.uk/.

programme/module evaluations, programme/module surveys, external examiner reports[21] and other consultative processes to identify potential risk/s in teaching practices and to initiate a plan of remedial action. HoDs should observe the teaching of all staff, including the compulsory observations required as part of the probation of new staff. All staff teaching or facilitating learning, including associate lecturers and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA), should be involved in teaching observation within the department. To satisfy the University of the quality of teaching undertaken by academic partners (e.g., franchise arrangements[22]), Faculties/departments should routinely review academic partners' teaching observation processes to ensure they remain sufficient or whether additional review mechanisms are required.

Faculties determine their own processes for the operation of teaching observation, however **as a minimum** they must:

a) Have a clear rubric for observation and feedback.
b) Provide access to local or central training for observation.
c) Published timetable for observations so that the process may be monitored by managers.
d) Have systems for capturing the outcomes of the observation and for reporting these to the HoD, with a particular focus on good practice and dissemination.
e) Have mechanisms for reporting generic and specific professional development needs for action by the CLT where they cannot be easily provided locally, or where collaborative support is required.
f) Have processes for disseminating good practice.
g) Have documented arrangements for supporting teachers whose teaching is deemed to be unsatisfactory, which clearly links to the University's performance review process[23].

All staff are contractually obliged to participate in **the University's performance review process**, which is informed by outputs from observed teaching. Managers and academic staff should also ensure that full 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 use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), planning for teaching, assessment and feedback and personal tutoring, all of which make valuable contributions to the enhancement of teaching for learning.

[21] See Chapter 2.
[22] See Chapter 5.
[23] See 'https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/humanresources/Forms%2C+Policies+and+Documents.

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 Fellowship Leads and Senior SOLSTICE Fellowship Leads (see below).

Learning and Teaching Fellowship and SOLSTICE Fellowship

The Learning and Teaching Fellowship and SOLSTICE Fellowship schemes[24] are designed to:

- Recognise and reward excellence in teaching and supporting learning;
- Promote the effective implementation of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy[25]; and
- Enhance the learning of students and staff.

To this end they contribute to the achievement of the six (inter-related) key objectives of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy:

1) The provision of quality learning opportunities, and guidance and support for students/ learners;
2) The improvement of 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) Research into the identification of new learning technologies and the evaluation of their potential to support teaching and learning.
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 CLT. Fellowship Leads are expected to:

- Lead on or participate in staff development sessions and dissemination activities on topics related to learning and teaching;
- Support course teams by providing expert advice on curriculum design and development prior to validation; and,
- Support the work of the CLT.

Categories of Fellowship

Senior Learning and Teaching and Senior SOLSTICE Fellowship Leads are expected to follow Faculty-defined lines of development and scholarly activity during their tenure which are

[24] www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/centre-learning-teaching-clt/fellows/.
[25] www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/about/strategies-and-policies/.

described in their application[26] and related to the foci specified below which may include reference to:

- The University Learning and Teaching Strategy and/ or Information Strategy[27].
- 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 Fellowship Leads develop capacity and capability within their Faculties, identifying and contributing to 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 delegated validation, monitoring and review activities.
- Share information and best practice on developments and approaches via the University's 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.
- 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 *Taught Degrees Framework*[28] 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.

[26] Applications for both Fellowship schemes are invited annually in December and considered by an academic panel.
[27] www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/about/strategies-and-policies/.
[28] http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/centre-learning-teaching-clt/taught-degrees-framework/

- Contribute to the Digital Learning Strategy Group and other institutional fora as appropriate.

External Examinerships

Higher education providers recognise the importance, and mutual benefit, of the work undertaken by many of their staff as external examiners for other institutions. The appointment of University staff as external examiners helps maintain HE sector standards and promote quality enhancement, both for the appointing institution and for the University. Staff, and ultimately the University, benefit from exposure to wider sector practice. The University encourages staff to seek such opportunities and provides specific development[29] for those seeking external examiner positions.

[29] See also www.edgehill.ac.uk/aqdu/external-examiners/.

APPENDIX: Framework for Quality Assurance of Blended and Fully Online Study

Aims

- To support colleagues in designing TEL processes
- To assist assembly of curriculum and to support validation and review processes, particularly where e-learning and/or other technology are essential, integral components of the student learning experience.
- To provide an articulation of the University's position maintaining the security and protection of delivery systems in supporting the student learning experience, including contingencies for failures related to technology.

This document is not exclusively aimed at a specific VLE platform. It relates to various technologies including those that may emerge in the future. Course teams are advised to exercise caution when considering the use of externally hosted social networking technologies, particularly if they are to be essential to the curriculum and learning.

Note: This document should be considered alongside the University's *Baseline: Deployment of Online/Digital Tools to Support Student Learning and Success* and the 'Toolkit' *Moving teaching, learning and student support online* (*https://figshare.edgehill.ac.uk/articles/conference_contribution/Moving_teaching_learning_and_student_support_online/1258225*)

Content

This document sets out Benchmarks & Foci for reflection when planning, validating and reviewing curricula.

- **Curriculum design teams** should consider section 1 during the journey to validation; and,
- **Panels** should use section 1 when considering the validation documentation. This can be achieved through 'interrogation by exception', thus focusing on the aspects of the benchmarks, that may not be clearly articulated in the documentation.

Benchmarks & Foci for reflection

Benchmark 1	Foci for Reflection	Response
Students should have access to: • Documents that set out the respective responsibilities of the awarding Institution and the programme presenter for the delivery of a blended or fully online programme or element of study; • Descriptions of the component units or modules of the 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.	1) In what way has the programme of study been communicated to the student? 2) What information is available to encourage the students to make informed decisions in choosing the blended or fully online approach? 3) Can this programme be undertaken by a student who does not have access to the technology? What arrangements will be made to ameliorate this issue?	What evidence is available to meet the above benchmark? Are there gaps that need consideration?

Benchmark 2	Foci for Reflection	Response
The awarding Institution should ensure that students can be confident that: • Any blended or fully online 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 a blended or fully online 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 and receipt; • Study material, whether delivered through staff of a programme presenter or through web-based or other distribution channels, meet specified expectation of the awarding Institution in respect of the quality of teaching and learning support	1) How have the blended or fully online systems been evaluated to eliminate risk of any 'downtime'? 2) Is there full alignment with the University's position in the event of system failure to ensure continuation of the students' learning? 3) Has checking the security and protection of the student within the blended or fully online systems been undertaken? 4) How has / will the quality of materials be measured in line with the University's aspiration of high quality of teaching and learning? 5) How has the programme been reviewed in its development and what processes are in place for review of online teaching and learning?	What evidence is available to meet the above benchmark? Are there gaps that need consideration?

Benchmark 2	Foci for Reflection	Response
material for a programme or element of study leading to one of its awards and are accessible to those with disabilities; • The educational aims and intended learning outcomes of a programme delivered through blended or fully online arrangements are reviewed periodically for their continuing validity and relevance	6) Are there any deviations from the University's position on this benchmark? If so, why?	

Learner Support

Benchmark 3	Foci for reflection	Response
Prospective students should receive a clear and realistic explanation of the expectations placed upon them for study of a blended or fully online programme or elements of study, and for the nature and extent of autonomous, collaborative and supported aspect of learning.	1) How are the expectations of the mode of study communicated up front to students? 2) How are students inducted to the mode of learning? 3) What approaches are used to adequately prepare the student for degrees of autonomous learning? 4) Are the students made aware of their involvement in any collaborative learning? How?	What evidence is available to meet the above benchmark? Are there gaps that need consideration?

Benchmark 4	Foci for reflection	Response
Students should have access to: • A schedule for any learner support available to them through timetabled activities, for example tutorial session or web-based conferences; • Clear and up to date information about the learning support available to them locally and remotely for their blended or fully online programme or elements of study; • Information that sets out their own responsibilities as learner, and the commitments of the awarding institution and the support provider (if appropriate) for the support of a blended or fully online programme or element of study.	1) How is student support provided? 2) In what way is the learner's responsibility communicated? 3) How is the institution's responsibility mapped out for the student?	What evidence is available to meet the above benchmark? Are there gaps that need consideration?

Benchmark 5	Foci for reflection	Response
Students should have: • From the outset of their study, an identified contact, either local or remote through email, telephone, or other electronic means, 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.	1) What arrangements are made to monitor and feedback to students on their progress? Who are the key contacts and how will this be operated? 2) How do learners' feedback to the programme team about their experience?	What evidence is available to meet the above benchmark? Are there gaps that need consideration?

Benchmark 6	Foci for reflection	Response
The awarding institution, whether or not working through a support provider, should be able to ensue that students can be confident that: • Staff who provide support to learners on blended or fully online programmes have appropriate skills, and receive appropriate training and development; • Support for leaners, whether delivered through staff of a support provide or through web-based or other distribution channels, meets specified expectations of the awarding institution for a programme of study leading to one of its awards.	1) Has the programme team been in receipt of appropriate training and development or has experience which demonstrates its ability to provide a blended or fully online programme? 2) Does student support for blended / fully online learners differ in any way from present in person? If so, why and what support is available? How does this benchmark with support for present in person learners in terms of equity?	What evidence is available to meet the above benchmark? Are there gaps that need consideration?

Assessment of students

Benchmark 7	Foci for reflection	Response
Students should have access to: • Information on the ways in which their achievements will be judged, and the	1) Are the relevant module/programme handbook and regulations	What evidence is available to meet

Benchmark 7	Foci for reflection	Response
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.	made available to students, including details of assessment and associated criteria? 2) How will information on academic performance/feedback be communicated in a timely way? 3) What opportunities for formative and informal feedback will be included?	the above benchmark? Are there gaps that need consideration?

Benchmark 8	Foci for reflection	Response
The awarding institution, whether or not working through a programme presenter or support provider, should ensure that students can be confident that: • Their assessment 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.	1) How is secure exchange of assessed work and feedback achieved with due respect of confidentiality? 2) How is student work authenticated? 3) Are there any deviations from the University's position on this benchmark? If so, why? 4) How have any technology-supported systems outside of core and supported systems for exchange of student work and feedback been evaluated for security and robustness?	What evidence is available to meet the above benchmark? Are there gaps that need consideration?

Chapter 7
Quality Assurance of Assessment

Updated October 2021

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 3
ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES 4
Summative assessment 6
Formative assessment 7
Monitoring and evaluation 7
ASSESSMENT PROCESSES 8
Marking and Moderation 8
Moderation of 'closed' programmes 9
Inclusive Assessment Design and Reasonable Adjustments 10
'Must Pass' and 'Pass/Fail' 11
RECOGNITION OF PRIOR [EXPERIENTIAL] LEARNING 12
STUDENT-INITIATED CREDIT 13
RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF ASSESSED WORK 14
APPENDIX: "Assessment and Feedback: Baseline Expectations to Ensure Good Practices" 16

INTRODUCTION

> "***Assessment is a fundamental aspect of the student experience. Students learn from assessment activities, interact with staff and peers, and gain feedback on their progress and performance. Assessment enables them to reflect and continually build on their learning***." (QAA,2018)

This chapter describes the University's approach to the quality assurance of assessment. The practices described below are aligned with the Office for Students' (OfS[1]) Regulatory Framework,[2] specifically the B Conditions of Registration for Quality and Standards. The following B Conditions have particular relevance to assessment practices, in that providers must:

- **B1** - Deliver well designed courses that provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

- **B4** - Ensure that qualifications awarded to students hold their value at the point of qualification and over time, in line with sector recognised standards.

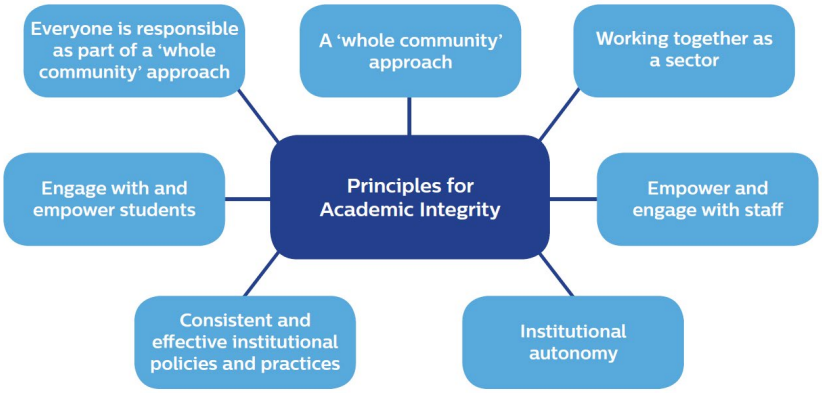
- **B5** - Deliver courses that meet the academic standards as they are described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications at level 4 or higher.

It is also informed by the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA[3]) UK Quality Code's supporting Advice and Guidance on Assessment[4] (Nov, 2018) and is consistent with the University's Assessment Policy[5].

The QAA's **Academic Integrity Charter**[6], provides '*a baseline position upon which to develop policies and practices to ensure that every student's qualification is genuine, verifiable and respected' (QAA, 2020)*. As a signatory, the University has committed to the implementation its seven principles for academic integrity (see Figure 1). These include working with staff, students, and the sector, to protect and promote academic integrity and act against academic misconduct.

[1] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/.
[2] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/securing-student-success-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/
[3] www.qaa.ac.uk/.
[4] www.qaa.ac.uk//en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment.
[5] www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/files/2019/02/Assessment-Policy-Revisions-2019-Definitive-after-LTC.pdf.
[6] https://www.qaa.ac.uk//en/about-us/what-we-do/academic-integrity/charter

Figure 1: Principles for Academic Integrity (QAA, 2020)



Assessment practices at Edge Hill are both *for* and *of* learning. Students' learning is demonstrated through:

- **Formative assessment** - as part of their learning development; and,
- **Summative assessment** - through assessment against Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) leading to the award of academic credit towards an intended qualification award.

Assessment is an integral part of learning and must be closely aligned to:

- The programme / module Aims and Rationale;
- The methods of teaching and learning to be used; and,
- The ILOs to be demonstrated by students at each level of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

In designing assessment activities, tutors must ensure they are aligned to the learning outcomes and will enable their achievement to be measured.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

The University works to develop students' understanding of the purpose and process of assessment – also known as **assessment literacy** - to help them better understand the relationship between intended learning outcomes, assessment (marking) criteria, grades and feedback as a means towards meeting the assessment requirements and improving their own performance.

Programme teams provide detailed information to students about the following:

- **The purpose 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 receive detailed information about the type(s) of assessment they will encounter 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.
- **How to prepare for assessment:** staff ensure that all students receive advice and guidance on how to prepare for assessment and that no student is disadvantaged by unavoidable absence from any taught session in which such guidance and support is offered.
- **The assessment criteria to be used in judging students' work:** students are made aware of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria that will be used to indicate the standard they have achieved. They are also advised of any penalties for incorrect spelling, grammar or academic referencing[7]. 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[8].
- **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 incurred for poor or non-attendance unless participation is assessed through specific activities, e.g., assessed seminars, or is referenced explicitly within the intended learning outcomes[9].
- **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 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,

[7] See *'Assessment of Academic Referencing Policy'* at www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/files/2012/02/Assessment-of-referencing-policy-FINAL-17Oct12.pdf.
[8] Available via www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/.
[9] For example, where minimum attendance is necessary to meet professional standards and/ or Fitness to Practise requirements.

duration and location for examinations is set. Conventional exams are subject to invigilation controls. Non-attendance at an examination is awarded a zero mark.

- **Arrangements and procedures for computer-based examinations, Time Limited Assessments online (TLAs):** where applicable, students (and staff) are made cognizant of current University policy on computer-based exams as set out in the Academic Regulations[10]. Computer-based exams may be subject to proctoring controls.
- **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. Where in exceptional circumstances the turn-round time will exceed 4 weeks, staff ensure that students receive advance notification.
- **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[11] and the way in which appeals will be handled.
- **Explanation of the processes in place to ensure assessment is fair:** For example, how assessment strategies are validated, the internal moderation process, external examination, monitoring and evaluation).

Summative assessment

Programme teams are responsible for deciding the form, volume and timing of assessment in modules and programmes which are considered and approved at validation. Summative assessment strategies typically comprise:

- Coursework - *Written assignment, including essay; report; project; dissertation; portfolio.*
- Written examination
- Practical skills assessment - *Oral assessment and presentation; viva voce examination; clinical skills assessment (OSCE).*

Information on assessment collected at validation also supports the production of programme publicity, e.g., print and online prospectus, and compilation of external data returns including the University's submission for Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) assessment.

[10] See *Academic Regulations*, Appendix 5, available via www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/.
[11] See *Academic Regulations*, Appendix 22, available via www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/.

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. Draft examination papers[12] are approved by the external examiner who may also review draft coursework specifications by agreement with the programme team.

Departments have procedures to ensure there is no inadvertent overlap between specific tasks of different modules of the same programme, or between coursework and examination questions in the same module.

Formative assessment

All assessment, including summative assessment, may be considered to have formative elements and programme validation requires teams to demonstrate and explain their strategies for formative experiences - a key element of 'assessment *for* learning'. The formative value is greater when coupled with highly **developmental feedback**, however formative experiences should go further and help students understand the nature of assessment, what it is for and how it works. Programme teams demonstrate at validation how formative experiences have been incorporated into modules. The Taught Degrees Framework wiki[13] contains a number of useful links and exemplars for course developers, 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 assessment criteria are used.

Where examples of former students' work are utilised for formative purposes, these will in all cases be anonymised and the explicit permission of the authors obtained in line with the University's Intellectual Property Policy.

The University has approved a set of minimum baseline expectations in relation to assessment and feedback for use by course teams and validation and review panels which is provided in the Appendix.

Monitoring and evaluation

Module evaluation and annual programme monitoring[14] provide opportunities to reflect on the inclusiveness and general fitness-for-purpose of all teaching, learning and assessment

[12] For modules at Level 5 and above but also including Level 4 for Foundation Degrees - see Chapter 2.
[13] https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/ufr/Home.
[14] See Chapter 3.

activities. Terms of reference for assessment boards include the specific evaluation of assessment in modules exhibiting low first-time pass rates.

ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

Marking and Moderation

Assessment criteria are used to classify student achievement of ILOs above (and below) threshold (pass) standard, i.e., 40%. Programme teams use the **Outcome Classification Descriptions for FHEQ Level 6 (Annex D)**[15] to 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). Separate criteria are developed for each FHEQ level (4 to 7). Use of assessment criteria should be transparent within the assessment process enabling students, internal moderators and external examiners to see clearly how marking 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 determined 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. While there is no Institutional requirement, departments determine whether to adopt blind marking for other forms of assessment, although it is recognised that some forms of practical assessment, such as performance and presentations, will often exclude this possibility. Where new staff (including associate lecturers) join a programme team and are inexperienced in assessment, Module/ Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of, understand and utilise the assessment criteria effectively. Such programme teams are advised to moderate all, or a high proportion of, less experienced staff's assessments (see below). Support for staff inexperienced in assessment is available from the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT).
- **Second marking** is a process for reviewing and confirming marks as a prelude to internal moderation (below). **Unlike moderation, second-marking is not compulsory across all assessed pieces of work** but may be used where departments 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 to test for consistent application of the assessment criteria across the range of marks displayed by a cohort. Moderation uses sampling[16] to confirm that the profile of marks is appropriate. The

[15] www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/annex-d-outcome-classification-descriptions-for-fheq-level-6-and-fqheis-level-10-degrees.pdf?sfvrsn=824c981_10.

[16] For Institutional guidance on the range and size of moderation samples, see *'Marking and Moderating Assessed Work'* at www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/files/2013/01/MarkingModeratingAssessedWork.pdf.

moderator(s) review 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 with precise numerical scores. 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 the 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's work. **Moderators are mindful of the impact of changing individual marks during the process on the rest of the cohort and this should not occur.** Evidence of a record of moderation must be present and made available to external examiners. The record must document the moderation process and lessons learned in relation to teaching, learning and assessment that may enhance the next cycle of learning. Discussions between marking tutors and moderators also consider the appropriateness of assessment, and assessment criteria.

Following internal moderation, all internally-moderated work is sent to **the external examiner** for further sampling sufficient to confirm that, in their expert opinion, academic standards are being set appropriately and that students are achieving them[17]. Module Assessment Boards are convened to consider students' marks and make recommendations to Progression and Award Boards[18] according to specifications set out in the University's Academic Regulations (sections H & I)[19].

Moderation of 'closed' programmes

The process for programme closure as detailed in Chapter 4 of this Handbook involves a Faculty proposal to the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC)[20] confirming termination of recruitment, the date by which the final full- and/or part-time cohorts complete and the arrangements in place to maintain the quality of the student experience. **During the closure period, programmes remain subject to the full range of quality assurance processes** including annual monitoring, external examining, periodic review and any minor / major modifications deemed necessary to maintain academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities. Following completion of the final cohort, any individual students trailing referred assessment are covered by existing procedures which require their work to be internally moderated only. There is no requirement for external moderation. on the basis that constructing a meaningful sample in such circumstances is likely to be impractical[21].

In some cases, **repeating students or students who have had an interruption to their studies return to study** after their programme has ceased delivery. In such circumstances the

[17] See Chapter 2.
[18] See Chapter 8.
[19] Available via www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/.
[20] See Chapter 8.
[21] See Chapter 2, 'Roles and Responsibilities'.

University supports them to complete the awards on which they were initially registered, through either:

1. Continuing on their original modules where these remain in delivery for other programmes; and/or
2. Undertaking alternative subject modules that demonstrably meet the Programme Learning Outcomes of their intended award; and/or
3. Negotiating Student-Initiated Credit[22] that demonstrably meets the Programme Learning Outcomes of their intended award.

In each of the above three scenarios, normal external examiner arrangements apply.

In a very small number of cases where students are required to **repeat without attendance** after module delivery has ceased, they remain registered on their original modules for assessment only and there is generally no requirement for external moderation (although internal moderation is still undertaken). Nevertheless, Faculties may seek the involvement of an external examiner where this felt to be both *proportionate and productive*, most notably where there are enough students to generate a meaningful 'cohort' for moderation purposes and/or where the assessment makes a significant contribution to the student's intended award, e.g., final year Dissertation or Extended Project. In such cases, the Faculty has the option of:

- Retaining the outgoing external examiner (with an Extension of Office where required and available); or
- Extending the duties of an examiner of a similar or cognate programme of the same department; or
- Appointing a separate examiner (time-limited appointment).

Inclusive Assessment Design and Reasonable Adjustments

Teaching and learning activities are influenced by University policies and UK legislation[23] 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 student group. Course designers take steps to identify and resolve any barriers and biases in respect of a proposed programme's content, learning activities, learning outcomes and assessment strategy. For example, consideration may be given to how students with a sensory impairment will access learning materials resulting in adaptations to the materials or how and when they are made available. Similar consideration must be given to assessment so that it is accessible to all students. A range of teaching and assessment methods also helps accommodate students' varying learning styles and preferences. The provision of academic and personal support also considers the diverse needs of students.

The University subscribes to inclusive assessment practices, ensuring that assessment is designed in a way that meets the needs of all students, including those studying at different

[22] See Academic Regulations s. C3.9.
[23] Equality Act (EQA) 2010 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents.

locations, via different modes of study (blended or online) and those possessing one or more protected characteristics. Inclusion 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'[24].

Programme approval (validation) panels judge the extent to which inclusion has been considered within the curriculum design process in relation to student characteristics that may include:

- Age, e.g. school-leaver or mature returner to study
- Gender, including sexual orientation and gender-identification
- Ethnicity, including faith or belief systems and cultural values
- Socio-economic background, including first-time HE participation
- Entry qualifications, e.g. A-level, BTEC, T-Levels, Access/ Fastrack; no formal qualifications/ RPEL
- Disability and/ or specific learning difficulties.

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. Students are requested to consult their tutors or the University's Inclusive Services[25] team before making an application for Faculty approval. In the case of alternative assessments, the choice of substitute is determined by the module leader on condition that it (i) meets the validated module learning outcomes for that particular element of assessment (and any professional body requirements); (ii) is confirmed with the external examiner[26]; and (iii) is verified by the responsible Programme Leader or Head of Department.

'Must Pass' and 'Pass/Fail'

The University's Academic Regulations permit the award of credit where the aggregation of marks obtained within a module is 40% or higher[27]. Designating an individual assessment element as ***Must Pass***[28] means that the student will not progress in the module unless the mark achieved in that element is at least 40 irrespective of the final module mark, e.g. a student with an aggregated module score of 50 would fail the module if they scored below 40 in the Must Pass element. Must Pass is normally reserved for the assessment of core (professional) competencies that are integral to a qualification award and can either be *weighted*, i.e. make a x% contribution to the overall module score, or *unweighted* (0% contribution) as justified at validation. Where used, Must Pass elements should be clearly

[24] www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/files/2019/02/Assessment-Policy-Revisions-2019-Definitive-after-LTC.pdf.
[25] www.edgehill.ac.uk/inclusiveservices/.
[26] For modules that would normally require external examination, typically at FHEQ level 5 and above but with some additional exceptions – see Quality Management Handbook Chapter 2 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/02-external-examiners.pdf.
[27] See *Academic Regulations* H3.6. However, a separate process of *condonement* may be used to compensate students for marginal failure of a module – see section H11 of the Regulations.
[28] Requires justification at programme validation.

identified as such under Additional Assessment Information in the module specification template (E-VAL).

Designating an assessment element ***Pass/Fail*** means that the student is awarded a mark of *either* 100 or 0. Because this is a binary judgement and there is no grading involved, Pass/Fail should be used where task completion against the intended learning outcomes, rather than degree of performance is being measured. Examples may include the submission of an essay plan or small research proposal. Assessment is weighted in the normal manner and because of the potential to 'skew' the aggregated module mark Pass/Fail elements will normally carry a low weighting, e.g. 10% contributing only 10 or 0 marks to the overall module grade. Pass/Fail elements should be clearly identified as such under Summative Assessment in the module specification template (E-VAL).

Whilst they are different and treated separately, it is possible for an assessment element to be specified *both* 'Must Pass' *and* 'Pass/Fail' – for example, a clinical skills test could be designated Must Pass with a Pass/Fail mark of either 100 or 0 (either weighted or unweighted).

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR [EXPERIENTIAL] LEARNING

The University's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy[29] acknowledges that learning may occur in a wide variety of settings and facilitates the formal recognition of such learning, whether based on previous academic qualifications or on learning derived from personal or professional experience gained outside any formal educational setting. Learning recognised in this way can be used towards meeting the entry requirements for an Edge Hill programme, or for 'entry with advanced standing' where one or more modules is exempted up to a permitted credit threshold[30]. Individuals seeking to have their prior learning recognised, access processes for the consideration of RPL claims which are described in Faculty Quality Statements[31], and where credit is being assigned for experiential learning, this is normally through the assessment of a portfolio demonstrating alignment with learning outcomes (see Table 1).

RPEL claimants receive support and guidance in producing their portfolios, and initial assessment is by a member of Faculty staff other than the designated support tutor. External examiners[32] review a sample of portfolios, negotiated with the department/ Faculty, which is typically larger than for modules that are conventionally delivered and assessed. Ultimate responsibility for the assessment of RPEL claims resides with the appropriate Faculty assessment board.

[29] Academic Regulations Appendix 4, available via www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/.
[30] See Academic Regulations s. C7.10.
[31] See Chapter 1.
[32] See Chapter 2.

Table 1: Portfolio assessment process in support of RPL claims

Claimant's details:	Description
Curriculum Vitae:	
Current job description:	This should be included only if the claim is for learning from work that includes, or is relevant to, the claimant's current post. Where no formal job description exists the claimant should develop his or her own job description.
The Claim:	This should state the learning outcomes achieved, the level and volume of credit being claimed and (for advanced entry) any modules from which exemption is being sought.
Evidence of Learning Achievement:	This should comprise the primary documentary evidence adduced by the claimant in their Reflective Account (below).
Reflective Account:	This should be explicitly cross-referenced to (and evaluate) the learning outcomes and the evidence of learning achievement. Length, content and style should be appropriate to the volume and level of credit being claimed. The account should demonstrate that the student has engaged with the relevant academic literature and be properly referenced. It should be produced in anticipation of the criteria against which the claim for credit will be assessed which will include its: • *Validity*: the match between the evidence presented and the learning achieved; • *Sufficiency*: sufficient volume and breadth of evidence, including reflection, to demonstrate the achievement of all the outcomes claimed; • *Authenticity*: the evidence must be clearly related to the applicant's own efforts and achievements (independent verification may be specified); • *Currency*: demonstrating that what is being assessed is current learning.

STUDENT-INITIATED CREDIT

Students who fail a module after initial re-assessment[33] can substitute another module[34] or undertake a negotiated learning module for the award of Student-Initiated Credit. Student-Initiated Credit is also available for students whom an assessment board has permitted to transfer from an Ordinary degree to an Honours degree[35]. Proposals for Student-Initiated

[33] Note: module substitution is not permitted following a second failed re-assessment.
[34] Up to 40 credits may be substituted subject to ensuring consistency with the validated programme learning outcomes and that any modules designated 'core' to the programme/award are not substituted. See Academic Regulations section H12.8.
[35] Academic Regulations section I4.6.

Credit are considered and approved by Faculties using the process described in their Faculty Quality Statements[36] and are supported by learning agreements which typically include:

1. The student's name, department and the programme/year on which they are enrolled.
2. The rationale for Student-Initiated Credit.
3. The code, title and credit value of the module to be replaced and the code, title and credit value of the replacement module[37].
4. The proposed module content, intended learning outcomes and assessment that have been negotiated between the student and tutor, and how the module learning outcomes align with the programme learning outcomes for the justification of a student's award.
5. Submission date for assessment.
6. Signatures of the tutor and student indicating their agreement of the negotiated learning.
7. External examiner's approval[38].
8. Signature of the approving authority, e.g., PVC Dean or Associate Dean of Faculty or chair of the relevant Faculty committee.

RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF ASSESSED WORK

The University's Retention Records Schedule (Staff and Student Records, 2018) contains the following guidance on the procedure and timelines for the retention and disposal of assessed student work:

Record Category	Retention Period	Rationale	Notes
Examination scripts	Level 4: Confirmation of Level 4 Results + 1 year All other levels: Termination of relationship with student + 1 year.	To allow for disputes to be resolved.	
Assessed work (other than examination scripts). Including dissertations, that counts towards the final award	Termination of relationship with student + 1 year.	Best practice	Retention period applies only when the assessment is retained by the University. Assessed work may be returned to students at any stage providing marking/ moderation/ sampling processes are complete. Departments may be required to retain samples for audit purposes[39]. Retention in these cases will be dictated

[36] See Chapter 1.
[37] Which may be a validated 'shell module' of the appropriate level and credit value containing generic learning outcomes to which the negotiated content and assessment are applied.
[38] For Student-Initiated Credit at level 5 and above.
[39] For example, by Ofsted or as required by individual Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.

Record Category	Retention Period	Rationale	Notes
			by the requirements of the audit. It is advised that externally examined samples and associated reports are stored for ease of retrieval. Samples may be retained indefinitely as 'exemplars' where the author gives consent.
PhD theses	May retain indefinitely	Best practice	

APPENDIX: "Assessment and Feedback: Baseline Expectations to Ensure Good Practices"

The processes of Assessment Design – Quality Management and Enhancement

1. Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria and tasks will be designed to match the level of higher education study. These will be checked by internal and external experts from this and another university when a programme is validated, or when significant modifications are made.
2. Marks are based on how well students perform against the Learning Outcomes and against specific Criteria for an individual assessment, or against generic Criteria for specific assessment types at that level.
3. Assessment tasks (including coursework, examinations, presentations etc. for levels 5, 6 & 7 and 4, 5 for Foundation Degrees) will also be checked and approved by an External Examiner before they can be used.
4. Tutors' marking will be checked by other tutors as part of Assessment Moderation sampling, to make sure it is fair and consistent. **A moderation record will be kept for each sampling**, indicating the nature of the sample, those involved, and any lessons learned which may enhance future learning, teaching and assessment.
5. This will be followed by further scrutiny by External Examiner/s who also check fairness, that standards are appropriate, and that feedback is of high quality.

Student Support and Development of Assessment Literacy

6. Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria will be explained in detail. These will be provided for students in a handbook.
7. The Programme Handbook will contain a schedule and instructions for submitting work and the date on which feedback will be received.
8. Teaching will include guidance and preparation for assessment (i.e. Formative Assessment). Tutors will explain how assessment works for each type of assessment that students will encounter. This will be in good time, before students experience that assessment type.
9. Students will be shown examples of assessment, feedback and grades awarded so that they get a sense of 'what matters.'
10. Tutors will provide opportunities to discuss assessment during teaching. The Personal Tutor will also act as a source of guidance.

Feedback and Communications

11. Students will receive feedback specifically constructed to explain in detail how grades have been awarded and how well the Learning Outcomes have been met against the Assessment Criteria.
12. Feedback will be developmental, giving specific advice for the future. It will be provided in a timely way (within 4 working weeks) in accordance with the schedule set down in the Programme Handbook.

13. Where feasible, work will be submitted via the VLE and feedback returned via the VLE. Students should be asked to consider Learning Outcomes and Assessment criteria prior to submitting to maximise the quality of their work before submission.
14. Any unforeseen delays in feedback will be communicated immediately to students and a confirmed date set for receipt. If a delay is anticipated, contingency measures will be pursued to ensure the original deadline is met.
15. Students will be given an opportunity to discuss feedback with a tutor, individually or as a group. Feedback on examinations will be discussed with the whole group (similar to an examiner's report on strengths and areas for further development)

Fairness in Assessment

In conclusion, it is important that students understand that assessment is a fair process and should know how we underpin that with integrity and accountability. The following messages should be reinforced as part of student inductions each year:

- When we create a programme, learning outcomes and assessment criteria are carefully designed to match the level of your study. These are checked by external experts from another university.
- Assessment tasks (coursework, exams, presentations etc.) are also checked and approved by an external examiner from another university before they can be used.
- Marks are based on how well you perform against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. They are focused solely on the quality of your work and are not a comparison or competition with other students' work.
- A process called assessment moderation makes sure marking/grading is fair and consistent. This involves tutors having their marking/grading checked for fairness and consistency by other tutors, followed by further scrutiny by external examiners.

This helps us ensure our standards are appropriate and our feedback is of high quality.

For further guidance on Assessment and Feedback see:

www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/assessment-policy-2019.pdf.

Professor Mark Schofield, October 2021.

Chapter 8
Academic Governance

Updated October 2021

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 4
Committee Structure 5
Roles and responsibilities 6
Secretariat 6
Role of the Committee Chair 6
Responsibilities of the Chair 6
Chair's action 7
Role of the Committee Secretary 7
Responsibilities of the Secretary 8
Committee roles 9
Responsibilities of committee members 9
Categories of committee membership 10
Guidance on appointing members 12
Election protocols 13
Student representation 14
Link Governor Scheme 14
Committee operations 15
Committee effectiveness and review 15
Annual Reports 15
Annual Process Review 15
Declaration of Interest 15
Identifying a conflict 15
Process for handling declarations 16
Business Planning 16
Communication 16
Guidance 17
Secretarial conventions 17
Agendas 17
Committee Abbreviations 17
Item Numbering 18
Document Numbering 19
Minutes and action recording 19

Recording Attendance 20
Decisions 20
Information Governance 20
Closed business 21
Retention 21
Guidance for committee report authors 22
Terms of Reference and Membership 24
Academic Board 24
Honorary Awards Committee (HAC) 27
Academic Planning Committee 29
Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC) 31
External Examiners Sub-Committee (EESC) 33
Progression and Award Boards 35
Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) 37
Student Experience Sub-Committee (SESC) 39
Employability Sub-Committee (EMS) 41
Regulations Review Sub-Committee (RRSC) 43
Research and Innovation Committee (RIC) 44
University Research Ethics Sub-Committee (URESC) 46
Human Tissue Management Sub-Committee (HTMSC) 47
Graduate School Board of Studies (GSBOS) ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Graduate School Board of Studies Research Student Experience Sub group ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Faculty Boards 50
Faculty Committees 51
Programme/Subject Boards 52
Student-Staff Consultative Fora 54

INTRODUCTION

Successful higher education providers are characterised by a full and mutually respectful partnership between academic and non-academic members of their communities who individually and collectively take full responsibility for maintaining the standards of their awards and the quality and enhancement of students' learning opportunities.

This also extends to the participation of students in line with the Core Practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education which state that higher education providers 'actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience'[1].

The effectiveness of the procedures set out elsewhere in this Handbook is ultimately dependent on the University's arrangements for academic governance and in particular, the activities of Academic Board and its committees[2]. The committee structure has been designed to secure the accountability of all staff, groups and committees within the University to one another as well as to external stakeholders and sits alongside the Institution's management and executive structure which is subject to the ultimate authority of the Board of Governors.

As outlined in the Articles of Government, Academic Board determines its own procedures and these are approved by the Board of Governors.

This chapter describes and explains the structure, remits, constitutions and individual roles of Academic Board, its committees and members. In addition to clear and complete terms of reference and relevant and appropriate memberships, an effective committee structure depends upon the efficient management of committee business and a commitment on the part of all members to critical engagement, free expression and the civilities of challenging but constructive and open debate.

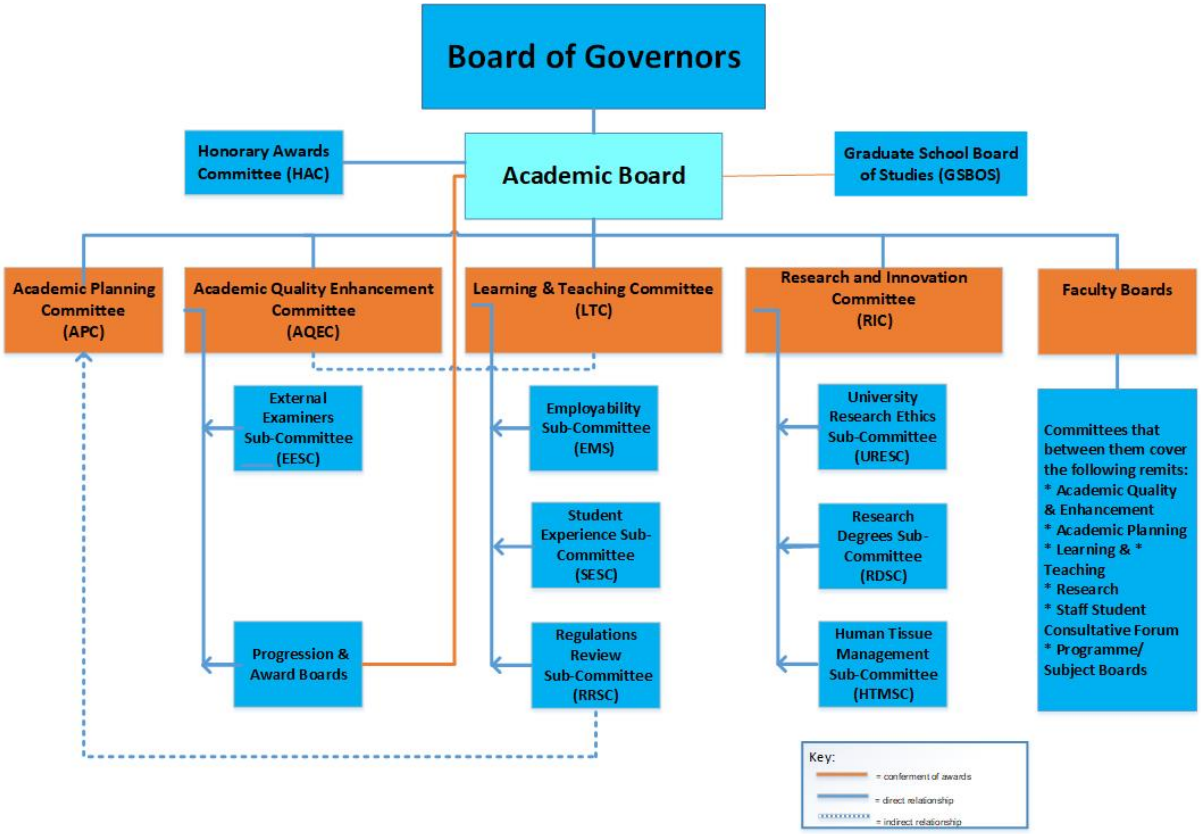
Alternate representation is permitted for most Academic Board committees unless otherwise stated in the Committee Constitution and Membership, or within the Standing Orders. If a Committee member is unable to attend a meeting, they are able to identify an alternate to attend the meeting in their absence. It is desirable that where possible, alternates are identified and attend the meeting to ensure that meetings remain quorate. In the case of elected academic representation from Faculties on Academic Board, provision has been made for one alternate elected member to deputise for elected members when they are unable to attend.

[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/revised-uk-quality-code-for-higher-education.pdf?sfvrsn=4c19f781_8.

[2] Agendas, papers and confirmed minutes of Academic Board and its sub-committees may be accessed in the central repository folders at: Y:\Everyone\Academic Board Committees (EHU staff login required)

Committee Structure

The academic governance committee structure is as follows:



Faculty Boards have the ability to constitute appropriate sub-committees to support the operation of their business. Where these sub-committees have formal reporting lines into Faculty Board (whether direct or indirect through another parent committee) they are to be considered as statutory committees for the purpose of information governance guidelines.

Roles and responsibilities

Secretariat

The secretariat for the academic governance structure is provided by the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework team, with support from other areas for a limited number of specialist committees which are serviced by Faculties, Academic Registry and the Research Office. The Secretariat is responsible for:

- Publishing the annual schedule of committee meetings, ensuring appropriate alignment to the Board of Governors calendar and flow of business between committees and their sub-committees.
- Co-ordinating the Annual Process Review for Chapter 8 of the Quality Management Handbook, including reviewing committee membership and terms of reference in conjunction with the committees.
- Running annual elections for representatives across the committee structure.
- Maintaining central committee membership records, monitoring expiry dates for appointed members as appropriate.
- Updating the Standing Orders annually, for submission and approval by Academic Board.
- Delivering relevant training and briefing sessions related to academic governance and committee operations.

Role of the Committee Chair

These are either ex officio[3] posts or appointed by Academic Board or a designated sub-committee. Chairs work closely with secretaries to ensure that committee business is planned and managed appropriately. All committee/sub-committee/group Chairs will also normally be members of any parent committees. Chairs are able to access shadowing or mentoring from other experienced Chairs if required, and guidance to support them in their role can be provided by the secretariat.

Responsibilities of the Chair

The primary function of the committee Chair is to manage the meeting effectively through creating an environment conducive to good discussion. Chairs are also responsible for:

- ensuring that all members who wish to participate in a discussion are enabled to do so;
- providing such information as may have a bearing on the debate and which is not commonly available;
- the clarification of the actual issue under debate;
- advising on the legality of debate in terms of the type of business deemed to be "in order " for the meeting to discuss, and whether debate of resolution is allowable under the Standing Orders;
- providing any requisite rulings on points of order or directions regarding procedure
- Ensuring well-defined outcomes and decisions from meeting discussions.
- Encouraging debate which leads to clear and positive outcomes.

[3] Such positions are held 'by virtue of the office', rather than by the individual in their own right.

- Providing leadership within meetings and steering discussions where appropriate.
- Managing the committee's effectiveness, including good time management.
- Remaining appraised of the latest issued Standing Orders.
- Maintaining a strong relationship with the committee Secretary, providing support if required[4].
- Keeping their knowledge of the committee's function up to date.
- Appointing Chairs of any sub-committees under their Committee, and a Deputy Chair where required.
- Reporting to the relevant 'parent' committee to provide updates on the business, decisions and operations of their committee[5].

A member may request that the Chair rules on a point of order, or ask that a relevant regulation be read or for any other information that they considers pertinent to the subject or procedure.

The Chair may freely contribute their personal opinions to a debate, but if they wish to propose, second or oppose a motion, they must appoint a temporary Chair to preside until the business is completed, including the voting on any motion they may have introduced. The Chair then resumes office and continues with the meeting.

Chair's action
As agreed in the Standing Orders, where deemed necessary, the Chair may take decisions and make approvals outside of scheduled committee meetings (usually related to category A agenda items exclusively). Chair's action should be taken on an exceptional basis and requires advance discussion with the committee Secretary. Where possible, Chairs should seek comments from the broader committee membership to inform any approval given via Chair's action. For transparency, any Chair's Action taken is reported at the next meeting for comment by the Members. A log of Chair's action taken is also maintained by the Secretary and this is reported on within the committee's Annual Report to monitor the appropriateness of Chair's action taken.

Deputy Chair
Some committees have a constituted Deputy Chair to deal with items where there may be a conflict of interest for the Chair, or where they are unavailable. Other committees may designate a Deputy Chair for individual meetings or specific items as required and appointed by the Chair.

Role of the Committee Secretary
Committee Secretaries provide a vital role in effective academic governance, providing expert and proactive support to committees. Secretaries are required to take ownership of the business of their committee, developing expert knowledge to support the committee's

[4] This includes agreeing the agenda, making decisions on authors/speakers, reviewing and approving draft minutes and challenging members where required (such as with persistent none attendance or late paper submission).
[5] The minutes of the 'child' committee should be submitted to the 'parent' committee where available. Where this is not possible, a verbal update should be provided at the meeting by the Chair instead.

operation and good decision making. Building a good relationship with the Chair is also essential for this role, tailoring approaches and styles where possible.

Secretaries are required to have a strong understanding of academic governance procedures, including the Standing Orders, providing advice upon operational matters where required by the committee or Chair.

Committee secretaries are generally allocated by the Secretariat, with specific exceptions for specialist committees with different requirements. The institutional membership spreadsheet outlines where these responsibilities reside for each Secretary role.

Responsibilities of the Secretary
Secretaries are also responsible for specific, operational tasks, including:

- Generating draft agendas, informed by the committee business plan, their expert knowledge, and through suggestions from committee members and wider stakeholders.
- Circulating meeting information and papers in good time for meetings.
- Disseminating actions as soon as possible following committee meetings, following up relevant actions where required.
- Producing accurate and concise minutes promptly within ten working days of committee meetings.
- Escalating issues to the Chair where appropriate[6].
- Co-ordinating requests for Chair's Action where appropriate.
- Liaising with committee paper authors, advising on agenda categorisation and other relevant matters.
- Producing the Annual Report and Business Plan for the committee.
- Advising the committee and the Chair on procedural matters, including the operation of closed business and declarations of interest[7].
- Adhering to appropriate information governance requirements, including ensuring appropriate data protection arrangements are in place for the distribution and destruction of committee papers[8] and handling matters of closed business appropriately[9];

Training for secretaries of Academic Board committees is available on request and details can be found on the Academic Governance WIKI pages[10]. Shadowing and mentoring opportunities are available for new secretaries where required.

[6] Examples where this may be appropriate could be the repeated non-attendance by key committee members, or other matters which may affect the effective operations of the committee.
[7] Further information is available elsewhere in this Chapter and within the Standing Orders.
[8] For any additional operational guidance please contact Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework.
[9] See section 4.1 for further guidance.
[10] https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/governance (EHU staff login required).

Committee roles

The fundamental responsibilities which are shared by all members of the University are to respect the authority (as set out in their terms of reference) of Academic Board and its committees; comply with action requirements; submit papers and agenda items to deadline and in accordance with the relevant Standing Orders; and to ensure that the views and experience of themselves, their colleagues and of students are adequately represented at and by the relevant committees.

The last of these can be met in a variety of ways which may include standing for election to a committee; encouraging colleagues and students to stand for election; participating in ballots for elections; attending a committee as an observer; submitting agenda items and papers for consideration by a committee; and providing feedback to Chairs, secretaries or the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework team on the effectiveness of the University's deliberative committee structure.

The Vice-Chancellor has right of attendance at any University Committee/Sub-Committee or Working Group.

Responsibilities of committee members

All members of institutional committees are expected to actively engage with their allocated committee(s) and their responsibilities include:

- Attending all meetings where possible, providing advance apologies where unavoidable[11].
- Suggesting items of business for the committee to consider and engaging with the call for agenda items issued in advance of the meeting.
- Reading the distributed paperwork in advance of the meeting and preparing questions and comments.
- Presenting designated items at the meeting.
- Maintaining strict confidentiality for items of closed business or at closed Committees e.g. External Examiners Sub-Committee.
- Disseminating relevant information or decisions to their Faculty or Department.
- Updating the Secretary regarding any role or contact information changes.
- Providing feedback on committee operations and engaging with the annual committee effectiveness review
- Engaging with training and guidance available to support committee members.
- Disclosing any matters which may fall under the requirement for Declaration of Interest.
- Ensuring the appropriate consideration for issues of equality and diversity, especially where matters of approval are considered[12].

[11] Members are also able to send an appropriate representative to attend on their behalf. For more information please contact the Secretary.

[12] In policy development, decisions and resolutions, matters of equality and diversity are considered where relevant, and may include reflecting on any impact on people with different protected characteristics, namely race; disability; age; sex; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity and religion or belief.

A member of an Academic Board Committee may nominate an Alternate to attend on their behalf if the member is unable to attend a specific meeting of a committee. Alternates have the same rights as the member they are acting for. If an Alternate is to be nominated the Secretary of the relevant committee should be informed at least 48 hours before the meeting is to take place.

Categories of committee membership

The constitutions of Academic Board and its committees are designed to maximise the effectiveness of the deliberative structure by including a mix of members which vary according to each committee's terms of reference. The role of the different types of membership and their period of appointment is detailed below.

Category of Membership	Period of appointment	Role on committee
Ex-officio	Continuous	• Essential, specialist expertise connected to their role or position • Consistent, fixed membership protects committee memory • Responsible for the dissemination of key discussions or decisions to their Department/Faculty
Appointed	1 year (rolling)	• Provides expert advice and information from their Department/Faculty, to contribute to debate and decision making • Selected to represent a sample of views from a Department/Faculty • Allows greater reflexivity where there are capacity or role changes • Provides an opportunity for personal/professional development
Elected	3 years[13]	• Provides an example of the views of a designated constituency • Provides a mechanism by which views of constituents may be represented within to committee decision making • Allows rotation of committee membership on controlled cycle • Provides an opportunity for personal/professional development
Students	Rolling annual appointment	Generally constituted student representatives are elected sabbatical officers from the Students' Union, however some committees may also draw student representatives from other forums. More information on students on committees can be found elsewhere in this chapter.

Processes for the election of elected representatives can be found elsewhere in this chapter.

External individuals may be constituted on a committee and be from outside of the University (i.e. not members of staff or students). This may include lay representatives or staff from the Students' Union for example. They are granted privileged access to the committee and have voting rights alongside other members.

[13] Any elected member of a Committee away from the institution on a full-time basis for one year or more will resign his/her seat to cover the period of absence.

Additional individuals may be co-opted onto specific meetings where their attendance or expertise is required. This is done at the discretion of the Chair[14] and they are recorded as 'in attendance'. They do not count in quorum calculations and hold no voting powers. Co-opted members generally remain on a committee for a period of one year.

Similarly, observers are allowed at any open meeting of committees at the discretion of the Chair, however closed business may be restricted to them.

Due to the nature of some roles, an individual may hold multiple positions on a single committee e.g. ex-officio and appointed. Details of the impact of this on the calculation of quorum and voting rights can be found in the Standing Orders.

A register of all committee members (excluding Faculty committees) is maintained by the Academic Governance and Quality Assurance Team within the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework department and includes responsibility for appointed positions.

Any in-year vacancies which emerge may be managed in various ways, at the discretion of the Chair:

- Holding the position as vacant;
- Asking for a replacement appointed representative where appropriate;
- Co-option of a specific individual for the remainder of the academic calendar.

Guidance on appointing members
Appointed positions are subject to annual review by a designated Dean, Director or Chair of a Committee. Guidance on making appointments is provided to these Appointers as follows:

- **Representation**

Appointed members are there to represent the views of the Faculty but are not expected to speak with expert authority on specific matters (this falls to the ex officio representatives), therefore colleagues with varied backgrounds and experience to represent the area's views and expertise should be considered.

- **Attendance**

Anyone appointed must be able to attend regularly and have adequate time to prepare for meetings. Attendance information for any current members to inform is provided to inform the decision to renew anyone.

- **Talent spotting**

This is an opportunity to spot emerging talent in their area, including across junior members of staff who may be future leaders. Appointers may wish to seek volunteers from within their area and this is supported by an **Expression of Interest** process to seek interest from

[14] The Vice-Chancellor has right of attendance at any University Committee/Sub-Committee or Working Group.

across staff (with support from line managers required). Committee attendance should be seen as a form of professional development and can be suggested within PDRs.

- **Diversity**

Committee representation should be as balanced as possible and, as appointed positions make up a proportion of the whole committee, therefore it is important that appointments reflect the diversity of the University. Further guidance on this shall be provided by the University EDI Group.

Election protocols
This section provides the details for the operation of elections in academic governance committees, as agreed by Academic Board. Elections are normally held annually in advance of the new academic year however in-year elections are permissible.

The Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance will act as Returning Officer for the election of members and elections are conducted by the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework team in accordance with these protocols.

The nominal roll for elections is maintained by Human Resources and includes academic staff and support staff employed by the institution on a permanent or temporary contract, in a full time or fractional full-time post; it does not include staff employed on Associate Tutor contracts or other casual staff. The four constituencies for elections are:

- Academic staff in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
- Academic staff in the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine
- Academic staff in the Faculty of Education
- Professional service / support staff

The determination of elected members shall be by ballot, using the system of the Single Transferable Vote (STV), through an e-voting platform. The call for nominations will allow a period of at least seven days in which nominations will be lodged with the Returning Officer.

Ballots will be normally be held following this seven-day period, with a minimum of a further seven days permitted for the casting of votes. Candidates for election will be invited to produce a brief manifesto for publication.

An extension to the nomination period is allowable where required to fill all committee vacancies and the election ballot can be re-scheduled to allow for all elections to take place simultaneously.

Results of elections will be published for all staff. Training for new members is available.

Unfilled posts will normally remain vacant for one year and re-advertised at the next election cycle, as will any in-year vacancies which emerge however temporary 1-year appointments may be made to fill vacancies which are not elected to.

Student representation
All committees of Academic Board are responsible for remaining cognizant of matters which impact upon students and this is supported and enhanced through engagement of students with academic governance. This is achieved in a variety of ways to maximise engagement and ensure meaningful representation on committees, including engagement with the Students' Union and its elected officers.

There is a tiered approach for student representation on Committees, in relation to Students' Union elected officers, starting with the most significant and formal way of involving the Students' Union and its elected representative in committee decisions:

1. The Students' Union and its elected sabbatical officers have the right to attend any open meeting of a committee of Academic Board. To facilitate this, they are sent the annual Committee Business Plans and the agendas/papers for each meeting, so they may identify specific meetings they wish to attend[15].
2. The Chair of each committee may request the attendance of the Students' Union and/or an elected officer for specific meetings of their Committee, where a pertinent discussion is anticipated.
3. Consultation on specific items or papers may be done by correspondence between the Committee Secretary and the Students' Union and any resulting feedback on items fed into the appropriate meeting.
4. A standing item may remain on each committee agenda to allow the Students' Union the opportunity to submit a relevant update on its activities to the committee for information.

Other students may also be included on committees as student representatives and these can be drawn from programme boards or other forums as identified by the committee, as long as its constitution is up to date.

Link Governor Scheme
The Board of Governors operates a Link Governor Scheme for the major Academic Board committees, to which vacancies are advertised amongst independent members by the Clerk and confirmed by the Chair. The participating Academic Board Committees are:

- Academic Planning Committee
- Academic Quality Enhancement Committee
- Learning and Teaching Committee
- Research and Innovation Committee

Link Governors are classed as 'in attendance' at such meetings and whilst they may contribute to discussion, they do not hold formal voting powers or count in the quorum calculations.

[15] Committees with a constituted student representative have this detailed on their constitution.

Committee operations

Committee effectiveness and review

The evaluation of the effectiveness of each Committee is monitored by the committee on an annual basis through a dedicated section in their Annual Report. Any subsequent recommendations for improvements or changes to the committee or related processes form part of the Annual Process Review[16].

Annual Reports

At the end of each academic year, an annual report[17] is drawn up by the committee Secretary with input from the Chair. These reports summarise the decisions taken by the committee, reflect upon the effectiveness of its operation in the previous academic year and provide an opportunity to identify and recommend changes for the following year. The report should normally be produced following a discussion at the final meeting of the year of the committee, providing members with the opportunity to contribute their thoughts and opinions. The final report is approved at the first meeting of the academic year.

Annual Process Review

One of the outputs of the annual report may be the identification of changes to committee membership or remit. Such changes require consideration and approval by Academic Board and are reflected within this chapter of the Quality Management Handbook. Any other relevant, significant procedural changes related to academic governance are also included in the Annual Process Review. Included within this process is the annual review and updating of the Standing Orders.

Declaration of Interest

Members are expected to disclose any potential conflicts of interest at each meeting to ensure that the committee's business and decisions are handled appropriately. Each committee agenda provides an opportunity for the declaration of interests at the start of each meeting via a standing agenda item.

Identifying a conflict

A declaration is required where there may be a potential conflict between a committee member's personal interests and the committee business, including where these interests could directly benefit from an outcome or decision. Being open about this interest means that the committee can operate transparently and with integrity.

It is important to know that conflicts can be perceptual as well as actual. If an item may appear to benefit a member's personal interest, even if it will not actually do so, members must still declare this.

Conflicts of interest for committee members may include, for example:

- An interest in a third-party organisation being discussed by the committee. For example, a member may sit on the governing body of a partner institution.

[16] See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 1 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/01-the-quality-strategy-management-of-quality-and-standards.pdf.
[17] An indicative, flexible template for the report is available in the templates folder on the Y Drive.

- A personal relationship (family member, personal friend, intimate relationship, supervisor etc) with a student being discussed in the meeting.
- Responsibility for, or involvement with, a course or programme being discussed (for section A approvals only).

The committee Secretary can provide advice where there are queries related to potential conflicts.

Process for handling declarations
Conflicts of interest should be handled proportionately according to the nature of the declaration and the item of business. The Chair has the ultimate discretion as to the required action to take in relation to potential conflicts of interest, however some indicative guidance is listed below:

- If the issue relates to an item where a decision or approval will be made, including where this may determine ongoing strategy, the committee member may be asked to leave the room for this item. This should be reflected within the minutes.
- In some cases, this action would not be proportionate to the level of risk. Indeed, it may be beneficial for the committee to hear the committee member's expert views as part of their discussion. However, it is still important that the committee is made explicitly aware of any interest through the declaration, rather than assuming prior knowledge.

Business Planning
Prior to the start of each academic year, a Business Plan[18] for each committee is developed by the Secretary, with input from the Chair. These plans provide an indication of the business which will be received at each meeting of the year to aid planning. The Business Plan also demonstrates where the committee is executing its Terms of Reference, although it is acknowledged that other, adhoc business may also demonstrate these.

Communication
A termly newsletter is produced for the wider university community, highlighting important decisions, discussions and approvals which have taken place across the academic governance structure. The Governance WIKI pages[19] also provide a repository of guidance to increase awareness of the business of academic governance and ensure transparency of operation.

[18] An indicative, flexible template for the plan is available in the templates folder on the Y Drive.
[19] https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/governance/ (Edge Hill staff login required).

Guidance

Secretarial conventions
Broadly speaking a set of established conventions exist for the operation of committee paperwork, including agendas and minutes.

Agendas
A set agenda exists for institutional committee agendas and this is divided into the following sections:

- Standing Items (approval of minutes, matters arising, action updates, Chair's announcements)
- A – Items for approval
- B – Items for discussion
- C – Items for information
- Any other business and the next meeting information

Members may request that agenda items contained in Section A, B or C be transferred to different sections of the agenda, by contacting the Secretary at least 48 hours prior to the commencement of a meeting. The movement of items of business in this way shall be confirmed at the meeting, prior to the consideration of substantive business.

The Secretary must be notified of items to be considered under Any Other Business at least 48 hours prior to the commencement of a meeting.

Once circulated, the agenda of an Ordinary meeting or an Extraordinary meeting shall not normally be amended except by approval of the Chair.

The Secretary is responsible for identifying the appropriate category and ensuring report authors reflect this within any coversheets. Agendas may also describe the actions required by the committee e.g. 'Members are asked to approve the policy'. Where this is applicable, the language used should mirror the agenda category to avoid confusion amongst committee members. So, items would normally always be asked for approval, discussion or provided for information.

Committee Abbreviations
Each committee is allocated an abbreviated three letters for use in document/item references, with the exception of Faculty Boards whom determine their own abbreviation and conventions as follows:

Committee	Abbreviation	Example References
Academic Board	ABD	001/ABD/19 ABD/01A/19
Honorary Awards Committee	HAC	001/HAC/19 HAC/01A/19
Academic Planning Committee	APC	001/APC/19 APC/01A/19

Committee	Abbreviation	Example References
Academic Quality Enhancement Committee	AQC	001/AQC/19 AQC/01A/19
Learning and Teaching Committee	LTC	001/LTC/19 LTC/01A/19
Research and Innovation Committee	RIC	001/REC/19 REC/01A/19
Employability Sub Committee	EMS	001/EMS/19 EMS/01A/19
External Examiners Sub Committee	EES	001/EES/19 EES/01A/19
Graduate School Board of Studies	GSB	001/GSB/19 GSB/01A/19
Research Degrees Sub-Committee	RDS	001/RDS/19 RDS/01A/19
Human Tissue Management Sub-Committee	HTS	001/HTS/19 HTS/01A/19
Regulations Review Sub Committee	RRS	001/RRS/19 RRS/01A/19
Student Experience Sub Committee	SES	001/SES/19 SES/01A/19
University Research Ethics Sub-Committee	UES	001/UES/19 UES/01A/19
Faculty Board – Faculty of Education	EDU/FAB	001/EDU/FAB/19 EDU/FAB/01A/19
Faculty Board – Faculty of Arts and Sciences	FAS/FACB	001/FAS/FACB/19 FAS/FACB/01A/19
Faculty Board – Faculty of Heath, Social Care & Medicine	FB	001/FB/19 FB/01A/19

Item Numbering

As demonstrated in the example references above, conventions for item references exist and should follow the principle below:

(a) (b) (c)

- - - / - - - / - - -

- 3 digit unique number of the minute for the committee for that academic year (starting from '001'). The minute numbers should be continued in sequence for all committee meetings of that year.
- 3 digit abbreviation identifying the committee (see table above).
- 2 digits identifying the academic year; the year used must be the first year of that session i.e. academic year 2019/20 will be identified by '19' and will be used throughout the year.

Document Numbering

Similarly document references which identify specific papers submitted under items also have their own unique reference. All documents submitted to committees should follow the principle below:

(a) (b) (c)

- - - / - - - / - - -

- 3 digits for the abbreviation of the committee (see table above).
- 3 characters, consisting of two numbers and one alphabetical character (e.g. 01A). The number represents the document's number within that committee meeting, e.g. 01 is the first document at the meeting. The alphabetical character identifies the specific committee meeting, for example the first meeting of the committee is A, the second is B and so on.
- 2 numbers to indicate the academic year.

Minutes and action recording

Whilst minutes are the record of discussion and decision from a meeting, they are designed to be read alongside Committee agendas and papers. For each agenda item, the structure of minutes will normally follow this order:

- Title of agenda item
- Received: paper reference
- A brief summary of what the speaker says in their introduction to the item or paper. This should not duplicate any content of any paper submitted under this item but should explain that the item was about.
- A summary of the key discussion points. These should be kept concise and include clarifications of the content of any papers and any important debates or considerations which informed the decision, outcome or action. Care should be taken to ensure that minutes reflect the remit and authority of the Committee and evidence their appropriate operation of these responsibilities.
- The outcome (approved/rejected, noted etc.). One of the key functions of minutes is to record decisions taken and any actions required in response to those decisions. This should also align with the anticipated outcome detailed in any paper coversheet.

Minutes are required to be both concise and accurate, usually making no direct reference to individual named members but instead referencing job titles or roles within the committee. Where appropriate, to make a distinction between multiple members of a committee, initials may also be used to distinguish between members. This is particularly important in the setting of actions following discussions so that it is clear who is responsible for taking this task forward.

Actions should be detailed at the end of each appropriate item and recorded in the Actions Log which is appended to the minutes of each meeting. Secretaries should distribute actions

as soon as possible after each meeting, including to any actors not in attendance at the committee meeting.

Recording Attendance
A list of attendees is provided at the start of the minutes of each meeting and contains a complete list of all members of the committee and whether they were: **Present, Apologies** or **Absent** (did not send apologies). Where a representative is sent in the place of a committee member they should be recorded as Present (Alternate) and details of their alternate should be recorded.

Decisions
Where appropriate, decisions may be recorded within three categories:

a) **Key decisions**: of strategic importance to the University or that it is essential that all staff are aware of them/decisions of general interest to the wider University community.
b) **Transactional decisions:** these relate to specific committees such as Academic Planning Committee, External Examiners Sub-Committee and Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee and relate to a very specific audience or purpose.
c) **Committee specific decisions**: All other decisions will be committee specific decisions. They will form part of the minutes and the reporting of decisions. Any member of the University wanting to see decisions of this nature will need to refer to the relevant committee minutes for details.

Most decisions at committees can be categorised under C, however key decisions may need reporting separately and will likely be included in the Academic Board newsletter.

A list of decisions taken at each meeting is provided as an appendix to the minutes of each meeting, and a standing item at the following meeting requires the approval of Members as to the description of the decisions taken.

Information Governance
The University Records Management Policy and University Retention Policy[20] apply to all committee papers and the appropriate Data Steward resides in the Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework team.

In alignment with the institutional policy, committee papers are broadly designated as 'internal'; available to any authenticated member of the University. Typically, it is identified that if this level of information was leaked outside of the University, it could be inappropriate or ill-timed.

However, items of closed business are classified as 'restricted'; available only to specified and/or relevant individuals, with appropriate authorization (committee members in this context). A breach of restricted papers could cause serious damage resulting in the

[20] Available on the Information Governance WIKI pages https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/compliance/Home (EHU staff login required).

compromise of activity within the University in the short to medium term. This includes both personnel data and research data.

Closed business

Unless designated otherwise, the business at committees is classified as open to all members and therefore does not contain any sensitive or commercially confidential information beyond what is appropriate for that committee's standard operation. It is the responsibility of the submitting author to highlight exceptionally where an item should be classified as an item of closed business. In such circumstances this should be made clear to the committee by the Secretary in the agenda and minutes, with attention drawn to this in the meeting too. Items of closed business, as with general committee papers, should be circulated exclusively to designated committee members. However closed business should not be published on the WIKI or Y Drive for access by other members of the University; the Secretary is responsible for keeping closed business items secure in their own files for future audit.

Agenda items deemed suitable to be classed as 'Closed Business' are exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 however it may be that in certain circumstances the request could be made under the Data Protection Act 2018. It is to be recognised that any such request would only apply to personal information and it is expected that any release of information under this Act would need to be heavily redacted.

Certain committees are designated as closed due to the sensitive nature of their business and discussions[21] and so all items within their meetings are closed. Their minutes are also automatically designated as closed items of business and when circulated to 'parent' committee members, secretaries should ensure that these are handled appropriately and not published in the wider university committee paper repository.

Within committees a discussion may be determined as closed by the Chair at any point, normally to enable a confidential discussion about a specific item. In these circumstances minuting is normally suspended or reduced until the Chair declares the discussion to be open again.

Retention

The University Records Management Policy does not currently specify governance or committee documentation within its guidance and there is not yet an Institutional retention schedule for these associated documents. Therefore, a bespoke approach is required to ensure appropriate information governance is in place for Academic Board and its committees, based upon the recognised sector best practice guidance from the Joint Information Systems Committee (2007). It has been determined that all Academic Board committees and constituted sub-committees shall be deemed statutory under the JISC guidelines due to their instrumental role in the governance of the University and its functions. Therefore, all committee administration records are currently required to be kept for the lifetime of the Institution. This includes but is not limited to: records documenting the development and establishment of the terms of reference for a statutory committee;

[21] The Terms of Reference for these Committees outline their closed status.

and records documenting the conduct of the business of a statutory committee (agenda, minutes and supporting papers).

Whilst it is recognised that there is a requirement to retain records of Institutional committees and their operations, all committee members, secretaries and Chairs should follow the guidelines detailed in the Institutional Records Management Policy in relation to general good record keeping, including not retaining duplicate copies of paperwork as the Secretary is responsible for maintaining the definitive single copy for retention.

Any committees not formally constituted under the Academic Board will require separate consideration to determine an appropriate retention period as they are to be considered as non-statutory.

Guidance for committee report authors
Committee effectiveness is greatly enhanced where items clearly meet the needs of both the author and committee members. There are a few simple things which paper authors can do to facilitate such an outcome:

1) **Ensure that your paper is succinct, written according to plain English principles, and tailored to the committee's requirements**. Your paper should be no longer than the content requires and must clearly state its purpose; ideally, papers should begin with a short series of bullet points which summarise the content and the action being requested of the committee.
2) **You must fully complete your coversheet.** If you do not, your item will be returned to you by the Secretary. Ultimately, the coversheet will help you to easily convey the item's purpose to the committee and lead to a productive outcome. It will also ensure that actions can be swiftly allocated and actioned following the meeting. The coversheet should take no more than 5 minutes to complete.
3) **Work with the Secretary to ensure that your item is in the right format.** If you are asking a committee to approve a proposal, it will be easier for them to do so if they receive a paper and have time to read and consider this before the meeting. If you are requesting a discussion, a presentation may be more appropriate.
4) **Ensure that your item is on the correct section of the agenda**. The Secretary will work with you to correctly allocate your item to either Section A (for approval), Section B (for discussion) or Section C (for noting). It is your responsibility to direct the committee's focus to the aspects of your item which you'd like them to approve/discuss/note.
5) **Meet the paper deadline.** Late papers prevent committee members from being able to allocate sufficient time to prepare for the meeting, reducing its overall effectiveness. They also cause unnecessary stress to colleagues involved in the preparation and printing of hard copies. Where items are delayed significantly, they will be removed from the agenda. Items listed as papers on the agenda will not be changed to verbal items at a late stage unless this is to the benefit of the committee. Where individual authors are regularly delayed in submitting papers these may be highlighted in the committee's annual report.

Terms of Reference and Membership

The following is the definitive, current Terms of Reference and Membership for each constituted committee within the academic governance structure.

Academic Board
Subject to the provisions of the Articles of Government, to the overall responsibility of the Board of Governors and to the responsibilities of the Vice-Chancellor, the Academic Board (AB) shall be responsible:

- Subject to the requirements of external validating and accrediting bodies, for:
  - general issues relating to the teaching, programmes of study and research scholarship, at the Institution, including criteria for the admission of students; and the appointment and removal of internal and external examiners;
  - policies and procedures for assessment and examination of the academic performance of students, including progression and award boards;
  - the content of the curriculum; academic standards and the validation and review of courses; the procedures for the award of qualifications and honorary academic titles; and the procedures for the expulsion of students for academic reasons;
- For considering the development of the academic activities of the University and the resources needed to support them and for advising the Vice- Chancellor and the Board of Governors thereon;
- For the oversight of continued compliance with Office for Students Conditions of Registration.
- For advising on such other matters as the Board of Governors, the Vice- Chancellor, or University committees may refer to the Academic Board.
- For the approval of any changes to the structure or nomenclature of Faculty Schools or Departments, as recommended by Faculty Board
- For ensuring all committees of the University's deliberative governance structure adhere to principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law.
- For ensuring all committees of the University's deliberative governance structure review their effectiveness on an annual basis and adhere to the protocols outlined in the Academic Board Standing Orders.
- To give due regard to any academic risks which fall within the remit of its Terms of Reference.

The Academic Board may establish such committees as it considers necessary for purposes enabling it to carry out its responsibilities, provided that each establishment is first approved by the Vice-Chancellor and Board of Governors.

The membership of Academic Board shall be no more than 35 members, comprising the Vice Chancellor (who shall be Chair) and such other members of staff and students as may from time to time be approved by the Board of Governors. If the Vice Chancellor is unable to chair a particular meeting they will nominate a Deputy Chair from among the members of the Academic Board to take the Chair in his/her place. The period of appointment of

members and the selection or election arrangements shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Governors.

The number of members of any such committee and the terms on which they are to hold and vacate office shall be determined by the Academic Board.

Appointed members or alternates with full voting rights are permitted at Academic Board and its committees in order to ensure appropriate communication to all parts of the University. The only exception is the Honorary Awards Committee which does not permit alternates.

Standing Orders[22] for Academic Board and its sub-committees are approved by Academic Board prior to the commencement of the academic year.

Co-options: A provision for up to two co-opted members is available to Academic Board and its committees. Co-options may be used to incorporate a member with specific expertise of value to the committee and/or to provide a balanced membership with respect to under-represented groups within the University. Co-options may be made within a meeting through the raising of a formal motion and its resolution, and a period of co-option must be agreed at this point by the Committee.

[22] These are available at Y:\Everyone\Academic Board Committees\Committee Information.

Membership:

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	Vice-Chancellor
Secretary	Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework
Ex-Officio Members	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) & University Secretary Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Relations) Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) & Dean of Faculty of Arts and Sciences Pro Vice-Chancellor & Dean of Faculty of Education Pro Vice-Chancellor & Dean of Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine Dean of Teaching and Learning Development Director of Student Recruitment and Administration Director of Governance and Assurance Director of the Research Office Academic Registrar Director of Student Services Dean of the Graduate School Head of Academic Registry Chair of Academic Planning Committee Chair of Academic Quality Enhancement Committee Chair of Learning and Teaching Committee Chair of Research and Innovation Committee
Appointed Members	Representative of Learning Services
Elected Members	Two from Professional Services/support staff Three academic representatives from Faculty of Arts and Sciences Three academic representatives from Faculty of Education Three academic representatives from Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine
Student Representation	Two student representatives nominated by the Students' Union
External Representation	Not applicable
In Attendance	A representative from the Students' Union staff (to provide support to the student representative(s))

Academic Board also delegates significant responsibilities to its reporting committees[23]:

- Academic Planning Committee (APC);
- Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC);

[23] Some sub-committees which report into these senior committees also hold specific delegated authority, as outlined within their Terms of Reference.

- Honorary Awards Committee (HAC);
- Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC);
- Research and Innovation Committee (RIC);
- Other committees including Faculty Boards, which are detailed below.

Honorary Awards Committee (HAC)
The University may confer the following honorary awards:

Honorary Doctorate: (HonDPhil; HonDSc; HonDLitt; HonLLD; HonDEd; HonDTech; HonDBA; HonDUniv, HonDA)

Note: Honorary award holders may use the approved designated letters after their names but the award of Honorary Doctorate does not confer entitlement to use the title 'Dr' in front of their names.

Approval of Nominations

Nominations may be made through Faculties, Services, Directorate or the Board of Governors and should be submitted to the HAC Secretary who will instigate an annual call for nominations. The University may also receive nominations from other sources. Nominations must include a brief resumé and supporting statement indicating how the nominee meets the criteria for award. Additional information on the role of Honorary Awards Committee can be found in Appendix 25 of the Academic Regulations[24].

All nominations will be considered by the Honorary Awards Committee Membership which comprises:

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	Vice-Chancellor
Secretary	Academic Registry
Ex-Officio Members	Pro-Chancellor Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) & University Secretary Clerk to Governors Head of PR, Corporate Communications and External Relations
Appointed Members	Two members of Academic Board (one of which must be a student representative) A representative of the Board of Governors
Elected Members	Not applicable
Student Representation	See appointed membership
External Representation	Not applicable
In Attendance	Not applicable

[24] Available via www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/.

The Honorary Awards Committee is a closed committee and therefore its proceedings are confidential. Additionally, no discussions should be held with the nominee until approval of the award has been given by the committee. Alternate representation is not permitted for this committee; however, *in absentia* members may submit their written comments by prior arrangement with the Secretary.

Academic Planning Committee

The Academic Planning Committee (APC) considers proposals for new academic developments.

APC's Terms of Reference are:

1) To recommend to Academic Board and Directorate changes and developments within the University's academic portfolio.
2) To consider the broader University implications of academic developments in terms of physical resources, human resources, support and services, and to give development consent to departments and Faculties.
3) To take strategic oversight of longer-term planning in relation to the University curriculum offer.
4) To monitor the effectiveness of curriculum development decisions by reviewing recruitment to new provision and monitoring programme closures approved by AQEC.
5) To consider and approve Applications for Development Consent including the approval of new Target and Named Awards as defined within the Academic Regulations (Appendix 5).
6) To consider and approve Initial Proposals for Modification of validated programmes.
7) To consider and approve any changes to the validated UCAS tariff point bands, IELTS score for programmes or level 2 or 3 entry standards.
8) To oversee academic partnership activity, including the consideration of new proposals, strategic monitoring of existing partnerships and the longer-term strategic planning for academic partnership activity.
9) To monitor and review the process and operation of academic planning within the University including the schedule of Autumn Monitoring and Spring Planning meetings with departments and Faculties.
10) To give due regard to any Consumer and Market Authority implications of proposals presented for approval which involve a material change for students and where appropriate, provide a judgement as to where such proposals may require student consent or consultation.
11) To monitor the effectiveness of the Committee on an annual basis.
12) To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the committee's business.
13) To give due regard to any academic risks which fall within the remit of its Terms of Reference as delegated from Academic Board.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Secretary	Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework
Ex-Officio Members	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) & University Secretary Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Relations) Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) & Dean of Arts and Sciences Pro Vice-Chancellor & Dean of Education Pro Vice-Chancellor & Dean of Health, Social Care and Medicine Dean of Teaching and Learning Development Director of Student Recruitment and Administration Director of Strategic Planning Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance Head of Academic Registry
Appointed Members	A representative of Learning Services
Elected Members	Not applicable
Student Representation	Not applicable
External Representation	Not applicable
In Attendance	Not applicable

Where appropriate the Chair may co-opt additional members to the Committee for additional expertise, for example, a representative from the International Office may be co-opted to attend a meeting which is considering international partnership proposals.

Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC)

Overseeing the academic quality and standards of the University's taught programmes is the principal responsibility of AQEC and its sub-committees. It is responsible to the Academic Board for the operation of the University's quality management strategies with specific regard to academic standards and quality enhancement, including programme approval, annual monitoring, periodic review, internal audit, academic partnerships, partner-delivered provision and the outputs from external examining.

AQEC's Terms of Reference are:

1) To develop and implement the University's quality management strategy through the monitoring of sector (QAA) developments and production of an Annual Process Review including monitoring and reviewing the quality processes and the operation of Autumn Monitoring.
2) To advise Academic Board regarding areas of emerging academic risk and to recommend appropriate remedial action.
3) To monitor the implementation of devolved quality responsibilities by Faculties, receiving and considering minutes of Faculty quality committees and other reports of Faculties and support services as appropriate.
4) To monitor academic standards and the quality of taught provision through receipt and consideration of periodic review and internal audit reports; student surveys; and annual overviews of academic partnerships and partner-delivered provision, programme validation, departmental monitoring and external examiner reports.
5) To approve new taught programmes and the closure of existing programmes using powers delegated to it by Academic Board and referring matters to LTC relating to the student experience as appropriate.
6) To give academic approval to new academic partnerships and programmes to be delivered with partner organisations, using powers delegated by Academic Board.
7) To monitor and review the quality processes and the operation of Annual Monitoring
8) To evaluate the operation of Scheme and Progression Boards to include annual reports on degree classifications, academic appeals and cases of academic misconduct.
9) To oversee the operation of processes for programme approval, periodic review and internal audit and the membership of the Validation and Audit Standing Panel (VASP).
10) To oversee the Register of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and ensure compliance with required processes relating to the accreditation or endorsement of provision.
11) To review and monitor the business of its Sub-Committees and approve any recommendations or proposals put forward.
12) To monitor the effectiveness of the Committee on an annual basis.
13) To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the committee's business.
14) To retain an oversight of the effectiveness of its reporting sub-committees.
15) To give due regard to any academic risks which fall within the remit of its Terms of Reference as delegated from Academic Board.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) & University Secretary
Secretary	Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework
Ex-Officio Members	Director of Governance and Assurance Dean of Teaching and Learning Development Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance Faculty Quality Officer (Faculty of Arts and Sciences) Faculty Quality Officer (Faculty of Education) Faculty Quality Officer (Faculty of Health, Social Care & Medicine) Chair of the External Examiners Sub-Committee Chair of the Faculty Quality Committee (one per Faculty) Academic Quality Officers
Appointed Members	A representative of Learning Services A representative of Academic Registry Two academic representatives from Faculty of Arts and Sciences Two academic representatives from Faculty of Education Two academic representatives from Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine
Elected Members	Not applicable
Student Representation	A student representative nominated by the Students' Union
External Representation	Not applicable
In Attendance	A representative from the Students' Union staff (to provide support to the student representative)

External Examiners Sub-Committee (EESC)

The External Examiners Sub-Committee (EESC) is responsible for the engagement of external examiners by considering external examiner nominations for taught programmes against the criteria set out in the Quality Management Handbook[25]. For all proposed nominations EESC makes one of the following decisions:

- That the nomination should be approved;
- That the suitability of the nomination is not clear and that the nominating Faculty should provide further information in support of the nomination;
- That the nomination is not suitable and the nominating Faculty should provide an alternative nomination.

The External Examiners Sub-Committee is a closed committee and therefore its proceedings are confidential. Additionally, no discussions should be held with the nominee until approval of the nomination has been given by the committee.

EESC's Terms of Reference are:

1) To make decisions on the engagement of external examiners for taught provision leading to awards of Edge Hill University*.
2) To develop, monitor and evaluate the processes for the nomination, engagement, administration and reporting of external examiners (in accordance with relevant national expectations).
3) To monitor the external examiner posts held by the University's staff and the institutions from which the University's examiners are drawn to ensure an appropriate spread and to guard against reciprocal arrangements.
4) To receive reports on a variety of aspects of external examiner administration (e.g. vacancies, fee levels, induction arrangements) and agree any changes required.
5) To advise AQEC and, through that committee, Academic Board of any policy or operational issues related to external examiners that might impact on the quality and standards of the University's academic provision.
6) To receive and consider annual summaries of external examiner reports, identifying areas of academic risk and opportunities for quality enhancement.
7) To monitor the effectiveness of the Committee on an annual basis.
8) To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the committee's business.

* External examiners for Research Degrees (Doctorate/MRes) will be approved by the Graduate School.

[25] See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 2 www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/files/08-academic-governance.pdf.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair[26]	Associate Dean (Quality), Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine
Deputy Chair[27]	As appointed by the Chair of EESC
Secretary	External Examiners Administrator
Ex-Officio Members	Academic Quality Officer
Appointed Members	Three academic representatives from Faculty of Arts and Sciences Three academic representatives from Faculty of Education Three academic representatives from Faculty of Health and Social Care
Elected Members	Not applicable
Student Representation	Not applicable
External Representation	Not applicable
In Attendance	One Designated Faculty Officer (one per Faculty)[28]

[26] The Chair of EESC is appointed by the Chair of AQEC.
[27] The Deputy Chair is appointed by the Chair of EESC on an annual basis and is drawn from the existing appointed members of EESC, to deputise for the Chair where they are unavailable or where they may have a conflict of interest.
[28] These are determined by the Associate Deans for Quality in each Faculty.

Progression and Award Boards

Scheme Progression and Award Boards operate with delegated authority from the Academic Board in confirming Progression and Award results for Edge Hill University Taught Awards. Specifically, they are responsible for:

1) Confirming the results for each student in relation to their progression or award, having regard to the recommendations from Module Assessment Boards and Panels considering mitigating circumstances and malpractice.
2) Reviewing RP(E)L recommendations and the operation of RP(E)L Panels.
3) Determining condonements, referrals and deferrals, having regard to Module Board recommendations.
4) Making recommendations in relation to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
5) Considering reports from associated external examiners.
6) Confirming associated prizes and academic achievement awards.
7) Advising on the operation of the Academic Regulations[29].

The Senior Assistant Registrar (Assessment and Awards) prepares an annual report to Academic Quality Enhancement Committee on the outcomes from, and operation of, assessment boards.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	PVC Dean/Associate Dean of Faculty/ or Directorate member
Secretary	Academic Registry
Ex-Officio Members	Director of Governance and Assurance Head of Academic Registry Heads of Department Heads of Curriculum Areas Subject Leaders Programme Leaders Subject/Programme staff Faculty Assistant Registrar
Appointed Members	Not applicable
Elected Members	Not applicable
Student Representation	Not applicable
External Representation	Chief External/External Examiners Representatives of Partner Institutions as appropriate to the business of the Board
In Attendance	Not applicable

Further details regarding the operation of Progression and Award Boards for taught degrees can be found in the Academic Regulations appendices.

Progression and Award Boards are to be considered as closed Committees and therefore their proceedings are confidential.

[29] Available via www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/.

The Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) & University Secretary and Director of Governance and Assurance / Head of Academic Registry have right of attendance at any assessment board. Pro Vice-Chancellors & Deans of Faculty have right of attendance at any assessment board operated by their Faculty.

Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)

The Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) is responsible for leading on enhancements to the University's strategies for learning, teaching, and assessment, and has overall strategic responsibility for the student experience.

LTC's Terms of Reference are:

1) To review University policy, practice, systems and processes that impact directly on the quality of the taught student experience and on student retention and progression, identifying and promoting opportunities for enhancement.
2) To promote developments and innovation in teaching, learning and assessment including research into aspects of pedagogy and professional development within the University and ensure alignment between teaching and learning strategies and Institutional capabilities.
3) To promote developments and innovation in Teaching excellence and Technology Enhanced Learning within the University including the implementation of enhancements referred from AQEC.
4) To monitor employability and enterprise activity in relation to its impact on enhancing graduate employability.
5) To consider issues relating to the current student experience referred by AQEC following the approval of programme closure proposals.
6) To review and monitor the business of its Sub-Committees and approve any recommendations or proposals put forward.
7) To monitor and review the University's regulatory framework for taught programmes and recommend appropriate changes to AB.
8) To monitor the effectiveness of the Committee on an annual basis.
9) To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the Committee's business.
10) To retain an oversight of the effectiveness of its reporting sub-committees.
11) To give due regard to any academic risks which fall within the remit of its Terms of Reference as delegated from Academic Board.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) & University Secretary
Secretary	Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework
Ex-Officio Members	Dean of Teaching and Learning Development Head of Directorate Office Director of Governance and Assurance Chair of Faculty Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee (one per Faculty) Chair of Employability Sub-Committee Chair of Regulations Review Sub-Committee Chair of Student Experience Sub-Committee
Appointed Members	A representative of Learning Services A representative from Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework A representative of Academic Registry A representative of Student Services Two representatives from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (one of whom must be a Learning & Teaching or SOLSTICE Fellow) Two representatives from the Faculty of Education (one of whom must be a Learning & Teaching or SOLSTICE Fellow) Two representatives from the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine (one of whom must be a Learning & Teaching or SOLSTICE Fellow)
Elected Members	Two representatives from Professional Services
Student Representation	A student representative nominated by the Students' Union
External Representation	Not applicable
In Attendance	A representative from the Students' Union staff (to provide support to the student representative)

Student Experience Sub-Committee (SESC)

The Student Experience Sub-Committee (SESC) is responsible to the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) for advising on issues relating to the operation of learning, teaching and student support and its impact on the student experience. It is also responsible for facilitating an Institutional focus for issues concerning student retention and widening participation and for promoting the dissemination of good practice.

SESC's Terms of Reference are:

1) To identify, evaluate, promote and disseminate good practice in learning and teaching and the academic guidance and support of learners.
2) To identify, evaluate and promote a range of learning and teaching strategies and assessment techniques that derive from the University's policies on teaching and learning, assessment and academic support.
3) To review and draft updates to these policies for consideration and approval by LTC.
4) To receive key annual reports relating to the operation of student facing policies and procedures and events in the Academic Cycle which may impact on the overall student experience (e.g. First Week, complaints etc.)
5) To oversee the development of the University's Retention Strategy and develop the Annual Retention report and devise and monitor progress against the annual Action Plan.
6) To oversee the University's performance in relation to widening participation.
7) To monitor the levels of student complaints in the University.
8) To encourage the dissemination of good practice and promote wider discussion of the issues in Faculties and Services.
9) To undertake specific tasks delegated by LTC.
10) To monitor the effectiveness of the Committee on an annual basis.

To ensure that equality and diversity considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the committee's business in order to accommodate a more diverse community.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	Director of Student Recruitment and Administration
Secretary	Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework
Ex-Officio Members	Dean of Teaching and Learning Development Head of the Directorate Office Head of Student Experience Faculty Assistant Registrar (one per Faculty) Strategic Lead for Access and Participation
Appointed Members	A representative of the International Office A representative of Student Recruitment A representative of Academic Registry A representative of Learning Services A representative of IT Services A representative of Facilities Management A representative of Strategic Planning and Performance Unit A representative from Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework A representative of Student Services A representative from each Faculty
Elected Members	Two academic representatives from Faculty of Arts and Sciences Two academic representatives from Faculty of Education Two academic representatives from Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine One representative from Professional Services
Student Representation	One student representative nominated by the Students' Union
External Representation	Not applicable
In Attendance	A representative from the Students' Union staff (to provide support to the student representative)

Employability Sub-Committee (EMS)

The Employability Sub-Committee (EMS) is responsible to the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) for advising on issues relating to employability and enterprise activity and its impact on learning and teaching and the overall student experience.

EMS's Terms of Reference are:

1) To monitor overall employability, graduate employability and enterprise activity in relation to its impact on enhancing student employability.
2) To provide a forum for University-wide sharing of information, ideas and procedures in relation to employability, employer liaison and enterprise.
3) To monitor and evaluate the impact of the Employability Strategy.
4) To monitor the progress of annual employability plans provided by academic departments and ensure that cross-Institutional support is provided where necessary.
5) To improve communications and engagement with employers across the University.
6) To provide a forum to support the implementation of the key strategic employability themes.
7) To monitor the effectiveness of the committee on an annual basis.
8) To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the Sub-Committee's business.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Relations)
Secretary	Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework
Ex-Officio Members	Head of Careers
Appointed Members	A representative of Human Resources A representative of the Centre for Learning and Teaching A representative from Learning Services Two representatives from Faculty of Arts and Sciences (one of whom must be a SOLSTICE or Learning and Teaching Fellow) Two representatives from Faculty of Education (one of whom must be a SOLSTICE or Learning and Teaching Fellow) Two representatives from Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine (one of whom must be a SOLSTICE or Learning and Teaching Fellow)
Elected Members	Two academic representatives from Faculty of Arts and Sciences Two academic representatives from Faculty of Education Two academic representatives from Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine One representative from Professional Services/support staff
Student Representation	Not applicable
External Representation	Not applicable
In Attendance	Not applicable

Regulations Review Sub-Committee (RRSC)

Although it is not expected that there would be major changes to the Academic Regulations[30] until such time as the University determined that a full review was appropriate, operational practice and legislative or national framework changes may occasionally result in requirements for amendment. The Regulations Review Sub-Committee has therefore been established as a sub-committee of Learning and Teaching Committee to bring forward any proposals for change.

RRSC's Terms of Reference are:

1) To review the Academic Regulations on an annual basis, with a commitment to do so in the best interests of the university community, taking account of:
2) Operational practice
3) National framework changes
4) Legislative changes
5) External examiner comments
6) Issues raised from meetings with Chairs and Secretaries of Assessment Boards
7) Impact in relation to equality.
8) To approve new Award Types as defined within the Academic Regulations (Appendix 2).
9) To monitor the effectiveness of the Committee on an annual basis.
10) To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the Group's business.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) & University Secretary
Secretary	Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework
Ex-Officio Members	Director of Governance and Assurance Senior Registrar; Assessments and Awards Faculty Assistant Registrar (one per Faculty)
Appointed Members	A representative from Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework A representative of Centre for Learning and Teaching A representative of Student Services Two representatives from Faculty of Arts and Sciences Two representatives from Faculty of Education Two representatives from Faculty of Health, Social Care & Medicine
Elected Members	Not applicable
Student Representation	Not applicable
External Representation	A representative from the Students' Union staff
In Attendance	Not applicable

[30] Available via www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/.

Research and Innovation Committee (RIC)
The Research and Innovation Committee is responsible to Academic Board for assuring the standards and quality of research and knowledge exchange activity undertaken by staff and students.

RIC's Terms of Reference are:
To formulate, implement and review the Edge Hill Research Policy and Strategy and make recommendations on resources and processes necessary to successful implementation, including staff development.

1) To monitor research and knowledge exchange activity across the University.
2) To monitor submissions to research councils and other bodies for funding and evaluate their success and make recommendations on the development of future submissions.
3) To develop, implement and evaluate the University's quality framework for research degrees including the training and support of students and the appointment, training and support of supervisors.
4) To review and monitor the work of the University Research Institutes and approve any recommendations or proposals put forward.
5) To review and monitor the business of its Sub-Committees and approve any recommendations or proposals put forward.
6) To monitor the effectiveness of the Committee on an annual basis.
7) To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the committee's business.
8) To retain an oversight of the effectiveness of its reporting sub-committees.
9) To give due regard to any academic risks which fall within the remit of its Terms of Reference as delegated from Academic Board.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) & Dean of Faculty of Arts & Sciences
Secretary	Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework
Ex-Officio Members	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Relations) Director of Research Office Head of Research Support Dean of Teaching and Learning Development Associate Dean for Research (Faculty of Arts and Sciences) Associate Dean for Knowledge Exchange and Innovation (Faculty of Education) Associate Dean for Research Innovation (Faculty of Health, Social Care & Medicine) Directors of the University Research Institutes Chair of University Research Ethics Sub-Committee Chair of Human Tissue Management Sub-Committee Chair of Faculty Research Committee (one per Faculty) Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee Dean of the Graduate School
Appointed Members	A representative of Learning Services
Elected Members[31]	Two academic staff from Faculty of Arts and Sciences Two academic staff from Faculty of Education Two academic staff from Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine
Student Representation	One student representative nominated by the Students' Union
External Representation	Not applicable
In Attendance	A representative from the Students' Union staff (to provide support to the student representative)

[31] Elected representatives on RIC should have either a current research profile or be active within their Faculty Research Committee.

University Research Ethics Sub-Committee (URESC)

The remit of the University Research Ethics Sub-Committee (URESC) is to oversee the good ethical practice of research and knowledge exchange activities carried out by staff and students across the Institution.

URESC's Terms of Reference are:

1) To ensure that the Research Ethics Committees (RECs) are executing the Framework for Research Ethics appropriately and ensuring best practice in ethical research and KE.
2) To review any case where the REC considers the proportionality of risk to require University level scrutiny.
3) To act as an appeal committee for the RECs.
4) To ensure that all ethical approvals are recorded and reported appropriately.
5) To ensure that the University is aware of developments of best practice in relation to ethical guidance, advice, support and scrutiny.
6) To ensure that training in research ethics is in place as part of a staff development programme (URESC is not responsible for the running of these sessions).
7) To monitor the effectiveness of the Committee on an annual basis.
8) To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the committee's business.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	University Professor (appointed as Chair by the Research and Innovation Committee)
Secretary	Research Office
Ex-Officio Members	Director of Research Office Human Tissue License Designated Individual
Appointed Members	Chair of Arts and Humanities Research Ethics Committee Chair of Science Research Ethics Committee Chair of Social Science Research Ethics Committee Chair of Education Research Ethics Committee Chair of Health-Related Research Ethics Committee One representative from Faculty of Arts and Sciences One representative from Faculty of Education One representative from Health, Social Care and Medicine
Elected Members	Not applicable
Student Representation	One PGR student representative
External Representation	Four external representatives – 2 specialist representatives and 2 lay representatives
In Attendance	Not applicable

Human Tissue Management Sub-Committee (HTMSC)
The Human Tissue Management Sub-Committee (HTMSC) is responsible for overseeing activity conducted under the University's Human Tissue Research Licence and reports directly to the University Research and Innovation Committee.

HTMSC's Terms of Reference are:

1) To establish, review and revise policies and procedures to ensure Edge Hill University conducts its business in accordance with the requirements of the Human Tissue Act (2004) and associated codes of practice.
2) To monitor activity under the University's Human Tissue Research Licence.
3) To monitor compliance with the conditions of the University's Human Tissue Research Licence, and policies and procedures detailed in the University's Human Tissue Quality Manual, including the review of internal and Human Tissue Authority audits.
4) To establish the provision and monitoring of training and support given to Edge Hill University staff and postgraduate students working under the University's Human Tissue Research Licence, as well as members of the University Research Ethics Committee.
5) To review any adverse events relating to the handling or storage of human tissue and implementing changes in policy or procedure where appropriate.
6) To receive reports from the University Research Ethics Sub-Committee on ethics applications received that contain licensable activity.
7) To monitor the effectiveness of the Committee on an annual basis.
8) To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the committee's business.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine
Secretary	Research Office
Ex-Officio Members	Designated Individual Persons Designate (Professional Services staff responsible for storing and handling Human Tissue) University Bio Safety Officer
Appointed Members	A representative of Research Office An academic representative of every Department using Human Tissue
Elected Members	Not applicable
Student Representation	Not applicable
External Representation	Not applicable
In Attendance	Not applicable

Whilst not a constituted member, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) & University Secretary will receive papers for this meeting as the License Holder's Contact and will have any relevant matters escalated to them.

Research Degrees Sub-Committee

The Research Degrees Sub-Committee is responsible for research degree matters relating to the sector, quality, regulations, policies and postgraduate researcher experience. Its Terms of Reference are:

1. To consider proposals for modifications to regulations and policies pertaining to research degrees.
2. To make recommendations to Academic Board, through the Research and Innovation Committee, where appropriate, for modification of the Research Degree Regulations and their operation.
3. To provide oversight of any research degree developments in the sector, as well as quality & regulatory matters in relation to research degrees and alert the University through the Research and Innovation Committee where appropriate.
4. To identify, evaluate, promote and disseminate good practice in postgraduate researcher supervision.
5. To consider issues relating to postgraduate researcher experience, making recommendations as appropriate.
6. To consider matters as requested by the Graduate School.
7. To monitor the effectiveness of the sub-committee on an annual basis.
8. To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the sub-committee's business.

Its constitution shall be as follows:

Chair	Dean of the Graduate School
Secretary	Research Degree Administration Coordinator
Ex-officio members	Graduate School Manager
	PVC (Research)
	Associate Dean of the Graduate School
	Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts & Sciences
	Associate Dean (Research and Innovation), Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine
	Associate Dean (Research & Impact), Faculty of Education
Appointed members	Graduate School Research Degree Contacts[32]
	Researcher Development Fellow
In attendance	Research Office Representative Learning Services Representative Student Services Representative

[32] The Graduate School Research Degree Contacts are representatives from each of the current 13 subject areas in which we have research degrees. They are allocated the role of being responsible for the organisation and operationalisation of Graduate School processes within the relevant subject area. Subject areas for research degrees do not equate to departments or any other academic unit. Graduate School Research Degree Contacts are appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School in consultation with the PVC (Research).

	Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework Representative PGR representative
Student Union Representation	SU Vice-President (Academic Representation)

Graduate School Board of Studies

The Graduate School Board of Studies operates with delegated authority from the Academic Board in confirming Progression and Award results for Edge Hill University Research Awards. Specifically, it is responsible for:

1. Confirming examination outcomes for project registration, progression, and final examinations
2. Monitoring and reviewing individual PGR progress, including reviewing the recommendations of the annual appraisal process and taking final decisions on appraisal outcomes.
3. Taking final decisions on malpractice outcomes.
4. Taking final decisions on fitness to study outcomes.
5. Taking final decisions on termination of registration.

Its membership shall be as follows:

Chair	Associate Dean of the Graduate School
Secretary	Graduate School Administrator
Ex-officio members	Researcher Development Fellow
Appointed members	3 academic staff seconded to the Graduate School[33]

The Graduate School Board of Studies shall be considered quorate if two members of the Board are present in addition to the Chair and the Secretary.

The Graduate School Board of Studies is to be considered as managing closed business and therefore its proceedings are confidential.

[33] These are Edge Hill University academic staff, seconded to the Graduate School, with expertise in one of each of: Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities, broadly construed. They will be appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School in consultation with the PVC Research.

Faculty Boards

Faculty Boards are responsible to the Academic Board for implementing the following either directly or through delegation to, and reports from, their sub-committees and programme boards:

1. The monitoring, evaluation, review and enhancement of all Faculty academic provision including academic partnerships.
2. Monitoring student recruitment and retention across all programmes in the Faculty.
3. Monitoring student progression and achievement across the Faculty.
4. Engaging and facilitating the involvement of student representatives and processes for feedback to other students.
5. The consideration of regular reports from Programme Boards throughout the academic year.
6. The approval of outline proposals for future academic development prior to submission to the Academic Planning Committee (APC).
7. The consideration and response to consultation documents from the Academic Board and its committees.
8. The scrutiny of validation documentation, including partner-delivered provision, prior to submission for Institutional approval.
9. The consideration of proposals for programme modifications on the basis of recommendations from Programme Boards and any subsequent referral to the Validation and Audit Sub-Committee Standing Panel.
10. The approval of external examiner reports and responses or where this is delegated to a sub-committee, the approval of a summary report.
11. The approval of the Faculty Research Development Plan.
12. The consideration and approval of reports and proposals from Faculty sub-committees for Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, Research and Knowledge Transfer and Retention and Widening Participation.
13. To oversee the location of curriculum across planning units / Departments / Schools in the Faculty, managing any transitions of curriculum to protect the integrity of data. Proposals for structural changes are to be recommended to Academic Board for approval.
14. Regular reporting to Academic Board committees as appropriate.
15. To retain an oversight of the effectiveness of its reporting sub-committees.
16. To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the Board's business.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	Pro Vice-Chancellor & Dean of Faculty
Ex-Officio Members	Senior academic staff from across the Faculty, the number to be determined by the Faculty Faculty Administration Manager
Academic Staff Representation	Elected or ex-officio representation from across the Faculty, the number of representatives to be determined by the Faculty
Student Staff Representation	One member of Support Staff from across the Faculty
Student Representation	A minimum of three student representatives including one representative of the Students' Union and two representatives elected or nominated by programme boards. Faculty Postgraduate Research representative
In Attendance	Representatives from Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework, Academic Registry and Learning Services, Centre for Learning & Teaching, Student Services and/or other Faculties as determined by the Board's business Representatives of external stakeholders[34]

Secretarial and administrative support for Faculty Boards is provided from within the Faculty.

Faculty Committees

Faculties will require expert advice on key aspects of academic policy and should establish standing sub-committees in the following areas:

- Academic Planning;
- Academic Quality & Enhancement;
- Learning and Teaching;
- Research

(Note: Committee titles for the above four areas will vary across Faculties and other committees may be established according to the particular needs of the Faculty).

- Programme/Subject Boards (see 9.2)
- Staff-Student Consultative Fora (see 9.3)

[34] For example, partner organisations and employers.

Programme/Subject Boards

The first-line responsibility for the quality assurance of academic provision rests with Programme/Subject Boards. These also provide a formal process for student representation which complements the more informal Student-Staff Consultative Fora (SSCFs).

1. Programme/Subject Boards are responsible for a defined group of cognate academic provision and are responsible to Faculty Board for:
2. Monitoring, evaluation and review of all academic provision within the remit of the Board.
3. Monitoring student academic performance, progression and achievement.
4. Monitoring student recruitment and retention across provision within the remit of the Board.
5. Consideration of the department's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and, at the appropriate point in the cycle, its Periodic Review report.
6. Consideration of regular reports and minutes from Student-Staff Consultative Fora (SSCFs) within the remit of the Board.
7. Where practicable, consideration of outline programme proposals (Applications for Development Consent) and proposals for programme modifications.
8. Recommendation to Faculty Board for the appointment, or extension of the terms of appointment, of external examiners.
9. Receipt and consideration of external examiner reports and departmental responses.
10. Responding to consultation from other Committees and Groups in the University on matters relevant to the programmes that are within the Board's remit.
11. Engaging and facilitating the involvement of student representatives including arrangements for their nomination and selection and processes for feeding back to other students.
12. To monitor the effectiveness of the Committee on an annual basis
13. To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the Board's business.

Category of Membership	Committee Member
Chair	Normally the member of staff with overall responsibility for the management of the programme.
Secretary	Member of staff from the Faculty or Department Office
Members	An academic staff representative from each award-bearing course or pathway. Staff with other significant course/programme management responsibilities.
Student Representation	At least one representative of each Student-Staff Consultative Forum, elected by and from its student members **(see 9.3 below).**
External Representation	Representatives of external stakeholders, e.g. partner organisations and employers.
In Attendance	Representation from key academic-related service areas, in particular Learning Services and the Academic Registry.

Student-Staff Consultative Fora

Student-Staff Consultative Fora (SSCFs) are convened for a defined year, pathway or programme and are formally accountable to Programme Boards. Their Terms of Reference are to:

1. To engage and facilitate the involvement of student representatives including arrangements for their nomination and selection and processes for feedback to other students.
2. To consider staff and student feedback on the modules and programmes within the remit of the established group.
3. To consult with staff and students on matters of relevance relating to the modules and programmes within the remit of the established group.
4. To ensure that any necessary action arising from feedback and consultation is channelled through the appropriate structures with the actors identified, and that feedback on outcomes is provided to students, staff and other relevant parties.
5. To enable service area and external representation where appropriate.
6. To ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in the conduct of the Forum's business.

Student-Staff Consultative Fora have a different status from that of Programme and Faculty Boards. The latter are formally-constituted committees within the University's deliberative structure whilst Faculties are permitted greater discretion over the design and operation of SSCFs; for example, they might be constituted on a year group, pathway or award/course basis. Decisions on the number of SSCFs should be informed by two considerations:

1. The size and complexity of the provision; and
2. The need to ensure that all aspects of the business of a SSCF are directly relevant to the particular interests of its student and staff members.

It is up to the Faculties to determine whether an SSCF is necessary and include information about the alternative student feedback and representation mechanisms adopted in the absence of an SSCF (i.e. feedback goes directly to programme board without this middle step).

The constitutions of SSCFs may either provide for 'open' student membership or for elected student representatives. The latter option is recommended and, if adopted, the constitution of a SSCF must ensure that the student membership is capable of representing the full range and diversity of the interests and experiences of the various constituencies from which the student representatives are drawn. The staff membership of SSCFs must similarly reflect the breadth of the curriculum and the full range of course management roles. In general, Faculties should aim to establish SSCFs in which the number of student and staff members is roughly equal.

The Students' Union provides a framework for the SSCFs to promote engagement in constructive dialogue and appropriate feedback. The framework does this by outlining the minimum requirements of all parties.

Chapter 9
Quality Assurance of Research Degrees

Updated October 2021

Table of Contents

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE 3
2. PRINCIPLES 3
3. RESPONSIBLE STRUCTURES WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY 4
The Graduate School 4
Graduate School Board of Studies 5
4. THE UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH DEGREES 6
5. APPROVAL, MONITORING AND REVIEW IN RELATION TO RESEARCH DEGREES 6
Approval and modification of research degrees 6
Modifications of research degree routes 7
Approval of Professional Doctorate cohorts 7
Review of research degree routes 8
Review and approval of changes to Research Degrees Regulations 9
Review of Professional Doctorates 9
Admission to Edge Hill's research degrees 9
Approval, monitoring of review of supervisory teams and supervisory capacity 12
Postgraduate researcher development 14
Approval of project registration 15
Ethical scrutiny and approval 17
Progression viva 17
Changes to registration 19
Change to mode of study 19
Interruption of study 20
Extension to the period of registration and to submission deadlines 20
Change in award level 20
Withdrawal and termination of registration for an Edge Hill University research degree 21
Monitoring of PGR progress 21
The appointment of examiners 22
Appointment of viva chairs 23
Final examination 23

PhD by publication 25
Academic malpractice 27
Academic appeals 27
Complaints 28
PGR representation and PGR experience 28
PGRs with teaching responsibilities 29
Employability 29
Working with third parties 29
Research degrees and collaborating institutions 29
1. Guaranteed access to physical resources 30
2. Partnerships 30
3. Research degree funding provided by an external organisation 30

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This chapter describes the processes that the University has put in place to assure the quality of the research degrees that it awards.[1] The chapter outlines the form that approval, monitoring and review take in relation to each relevant element of research degrees at Edge Hill. It generally does not repeat the content of the University's Research Degree Regulations,[2] which are the definitive statement of both regulative and constitutive matters in relation to the University's research degrees and are in no way modified or overturned by the content of this chapter. The Research Degree Regulations, however, do not describe many of the Graduate School co-ordinated processes that are essential to the quality management of research degrees at Edge Hill. As a consequence, this chapter, along with various other Graduate School guidance and process documents,[3] supplements the Research Degree Regulations and its appendices (Schedules A-G), and describes in greater detail processes only briefly mentioned, or in some cases merely alluded to, in the Research Degree Regulations.

The processes are situated centrally and managed through the Graduate School Board of Studies (GSBoS), Research Degrees Sub-Committee (RDSC)[4] and the Graduate School,[5] which, collectively, act as the focus for all processes and procedures relevant to the experience of postgraduate researchers (PGRs) whilst they are at the University. The Graduate School has devolved some responsibilities, but no powers, to the faculties in relation to day-to-day operational matters (such as arranging examinations) while maintaining oversight and ownership of, and responsibility for, the processes.

2. PRINCIPLES

The University's research degree processes are intended to be both robust and also to fulfil a developmental function by, for example, preparing PGRs for their final oral examination through exposing them to vivas and viva-like experiences involving increasing degrees of critique and externality from an early stage in their research. In the development of its policies and procedures Edge Hill takes full account of the Office for Students conditions of registration,[6] *the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education*,[7] of the Framework for Higher

[1] By Order of the Privy Council, Edge Hill University was granted Research Degree Awarding Powers in August 2008.
[2] Available at https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/research-degree-regulations/
[3] Listed in Schedule E of the Research Degree Regulations.
[4] For the constitution and terms of reference for both the Graduate School Board of Studies and Research Degrees Sub-Committee see Quality Management Handbook (QMH) Chapter 8: https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/quality-management-handbook/
[5] http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/graduateschool/.
[6] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/
[7] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

Education Qualifications,[8] and of practice across the higher education sector. The University's policies and procedures are transparent and conducted in such a way as to ensure, as far as is possible, the independence - from the project and associated thesis or dissertation upon which the assessment of PGRs is based - of those taking decisions about the progression and examination of PGRs. Information regarding research degrees is included on the Graduate School website and on the PGR Blackboard site which are updated regularly and made available to PGRs and supervisors.

Edge Hill regards its PGRs as being early career researchers who are completing research that will prepare them for careers not only as researchers and university staff but also, through the development of a range of skills and reflection on the learning they bring to their research, for careers outside academia.

Edge Hill University supports lifelong learning, and this is reflected in the fact that a proportion of its PGRs study in part-time mode. The institution is committed to ensuring that its research degree processes are designed to meet the needs of part-time, as well as full-time, PGRs, in particular through ensuring that mandatory training and development sessions and other obligatory processes are identified with as much notice as possible and are generally scheduled on the same single day each week, or sometimes at the weekend, to assist those studying part-time, and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) who have teaching responsibilities.

3. RESPONSIBLE STRUCTURES WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY

The University's academic governance structure is the means by which large structures (departments, faculties etc.) are accountable to the University in relation to much of their responsibilities. As a consequence, it is really the Graduate School, not the GSBoS (which is part of the Graduate School), or Research Degrees Sub-Committee that is ultimately responsible for research degrees at Edge Hill. The accountability of the RDSC, via the University Research and Innovation Committee, to Academic Board is the means by which the Graduate School is held accountable to the University.

The Graduate School

The Graduate School is responsible for the development and operation of the processes and procedures relating to all aspects of research degree registrations, progression and examination. The Graduate School is managed by the Dean of the Graduate School, assisted by the Associate Dean of the Graduate School and the Graduate School Manager. Some of the day-to-day processes are operationalised in the faculties. The Graduate School is an academic unit of the University, but it is also, in a wider sense, essentially a complex

[8] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks

network of academics, managers, administrators and structures, managed and coordinated by the Dean, Associate Dean and Graduate School Manager.

The Graduate School is also responsible for taking a range of decisions in relation to PGR registration that do not require more formal consideration by GSBoS. Those include the following:

- changes to registration (mode of study, target award)
- extensions
- interruptions of study
- approval of initial supervisory teams
- approval of changes to supervisory teams
- approval of examination panels

Some applications for changes to registration, including withdrawals, simply require administrative checking and processing by administrators in the Graduate School, but where decisions are required the Graduate School Manager is responsible for making those decisions. Extensions and interruptions are considered by the Associate Dean of the Graduate School (who is also the Chair of the Graduate School Board of Studies). Approval of initial supervisory teams, changes to supervisory teams and approval of examination panels are the responsibility of the Graduate School Manager. Where necessary, the Graduate School Manager will consult the Associate Dean. The Dean of the Graduate School does not generally take a role in matters that concern individual PGRs, including the work of the Graduate School Board of Studies, in order to remain independent to consider appeals if necessary.

Graduate School Board of Studies

The University's research degrees are awarded by Academic Board, which devolves its powers in this respect to the Graduate School Board of Studies (GSBoS), which is not a deliberative committee but a Progression & Award Board of the University, with some additional responsibilities for other academic matters as specified in its Terms of Reference. Graduate School Board of Studies operates under the delegated authority of Academic Board. The Dean of the Graduate School provides an annual overview report for Academic Board which is the research degree equivalent of the annual overview report on the operation of Progression and Award Boards for Taught provision, which confirms that all awards have been made in accordance with the appropriate regulations and processes.

The Graduate School Board of Studies is chaired by the Associate Dean of the Graduate School and deals with the following business:

- approval of examination outcomes (project registration, progression, and final examination)
- awards
- review of individual PGR progress
- annual appraisals
- final decisions on malpractice outcomes
- final decisions on fitness to study
- final decisions on termination of registration

Research Degrees Sub-Committee

Research Degrees Sub-Committee is a deliberative committee and is concerned not with individual research degree registrations, but rather with matters related to developments in the sector, quality, regulations, policies and PGR experience, etc. The Research Degrees Sub-Committee meets three times per year and is chaired by the Dean of the Graduate School. The Research Degrees Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of the Research and Innovation Committee and reports in the standard way through its minutes etc.

4. THE UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH DEGREES

Edge Hill currently awards four research degrees, the Master by Research (MRes), the Master of Philosophy (MPhil), the Professional Doctorate and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The MPhil cannot be a target award and is only awarded to PhD candidates unsuccessful in gaining a doctorate following final examination for a doctorate. The PhD may be obtained either by PGRs following the conventional route, or by staff or former staff submitting a portfolio of published work and analytical commentary. In each case assessment is by a *viva voce* examination. The characteristics of each award are outlined in the Research Degree Regulations and are described in more detail in Schedule C of those regulations, and the Research Degree Handbook.[9]

5. APPROVAL, MONITORING AND REVIEW IN RELATION TO RESEARCH DEGREES

Approval and modification of research degrees

There is a single route for each research degree (PhD, professional doctorate and MRes), and the PhD by publication is an alternative route to a PhD available to staff of the University and some former staff. There are no individual research degree programmes – no

[9] http://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/15194/

tokens of a given type of research degree, in the way that there are, for example, individual validated tokens of the type Bachelor of Arts, such as a B.A. in History or a B.A. in English. As a consequence, there is no validation of research degrees, but rather approval of research degree routes or modifications to research degree routes by Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

Modifications of research degree routes

Proposal of new research degrees is very rare, and given that the University offers the PhD, PhD by publication, professional doctorate and MRes, and has defined routes for each, and, in addition has withdrawn the MPhil as a target award, it seems unlikely that any new research degree routes will be proposed in the foreseeable future.

Nonetheless, changes may occasionally be required to research degree routes. In such cases, the Graduate School convenes a working group to identify the options available. The working group submits formal proposals to Research Degrees Sub-Committee for consideration. RDSC may suggest modifications, request further developmental work, or approve the proposals in their entirety. The process is coordinated by the Dean of the Graduate School, who then makes the necessary alterations to the Research Degree Regulations through the formal process for amending those regulations.

Approval of Professional Doctorate cohorts

Another form of approval that is occasionally required is that of new professional doctorate cohorts. Such approval can take two forms – approval of the intake of a new cohort studying in an area where the University already has at least one cohort working in that area, and approval of the first cohort for professional doctorate study in a given subject area. As already noted, the professional doctorate route has been approved and any proposal to take a cohort working in a given subject area must be consistent with the approved route. That means that approval of new cohorts, whether the first in a given subject area or a subsequent intake in an existing professional doctorate subject area, concentrates on the supervisory capacity and expertise of the proposing team, the availability of internal examiners, the availability of facilities and resources, the size of the proposed cohort, and the proposed post-nominal designation. A formal application to RDSC must be made by each proposing team by completion of the relevant pro forma. Representatives of the proposing team attend part of the meeting of RDSC that considers the application and are questioned by members of the sub-committee. RDSC may require modifications, or may reject a proposal, but when approval is given that approval is only for the intake of a single cohort. The intake of subsequent cohorts requires separate approval at a later date. RDSC also stipulates a maximum number of PGRs that may be taken in the cohort that it approves and confirms the post-nominal designation. There is no separate programme title (because there is no programme, but only a route), so PGRs are awarded a professional doctorate and

may use the approved post-nominal designation, but they are not awarded a professional doctorate in a named subject, rather, the certificate gives the title of the research project (the thesis title). The award would, therefore, be of a professional doctorate, not, for example, of an EdD.

Review of research degree routes

Research degree routes are not programmes, and as such they are not the kind of thing that can be reviewed in the way that programmes are standardly reviewed. The research degree experience of each individual is more or less unique, so it is not possible to make the kind of inferences from general data about, for example, completion rates, withdrawals, times to completion etc. that are standardly made in the evaluation and review of programmes. The same issues arise in relation to figures on recruitment and the 'performance' of specific departments or faculties. As a consequence, the evaluation and review of research degrees is quite different from that of taught programmes.

Evaluation and review is holistic and conducted annually by the Graduate School. There are two interconnected sets of processes that provide data for evaluation and review of research degrees – one is the appraisal of individual PGR progress and experiences, and the other is the process of benchmarking that culminates in the annual updates to the Research Degree Regulations and chapter 9 of the Quality Management Handbook.

The appraisal of PGR progress and experiences includes formal annual appraisal conducted by the Graduate School Board of Studies, formal review of PGR progress, which is conducted by the Graduate School Board of Studies in cases where the Board deems it necessary to provide the support to an individual PGR that is afforded by the production of a short report by the PGR and another by the Director of Studies on behalf of the supervisory team at regular intervals for a fixed period of time to assist a PGR who has been struggling or who is returning from a period of interruption of studies. The Graduate School also oversees the approval of supervisory teams informed by regular capacity checks made by the Graduate School to ensure that, before accepting a PGR, the University has the capacity to provide the required number of supervisors with appropriate subject expertise, and the necessary internal examiners for the project.

The processes by which amendments are made on an annual basis to the Research Degree Regulations and to chapter 9 of the Quality Management Handbook involve consideration by the Graduate School of relevant developments in relation to research degrees that emerge from the work of the OfS, QAA, RCUK, the UK Council for Graduate Education, the Research and Enterprise Network for Universities and Vitae, along with agendas such as the REF and Athena SWAN. In addition, the Graduate School provides the opportunity to review our own provision by reflecting on the PGR experience through the work of Research

Degrees Sub-Committee, Postgraduate Researcher Representatives and the associated PGR representation structures.

Review and approval of changes to Research Degrees Regulations

Such benchmarking and evaluation leads to the Graduate School identifying proposed amendments to the Research Degree Regulations. Those proposals are considered at the spring meeting of Research Degrees Sub-Committee. They are then considered by Research and Innovation Committee before being considered and approved by Academic Board at its July meeting. The final, amended version of the Research Degree Regulations and associated appendices is then taken back to RDSC at its first meeting of the new academic year for information. Changes made to the Research Degree Regulations and any alterations to processes and procedures made during the year are reflected in the revisions to chapter 9 of the Quality Management Handbook.

Review of Professional Doctorates

There are three kinds of review of professional doctorates: i. review of the route(s); ii. review of capacity; and iii. review of the content of subject-specific training. The routes are reviewed in the way described above under 'Review of Research Degree Routes'.

Capacity is reviewed as described above under 'Approval of Professional Doctorate Cohorts' because approval is only ever for the intake of a single cohort, so the approval of any subsequent cohort requires an additional application by the delivery team.

Review of the subject-specific training is completed annually by the delivery team under the co-ordination of the relevant professional doctorate lead. The results of such reviews are considered by RDSC.

Admission to Edge Hill's research degrees

A candidate must normally hold at least an upper second-class honours degree from a UK HEI, its equivalent from an HEI outside the UK,[10] or other equivalent qualifications or professional experience. Evidence of equivalence will normally be presented through a portfolio. Applicants for research degrees must provide at least two academic references from appropriate referees who can attest to their academic attainment and fitness for research.

Applications for admission to a research degree are received by the Graduate School, which processes them and sends them to the relevant Graduate School Research Degree Coordinator who manages the process of scrutiny of both the application and references.

[10] As determined by the UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills (UK ENIC): enic.org.uk.

Where an applicant's qualifications and references are satisfactory and there is the potential to offer appropriate supervision and provide the necessary facilities, that applicant may be offered an interview. International applications are directed to the International Office by the Graduate School in the first instance to ensure the necessary checks are completed. In the case of competition for a limited number of places, a short-listing process may take place before the interview stage. The decision of the panel is reported to the Graduate School by the panel chair using a checklist form that ensures that panels consider all relevant matters. The panel may place conditions on the offer of a research degree place, which may include a requirement that further preparatory study be undertaken. The Graduate School ensures that the checklist has been completed satisfactorily before making an offer of a place.[11] All PhD, professional doctorate, and non-UK MRes applicants that are offered a place must have been interviewed. The decision as to whether to conduct an interview for UK MRes applicants is made by the relevant Graduate School research degree contact in consultation with the MRes Lead or, where necessary, the Graduate School. An interview is not a regulatory requirement because many MRes applicants are Edge Hill undergraduates at the time of application, and so are already known to the department or faculty in which they would be based and have discussed the proposal with appropriate Edge Hill staff. In such cases, an interview is unlikely to serve any useful purpose. The fact that an interview is not a regulatory requirement does not, however, in any way limit the ability of the Graduate School research degree contact to require an interview if it is necessary to establish whether a candidate should be offered a place and/or whether the University has the relevant supervisory capacity.

Applicants are made aware that admission to the University does not guarantee registration of the research project, as a PGR may develop a detailed research proposal that proves to be of insufficient quality or fails to meet the necessary academic requirements.

The initial stage of the programme consists in the PGRs developing a detailed research proposal, which is examined by three academics, including two with subject-specific expertise, to determine whether the project should be registered. In the case of the PhD and the professional doctorate, the project registration examination includes a viva. In the case of the MRes the proposal is shorter than those for doctoral projects and examination does not include a viva. Proposed supervisory teams are assessed against criteria (both for the composition of the team and individual membership of a supervisory team) by the Graduate School and, where necessary, revisions to teams may be required. If, during this process, it becomes apparent that the University cannot provide appropriate supervision or the facilities for its successful completion, the PGR will be encouraged to modify the

[11] http://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/11531/ illustrates the administrative checks that take place between interview and offer.

proposal and given suitable guidance and support. A PGR that was unwilling to make such revisions would be supported to seek registration for a research degree at another university where appropriate supervision and facilities are available. Such an outcome is highly unlikely, however, because an assessment of supervisory requirements for the project as outlined at the point of application is made prior to the offer of a place. While plans can change as a full registration proposal is prepared, any PGR developing their project in a direction that would make supervision or the provision of suitable facilities impossible would be alerted to that danger by the supervisory team and could make adjustments accordingly.

Enrolment for research degrees at Edge Hill is at one of two enrolment points determined each year by the Graduate School. The enrolment points are usually at the beginning of October and the beginning of February. This not only helps ensure that PGRs are part of a cohort, but also means that all PGRs have the same experience in relation to researcher development and training opportunities, as they all have full access to the programme of sessions co-ordinated by the Graduate School, which is delivered twice per year. In certain very exceptional circumstances (related to some external funding conditions), and only in the case of the PhD, a PGR may be permitted to begin study at a specified date at another point in the academic year (the date being determined by the Graduate School in consultation with Academic Registry). That is not desirable, however, and is discouraged, because the programme of postgraduate researcher development is extensive and cannot be repeated for PGRs beginning their studies at an atypical point in the academic year. Such PGRs cannot, therefore, have the same quality of experience as PGRs beginning their studies at one of the standard enrolment points. To mitigate this state of affairs as much as possible, PGRs will only be accepted in such circumstances in cases where the relevant subject area demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the Graduate School, that it is able to provide alternative training and development activities to fully compensate (at least at the level of content, if not at that of discussion and interaction with other PGRs) for all sessions that the incoming PGR will miss as a result of the atypical enrolment point.

The Graduate School may accept applications for research degrees from candidates who wish to transfer from another UK research degree awarding institution where they are already registered, and from where their supervisor is moving to join the staff of Edge Hill. In such cases, evidence of progress from the candidate's previous institution will be used to inform a decision by the Graduate School regarding the point of registration, and the time remaining until progression or submission.

Each such case will be unique, so while the standard interview checklist is the minimum requirement in relation to documentation, additional documentary requirements may be established by the Graduate School in particular cases. In all cases, however, an admissions

interview must be conducted – chaired by someone appointed to that role by the Graduate School, and the University's English language requirements must be met.

Approval, monitoring of review of supervisory teams and supervisory capacity[12]

Supervisors of doctoral PGRs must be active researchers currently involved in the production of peer-reviewed publications, and with a recent record of such publications. Edge Hill University doctoral PGRs each have a supervisory team consisting of at least two, but normally not more than three, supervisors, two of whom will be internal to the institution and at least one will have previous experience of successful supervision at doctoral level. Collectively, the supervisory team will demonstrate active engagement in research, bringing to the support of the PGR a range of skills and knowledge relevant to the project.

One member of the supervisory team, who will be a permanent member of staff of the University, will be designated as Director of Studies. The Director of Studies has responsibility to ensure supervision of the candidate on a regular and frequent basis and manages the supervisory team. Other members of the team will have specific subject and/or methodological expertise and may, occasionally, be drawn from outside the University when absolutely necessary.

MRes PGRs will standardly have one supervisor, but some may have a team of two supervisors where a combination of the expertise of two members of staff is necessary.

Initial proposals for supervisory teams are made by Graduate School research degree contacts. Those are considered against criteria by the Graduate School, and amendments made, in consultation with research degree contacts and departments and faculties, when necessary. Following the project registration examination process supervisory teams are confirmed by the Graduate School. This process of making initial proposals in relation to the supervisory team and later confirmation after the project has been fully designed and approved, ensures that if the design of a project alters during the course of the preparation of the project registration research proposal in such a way that the initial supervisory team is not suitable, adjustments can be made to the team immediately.

If it becomes necessary to alter a supervisory team at any time after confirmation of the team, an application is considered by the Graduate School.

[12] Candidates for PhD by publication are not PGRs, and do not have supervisors. Such candidates sometimes have mentors appointed from among the staff of the University, but that is an informal advisory role and does not constitute supervision.

Assurance of the quality of supervision provided for the University's doctoral PGRs rests with the Graduate School and GSBoS. It is for that reason that the Graduate School must approve any permanent changes to supervisory arrangements. Where a change is necessitated by the ill-health, retirement or other long-term unavailability of a member of the supervisory team, appropriate alternative arrangements must be proposed by the relevant research degree contact and any such arrangements must be organised to ensure that the PGR is not disadvantaged in project progression.

There will inevitably be situations where difficulties arise in the relationship between PGR and supervisor. Where this is the case, the parties should initially seek to resolve these informally by involving, where s/he is not part of the situation, the Director of Studies in a mediating role. Where this proves impossible or the issue remains unresolved, the Graduate School should be contacted. The Graduate School will then resolve matters, and changes may be made to supervisory arrangements by the Graduate School.

While supervisory difficulties can be brought to the attention of the Graduate School at any time of the year, the annual appraisal process provides an opportunity to monitor supervision on a regular basis. As part of that process PGRs and Directors of Studies (on behalf of the supervisory team) each write separate reports on the PGR's progress, which can assist the Graduate School in identifying difficulties in relation to supervision. When such difficulties are identified by those means they are taken to GSBoS for consideration if the Graduate School is unable to informally resolve any issue.

The Graduate School regularly monitors supervisory capacity across the University. Such monitoring considers both the supervisory load of individual members of staff (which is not permitted to rise, in the most extreme cases, above nine PGRs in total, a maximum of six of which can be doctoral PGRs),[13] and the capacity within subject areas. This involves not only considering the supervisory load of individual staff, but also the requirements for internal examiners, which must also be taken into account in assessing supervisory capacity, as examiners cannot have had any involvement in the supervision of PGRs whom they examine. Graduate School research degree contacts are responsible for monitoring supervisory capacity within their subject area, but the Graduate School also monitors capacity independently. In addition, capacity is considered on every occasion on which a supervisory team is approved.

[13] Those figures are maximums for the most experienced supervisors, not a standard supervisory load. Many supervisors will not be permitted such a load.

Postgraduate researcher development

Postgraduate researcher development takes five different forms:[14]

I. Core postgraduate researcher development sessions (mandatory for all new PGRs)
II. Methodological development sessions (mandatory for all new MRes and professional doctorate PGRs, and available for inclusion in a programme of related studies for all PhD PGRs)
III. Additional postgraduate researcher development sessions (mandatory for all new PhD PGRs, but available to all PGRs for inclusion in a programme of related studies)
IV. Professional doctorate subject-specific development sessions (mandatory for all professional doctorate PGRs)
V. The individual programme of related studies designed by the PGR and his or her supervisor(s) (mandatory for all PGRs).

The design and delivery of the core and additional postgraduate researcher development sessions is co-ordinated by the Associate Dean of the Graduate School in consultation with the MRes Lead, the Professional Doctorate Leads, the MRes Co-ordinators (of which there are three – one each for social science, science, and arts & humanities), and the Graduate School research degree contacts for each subject area (broadly equivalent to each REF unit of assessment). The design of the core postgraduate researcher development programme is informed by benchmarking and consideration of evaluations of previous training. As part of the evaluation of all postgraduate researcher development, PGRs are asked whether there are any topics they feel should be added to the programme.

The design and delivery of the methodological development programme is co-ordinated by the MRes Lead and overseen by the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. The three MRes coordinators consult with staff in their respective broad disciplinary categories (social science, science, and arts & humanities), and propose content for up to six sessions in each broad disciplinary category. In addition, some cross-disciplinary topics are identified and included in the programme as extra sessions.

The design and delivery of subject-specific development for the professional doctorates is coordinated by the Professional Doctorate Leads, who are also responsible for evaluation of such sessions.

[14] Detailed descriptions of the different forms of research student development sessions and the specific schedules can be found in the Research Degree Handbook: http://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/15194/

All postgraduate researcher development activities are evaluated annually by the Graduate School.

Approval of project registration

The GSBoS is the body that formally approves a programme of research as being appropriate for a PGR seeking the award of an Edge Hill University research degree. In making its decision, however, the Board takes the advice of the relevant examination panel.[15] This panel generally comprises three research-active members of staff, one of whom will normally be a member of the PGR's proposed supervisory team and one of whom will be appointed as chair in accordance with the Research Degree Regulations. The panel provides a written report containing a recommendation to GSBoS. The recommendation and paperwork are considered by GSBoS. Exceptions to the above arrangements for panel membership require the approval of the Chair of the GSBoS.

The examination panel's recommendation is one of the following:

I. The project should be registered at the level of the degree sought;
II. The project should not be registered at the present time. The PGR should revise and resubmit the proposal for re-examination (with a viva for doctoral degrees);[16]
III. Following a re-examination, the submission is not of an appropriate standard, so the project should not be registered (the PGR's enrolment will therefore be terminated by the Board); or
IV. The PGR should be considered under the University's malpractice regulations.

Should the panel recommend that the project should not be registered, the PGR has one opportunity to re-submit a proposal and be re-examined.

In order to determine that any particular project is an appropriate one to be pursued by a specific PGR for a research degree of Edge Hill University, the GSBoS must satisfy itself that:

I. the PGR is suitably qualified;
II. the programme of research submitted by the applicant is viable and appropriate to the standard of the award sought;
III. the supervisory arrangements are adequate and sustainable in terms of the programme requirements;
IV. appropriate resources and facilities are available for the conduct of the programme of research;

[15] http://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/12124/ contains project registration processes, guidance, and examination paperwork.
[16] Where the PGR's original submission was made after the submission deadline, the initial examination must be considered a second sitting. Under such circumstances, the option to offer revise and resubmit is not available.

V. ethical approval has been, or is in the process of being, obtained where appropriate; and,
VI. where a project is wholly or partly funded by an external agency or there is a collaborating institution, this does not inhibit the fulfilment of the objectives of the project and/or the academic requirements of the research degree, nor potentially give rise to a conflict of interest with the University. Formal written agreement from any collaborating organisation is required before registration can be approved.

Research proposals are assessed against the following criteria:

By the end of the examination, the examiners should be satisfied that the PGR can:

1. Demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of appropriate research methodologies in designing the research;
2. Demonstrate appropriate research project management skills, and critically reflect on those skills (must have included a research project management plan in the submission);
3. Demonstrate sensitivity to, and understanding of, ethical and other values. Has planned for and identified a relevant, specific, Research Ethics Committee meeting date at which ethical approval will be sought;
4. Articulate and defend a scholarly argument at the relevant postgraduate level;
5. Critically reflect on the methodological choices made in designing the research;
6. Demonstrate advanced critical ability to appraise, reflect and evaluate in relation to both subject knowledge and research skills development;
7. Demonstrate a capacity for advanced critical, theoretical and conceptual reflection upon subject matter of relevance to their area of study;
8. Demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills in relation to research design;
9. Provide rigorous and convincing evidence that the project is feasible and of an appropriate level for the research degree for which registration is sought;
10. Display academic writing skills to the appropriate level for the relevant research degree (assessed via submission only);
11. Demonstrate an advanced ability to defend their proposed research design;
12. Demonstrate the ability to produce a research data management (RDM) plan that both respects subject confidentiality and ensures data is reusable where appropriate (must have included the plan in the submission);
13. Demonstrate that they have completed:
    I. a learning and skills needs analysis;
    II. designed a programme of related studies that reflects the identified needs, and
    III. completed the programme of postgraduate researcher development activities appropriate to the research degree or have identified suitable

equivalent development activities to undertake (which must be approved in advance by the Graduate School).

If all of these criteria are met, there is no reason not to recommend registration of the project.

Ethical scrutiny and approval

Research proposals must adhere to the Research Ethics Policy.[17] No primary research or data collection may start until a proposal has gained the appropriate ethical approval.

Progression viva

In relation to doctoral work, the progression submission and subsequent viva provides an opportunity to confirm, in a formal setting, the robustness of the ideas developed in a PGR's research and their preparedness for a final viva examination, subsequent to the submission of a completed thesis.[18] This provides the Graduate School, through the GSBoS acting on its behalf, with an opportunity to assure itself that the project is of such a character as to allow the development of a thesis of a quality appropriate to submission for examination. It also allows the Graduate School, again acting through the GSBoS, to assure itself that the PGR is making intellectual developments appropriate to examination at the relevant level. Supervisors can also observe their PGR's performance in this formal setting, identify any areas where additional support is required and help to prepare them for the final examination. The progression viva, therefore, performs a number of important functions for all parties to the research degree.

Both part- and full-time doctoral PGRs must submit a progression application to the Graduate School. Normally, an application should be submitted no later than eighteen months from enrolment for full-time PGRs, or thirty-six months for part-time, and applications must be supported by the supervisory team. An application must be accompanied by a report of no more than 6,000 words outlining:

I. Progress to date in the literature review, methodological development and data collection;
II. The original contribution to knowledge that will be made by the research;
III. The written work to date,[19] its form and whether it has been seen and commented on by supervisors;

[17] 2020 - 2023 policy link - https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/research-ethics-policy/
[18] http://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/12123/ denotes progression processes, guidance, and examination paperwork.
[19] The written work should normally comprise at least one draft chapter of the thesis. Where work has already been published, the candidate might find it helpful to make reference to the appropriate publication(s).

IV. The timetable for thesis submission;
V. A detailed plan of the final thesis structure.

Applications are assessed by an examination panel, appointed on behalf of the Graduate School. The panel comprises two research-active members of staff , no more than one of whom will be a member of the supervisory team. One member will be external to the University and at least one of the examiners will have experience of supervising at least one PhD to successful completion. In some cases an independent chair will be appointed, but the internal examiner will act as chair where that person has completed research degree viva chair training. Amendment to these arrangements requires the approval of the Chair of the GSBoS or the Dean of the Graduate School and will only be given where exceptional mitigating circumstances apply.

On completion of the viva, the examination panel will prepare a report making one of the following recommendations to the GSBoS:

I. The application to progress be approved;
II. Progression should not be permitted at the present time. The candidate should revise and resubmit the application for re-examination *without* a second viva;
III. Progression should not be permitted at the present time. The candidate should revise and resubmit the application for re-examination *with* a second viva;
IV. Following a re-examination, the submission is not of an appropriate standard, so the candidate should not progress (the candidate's registration will therefore be terminated by the Board); or
V. The candidate should be considered under the University's malpractice regulations.

The GSBoS will make the final decision and where a referral by the examination panel is confirmed by the Board, a PGR is permitted a period of no more than eight weeks (for full-time PGRs) or twelve weeks (for part-time PGRs) to make a re-submission. In the case of a decision to refer an application for further work, written feedback will be provided by the panel chair for transmission to the PGR. In the event that a panel has not included a member of the PGR's supervisory team, the written feedback will also be provided to the supervisors.

Only one re-submission of a progression application is permitted and where an application is rejected for a second time registration will be terminated. PGRs who are refused permission to progress at the second submission may appeal under the Appeals Procedure described within the Research Degree Regulations.

The MRes does not include a formal progression *examination*, but it does have a formal review of the academic progress of all PGRs through a process co-ordinated by the MRes Lead on behalf of the Graduate School. The process is outlined on page 39 of the *Research Degree Handbook*.[20] The reports are considered by a panel drawn from the MRes co-ordinators, and also including the MRes Lead and, where necessary, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

Changes to registration

All changes to registration are by application and subject to the approval of the Graduate School. These changes include:

I. Change to mode of study[21]
II. Interruption of study
III. Extension to the period of registration and to submission deadlines
IV. Change in award level

In order to be considered by the Graduate School, any request for a change to registration must be supported in writing by the supervisory team.

Change to mode of study

Mode of study has different implications in research degrees from those it has in taught programmes because of the specificity of the research project and the requirements in relation to supervisory expertise. As a consequence, changes to mode of study cannot simply be granted whenever a request is made, but rather the Graduate School must consider the implications of granting such a request. Standardly, that will involve considering whether a change from full-time to part-time study will adversely affect the capacity of a supervisor or the University more generally to supervise other PGRs, including the capacity to admit new PGRs. Those issues are related to the allocation of (human) resources and planning, as the decision to admit a PGR is based on an assessment of the required resources, including human resources, for the period of registration originally proposed. Granting a request for a change from full-time to part-time registration could, if that request was made at the beginning of the period of registration, add three years to the time a supervisor is occupied in the supervision of a PGR. In addition, in relation to some projects, the Graduate School may ask the supervisory team to make an assessment of whether the currency of the research will be adversely affected by the delay to completion that a change of mode of study can bring.

[20] http://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/15194/
[21] For example, from part-time to full-time.

Interruption of study

Where a PGR is prevented from making progress with their programme of research because of illness or other reasonable cause, they may seek an interruption of study; PGRs are permitted, in extenuating circumstances, to interrupt studies (intercalate) for a minimum of three months (90 days) and a maximum period of twelve months (365 days) in total across the entirety of their registration period in the case of the PhD and professional doctorate, and a minimum of 60 days and a maximum of 90 days in the case of the MRes. It is unusual for a PGR to be granted periods of interruption totalling more than twelve months during the registration although exceptions to this may be made by the Graduate School acting within its discretion. Approved periods of interruption will not be included in calculating the PGR's period of registration for the purpose of determining minimum and maximum periods. Applications for interruption of registration must be supported by evidence and a considered explanation of the circumstances that will prevent completion within the normal timescale.

Extension to the period of registration and to submission deadlines

Requests to extend the period of registration beyond the maximum period normally allowed will be considered by the Graduate School, which will consider the request in the context of the progress made to date, the reason for the request for additional time, and its assessment of the likelihood of eventual submission of a thesis or dissertation appropriate for examination for the degree for which a PGR is registered.

An extension will normally only be made for a maximum 90-day period and requests that extensions should take effect retrospectively will only be granted should the Graduate School consider that sufficient justification has been provided to explain why such a course of action is necessary, and why a timely prospective application was not made.

The Graduate School also considers requests for extensions to examination submission deadlines. Again, PGRs must provide an appropriate reason for the request, and the Graduate School considers the impact of granting the request on the PGR's ability to complete the research degree within the timeframe specified by the Research Degree Regulations, because the extension of examination submission deadlines does not lead to an extension of the period of registration.

Change in award level

Should a PGR who has registered for the degree of PhD or professional doctorate be unable to complete the requirements of the award or seek to exit before submission for a doctorate, s/he may apply for the registration to be remitted to MRes. In such cases the Graduate School will satisfy itself that the standard of award applied for is appropriate and can be met. PGRs enrolled on the MRes cannot apply for a change in award level because

there is no lower level of research degree, and the University does not offer the opportunity for MRes PGRs to transfer to a higher level of research degree.

Withdrawal and termination of registration for an Edge Hill University research degree

If a PGR ends his or her registration, that is a withdrawal. If the University ends a PGR's registration, that is a termination of registration. Where the Graduate School becomes aware that a PGR has withdrawn their registration for a research degree it will notify the supervisory team, the appropriate Graduate School research degree contact and the department or faculty in which the PGR was based.

Where a supervisory team becomes aware that a PGR has withdrawn their registration for a research degree it will notify the Graduate School.

In either event, the Graduate School and the GSBoS must be notified of any PGR who has withdrawn.

In the event that the Graduate School is of the opinion that a PGR is not making satisfactory academic progress and/or it is evident that s/he is no longer in contact with her/his supervisory team, the Graduate School may formally take the initiative and employ the procedures outlined in Schedule F of the Research Degree Regulations, which could lead to termination of registration. The decision to terminate registration can only be made by GSBoS. Normally where there are concerns identified by the supervisory team or through the various monitoring processes, the PGR's progress will be placed under review for a specified period of time before termination of registration is considered, however, the formal process for review of PGR progress is not required in all circumstances (such as lack of engagement on the part of a PGR, some fitness to study or malpractice cases, etc.), and the Board can terminate registration at any point if the relevant conditions are deemed by the Board to have been met.[22] Termination of registration may also result where the Research Degree Fitness to Study Procedures (Schedule G of the Research Degree Regulations) are employed or in some cases of academic malpractice (which are covered by Schedule B of the Research Degree Regulations).

In the case of both withdrawal and termination of registration, the Graduate School will notify Academic Registry, which will follow its standard process.

Monitoring of PGR progress

The University operates an appraisal system in relation to research degree registrations involving both the PGR and the Director of Studies (on behalf of the supervisory team). Both

[22] http://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/9099/ outlines the progress review process.

are required to independently complete a pro forma and provide a written report. The reports are considered through a Graduate School process that results in those cases judged in need of consideration being referred to the GSBoS. The appraisal is required for PGRs who have not submitted work for a viva thus far in the calendar year. The documentation from the supervisory team includes a recommendation in relation to continued enrolment in the next academic session and, should it be evident to the GSBoS that a PGR is failing to make satisfactory progress or failing to respond appropriately to feedback, the Board may terminate their registration under the Research Degree Regulations or place the PGR's progress under review. Any PGR who is denied progression or whose registration is terminated under these regulations may appeal on procedural grounds using the University's Appeals Procedures.[23]

The appointment of examiners

Examination teams are nominated by the supervisory team but are appointed by the Graduate School. The Director of Studies for a PGR is responsible for submitting proposals for the examination team to the Graduate School at least three months prior to the proposed date of the examination.

Each PGR is examined by an examination team of at least two examiners. Each examination team includes at least one internal, and one external examiner. An examination team may not include more than three examiners.

With some exceptions, which are outlined in the Research Degree Regulations, where the PGR being examined is a permanent or full-time member of staff of either Edge Hill University, a designated research partner institution of the University or a collaborating institution as designated on the approved research degree project registration documentation, an additional external examiner is required (this does not apply in the case of Graduate Teaching Assistants).

The examining team must collectively have experience of a minimum of two previous examinations of PGRs at the level of the award being examined. Examiners must be experienced in research in the general area of the PGR's thesis and, where practicable, will have specialist experience in the particular topic that is the subject of examination. This is particularly important for the external members of the examination team.

For a professional doctorate, at least one member of the examining team must have appropriate experience of working in the profession. Whilst it is preferable to invite an academic with such experience to join the examining team, it is acknowledged that this will not always be possible. In such cases the practitioner will be a third (and external) examiner. Thus, a team may comprise an internal academic, an external academic (for benchmarking

[23] https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/graduateschool/regulations/.

of standards), and finally an external practitioner. At least one of the examiners must be familiar with professional doctorates.

It is extremely important that the external examiners must be, and must be seen to be, independent of the University, the department in which the PGR has pursued his or her research, any research partner or collaborating institution and the research project upon which the PGR's thesis is based. This means that an external examiner may not have acted previously as the PGR's supervisor or advisor, nor be either a supervisor of another PGR or, during the previous three years, have been an external examiner on a taught course in the same department in which the PGR is based. Additionally, the Graduate School acts to ensure that an external examiner is not appointed with such frequency that familiarity with the University might be considered prejudicial to objective judgement.

While it is not possible to require the same degree of independence of the internal examiner as it is of external examiners, the University does not allow a member of staff who is, or has been, the PGR's supervisor or formal advisor to be a member of the examination team for that PGR.

Appointment of viva chairs

The Graduate School appoints an independent and suitably experienced member of staff to chair the viva and who may make personal contemporaneous notes in relation to the process of the viva. These notes are retained by the chair and cannot be destroyed until the period for appeal has expired. Viva chairs (for project registration, progression and final vivas) are drawn from a standing panel of staff, the members of which have completed viva chair training provided by the Graduate School. Chairs must be entirely independent of the project, and the department or faculty in which the PGR is based.

Final examination

The final examination of Edge Hill University's research degrees[24] involves two stages and a degree cannot be awarded until both have been completed. These stages are:

I. the submission and preliminary assessment of the thesis or, in the case of the MRes, the dissertation;
II. the defence of the thesis or dissertation by oral examination (or approved alternative).

In the case of doctoral degrees, following three years of full-time enrolment or four-and-a-half years of part-time enrolment, submission of a thesis is the sole responsibility of the PGR. Should a PGR wish to submit prior to the conclusion of that period of enrolment, the

[24] http://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/id/document/31902 illustrates the process for final examination.

prior approval of the supervisors is required. In such cases, when they approve submission the supervisors are confirming that the thesis is of an appropriate standard to merit examination. A supervisor's agreement to the submission of a thesis does not ensure its approval by the examiners, nor can it be used as grounds for appeal against the outcome of an examination or introduced as evidence in any such appeal.

All theses and dissertations must be submitted in English and all oral examinations will be conducted in English. Oral examinations will normally be held on mainland Britain with exceptions being approved by the Chair of the GSBoS. Requests for final examination using video conferencing are permitted. In such cases all individuals involved in the examination must agree to the request. Progression examinations are standardly conducted using video conferencing.

In order to maintain a degree of distance between participants in the examination of a thesis, PGRs may not take any part in the formal arrangements for the examination nor have any formal contact with the external examiners between their appointment and the oral examination (or approved alternative).

The Graduate School will ensure that the conduct of examinations and the presentation of the examiners' recommendations are undertaken in accordance with the University's Research Degree Regulations. Within the viva, the independent chair plays this role and reports any concerns to the Graduate School. Where the GSBoS is made aware of a failure to comply with the specified procedures, the examination may be declared invalid and new examiners appointed.

Assessment of the thesis takes place in two stages. Each examiner independently makes a preliminary report, which must be submitted prior to any communication between the examiners about the thesis. This pre-viva report should include a preliminary recommendation. Examiners are required not to consult with each other in the preparation of the pre-viva reports. When all the reports have been received, the examiners are free to discuss the thesis and how they would like to approach the examination.

In their preliminary reports, examiners are at liberty to recommend that no useful purpose would be served by conducting an oral examination (or approved alternative). Where the examiners are agreed in this, they will provide written guidance on the deficiencies of the thesis for the PGR, who will then have a period of no more than twelve months in the case of the PhD and professional doctorate or 90 days in the case of the MRes to revise the thesis for re-examination. Where the preliminary recommendations from the external examiners are not in agreement, the viva chair, or, where necessary, the Graduate School, will consult with all the examiners to reach a decision as to whether to proceed with the oral examination (or approved alternative).

Following an oral examination (or approved alternative) the examiners will, where they are in agreement, prepare a joint report and recommendation to the GSBoS and, where the recommendation is to make the award, certify that the thesis meets the criteria for the award. The recommendations that the examiners may make are set down in the Research Degree Regulations.

Where the examiners are not in agreement following the oral examination (or approved alternative), each examiner will prepare a separate report and recommendation, and these will be considered by the GSBoS. The Board will determine one of the following outcomes, which must be considered in the order listed here with the first possible option adopted:

I. to accept a majority recommendation provided that such recommendation includes the views of at least one external examiner;
II. to accept the recommendation of the external examiner;
III. to require the appointment of an additional external examiner;
IV. to require the appointment of a new examining team;

In exceptional cases, where the Board feels that an examination has been conducted within the regulations, but that the examiners have failed to make a recommendation that is consistent with the regulations, or with their own comments on the work, the Board may not follow the recommendation of an examination panel. In such cases, the Board may make an award without a further examination.

Only one re-examination for a research degree award is permitted and the Graduate School may, where it is satisfied that just cause exists, approve an extension to the re-submission timescales detailed in the Research Degree Regulations. In the event of a re-examination, where possible, the examining team responsible for the final recommendation from the first examination will operate for re-examination, except that the GSBoS may require that an additional external examiner be appointed if it believes that to be necessary under the circumstances pertaining at the time of re-examination. If it is not possible to conduct the second examination with the panel from the first viva, the Board may simply allow a replacement without requiring an additional examiner. Examiners are required to complete preliminary report forms as detailed above.

Following the re-examination, the examiners will agree a written report and recommendation to the GSBoS. The recommendations available to the examiners in the event of a re-examination, and the process to be followed in the event of disagreement within the examination team, can be found in the Research Degree Regulations.

PhD by publication

The term ‘PhD by publication’ describes the route that a candidate takes to reach the examination for a PhD but does not in any way imply different learning outcomes. Another

important feature of the PhD by publication is that it is *an opportunity*, rather than a programme of research. The PhD by publication route provides eligible staff, or former staff meeting certain requirements, with the opportunity to submit a body of published work and an analytical commentary on that work for consideration for the award of a PhD. That is quite different from the other routes to an Edge Hill research degree (PhD, professional doctorate and MRes), which are specified routes by which an enrolled *PGR* of the University can engage in a programme of research, which he or she designs, having considered the advice of supervisors, and a programme of postgraduate researcher development activity. In the case of the PhD by publication candidates never have the status of PGR, do not follow a programme of postgraduate researcher development activity, do not conduct a programme of research (as the research has already been completed and published), and do not receive supervision, although they do receive the relatively informal advice of a mentor in relation to the preparation of the analytical commentary and perhaps also the selection of published work to include in the submission.

The distinctiveness of the route is that the thesis comprises a coherent portfolio of both the candidate's[25] published work and an associated analytical commentary, which identifies the candidate's original contribution to knowledge. The formal examination of the published work and analytical commentary is in the form of a viva (or approved alternative), in exactly the same manner as for candidates who have submitted a single dissertation.

The defining feature of this route to a PhD is that the prospective candidate has already conducted research, and the outputs have been made available in the public domain.

The University takes a view on the appropriateness of the prospective candidate's publications using a staged approach:

Stage 1: establishing the *prima facie* case;

Stage 2: production of an analytical commentary and portfolio; and

Stage 3: assessment by viva.

The first stage may be regarded as a speculative enquiry, which aims to establish whether the research outputs might make sufficient contribution to warrant assessment for a PhD. The Graduate School takes formal advice from an external peer subject advisor before considering whether or not to approve progression to the second stage.

It is during the second stage that prospective candidates make the detailed case regarding the coherence and originality of their published work. The submission of the analytical commentary and portfolio of work marks the point at which candidature is formally

[25] Restricted to current staff and previous members of staff of the University who meet certain criteria.

recognised by the Graduate School, with the appointment of the final PhD viva panel. The candidate is not considered to be a PGR of the University, as the research has already been completed.

The Graduate School has produced detailed guidance for prospective candidates and makes them available to staff at the appropriate time. The Dean of the Graduate School offers informal support to prospective candidates.

Assessment is conducted in accordance with the University's normal regulations for PhDs. The only notable difference is that, as the assessment is of previously *published* work, the examination team cannot require further work to be undertaken before a re-submission. Thus, whilst minor changes may be required in the candidate's analytical commentary, a decision that further research is required leads to a decision not to award the PhD. The candidate is, however, permitted to make a new application for candidature in no fewer than three years, by which time their portfolio of published work will have developed further, which may therefore lead to a more successful conclusion.

Academic malpractice

The nature and purpose of the research degree means that academic malpractice is a particularly important issue for those involved in its delivery. The University's Research Degree Regulations address both the issue of what constitutes malpractice and how allegations of this nature are dealt with (specifically identified in Schedule B of the Regulations).[26]

All PGRs must adhere to the University's Code of Practice for Research. If an individual suspects misconduct, s/he should refer to the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Research Misconduct.[27]

Academic appeals

If PGRs feel that they have suitable grounds for appeal, they may appeal Graduate School Board of Studies decisions relating to progression and award, or malpractice, under the terms of the Academic Appeals Procedure set out in the general academic regulations.[28]

Of particular note is the fact that, under the Research Degree Regulations, all recommendations of examination teams that a candidate should fail a research degree, or recommendations that an award should be made at a lower level than that for which a

[26] https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/research-degree-regulations/
[27] These codes are available for download from https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/code-of-practice-for-the-conduct-of-research/ and https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/code-practice- reporting-research-misconduct/ .
[28] https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/academic-regulations-2021-22/

thesis was presented for examination, will automatically be reviewed for process and procedure by the Graduate School.

Complaints

If a PGR has a complaint regarding provision by the University, the University has a published Complaints Procedure.[29] PGRs are strongly advised to seek the free advice and support of the Students' Union. Complaints must be lodged within three months of the incident occurring for it to be investigated.

PGR representation and PGR experience

Postgraduate researcher representatives are appointed by the Graduate School each year following the invitation to all PGRs to make expressions of interest. Those roles are not Students' Union roles, but rather roles created by the Graduate School for developmental purposes to ensure PGR involvement in discussions about the development of research degrees while also enabling the Graduate School to have accurate information about the experience of PGRs that can inform decision-making. One of the postgraduate researcher representatives attends Research Degrees Sub-Committee and an item on the agenda is devoted to a report on the activities of the postgraduate researcher representatives and discussion of any issues raised. The Graduate School operates a three-level process for reporting and addressing student experience matters.[30] That process directs matters to the appropriate part of the University for resolution. For example, individual problems are quite different from general PGR experience matters and must be dealt with in a very different way, not least because they can raise a need for confidentiality. Equally, certain matters, such as those concerning the GTA studentship scheme sometimes prove to be things which require action in the departments or faculties in which a GTA is based for teaching purposes. The aim of the three-level process is to identify the correct path so that all matters are addressed by the most appropriate individuals.

In addition to addressing any institutional-level matters that arise from the three-level process, the Graduate School looks closely at the feedback collected from the postgraduate researcher representatives and an informal feedback survey and reports the results to Research Degrees Sub-Committee. The Associate Dean of the Graduate School meets with the postgraduate researcher representatives on a termly basis. The Graduate School administers an institutional postgraduate researcher experience survey, the results of which are reported to, and discussed by, Research Degrees Sub-Committee. That survey is tailored to the Edge Hill PGR experience in order to assess the support required for our PGRs in a more accurate way than was possible using the national PRES survey.

[29] https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/complaints-procedure/
[30] http://eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/15194/

PGRs with teaching responsibilities

The Graduate Teaching Assistant studentship scheme is an institutional scheme coordinated by the Graduate School with the assistance of Human Resources, the faculties and the departments in which PGRs in receipt of a studentship are based. The Graduate School works closely with the faculties and the PVC (Research) to ensure that the requirements of the scheme do not have a detrimental impact on the ability of the GTAs to complete their research degrees within the timeframes specified in the Research Degree Regulations. Throughout, the Graduate School ensures that the requirements imposed by the system of funding research studentships do not in any way disadvantage PGRs in receipt of a studentship, particularly those that involve teaching. Equally, the Graduate School Board of Studies requires that, if a PGR does not meet the required academic standards, the fact that PGR is in receipt of a studentship has no bearing on the decision-making process in relation to the PGR's progress.

Employability

The centrality of the Researcher Development Framework to the experience of PGRs at Edge Hill means that the skills and attributes standardly developed by a fully trained researcher in the course of completing a research degree are developed in such a way as to maximise the employability of research degree graduates. In addition, a particular set of development sessions provided by the Graduate School is principally focussed on preparing PGRs for careers in academia and research more widely.

Working with third parties

The University, on occasion, identifies expert individuals from outside the University, who have the most appropriate expertise to supervise the programme of research. In such cases the University provides appropriate remuneration to the individual including a small annual honorarium, further renumeration for each supervisory meeting they attend at the University up to a maximum of four meetings per year, and expenses as outlined in the University's financial policies.[31]

Research degrees and collaborating institutions

Whenever a programme of research leading to the award of a research degree is conducted in partnership with, or with the support of, another organisation, the University must be made aware of, and agree to, the details at the point of registration of the programme of work.

There are typically three types of collaborating arrangement:

[31] https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/finance/Policy+and+Procedures

1. **Guaranteed access to physical resources.**

Such cases might, for example, involve granting access to private or public archive material, to data from fieldwork conducted by the partner organisation, to specialist computing facilities or to specialist laboratory equipment.

In such cases access is likely to be central to the successful completion of the research work, and the Graduate School is required to ensure that access is guaranteed.

The Graduate School thus requires a written commitment from the collaborator/partner that defines the rights of access to resources in order to make an appropriate decision, and which will be considered by the Graduate School Board of Studies at the point of project registration.

2. **Partnerships**

Those are cases where Edge Hill University and a partner enter into a mutually beneficial agreement to work together, and within which a research degree forms an element of the work.

The University's academic framework aligns with the UK Code of Practice for Higher Education. The code requires formal partnership agreements to be made whenever an external partner organisation bears any responsibility for the 'delivery or assessment' of any award-bearing academic activity. Such arrangements are rare because the University does not enter into collaborations to provide joint or dual awards in the case of research degrees.

No research degree registration can be approved until a formal agreement between the partners has been produced and signed. Such partnerships vary considerably, and there is no standard template to follow. The Graduate School works with the Research Office in the preparation of such agreements.

The agreement must include: responsibilities for resourcing, supervision and examination; financial arrangements; arrangements for late or early termination of the agreement; arrangements for agreeing variation to the programme of research; arrangements for seeking ethical approval for the work; arrangements for reporting progress and outcomes of the work; confidentiality; and ownership of intellectual property arising from the research.

The Graduate School should consider the agreement before it is signed.

3. **Research degree funding provided by an external organisation**

Those are cases where an external organisation provides funding which will be used, in full or in part, to support a programme of research leading to a research degree.

In these cases, the University and funding body have generally entered a formal agreement where the funding body provides financial support for a predetermined programme of research. Such arrangements include research council grants and contract research.

Funders must agree to cover the costs between enrolment and project registration, and if the PGR fails to successfully negotiate the project registration examination process, or, indeed, the progression examination process, or the PGR's registration is terminated for any reason, or the PGR withdraws, the agreement ends, and the University returns any unspent funds. Such agreements vary considerably, and there is no standard template to follow. The Graduate School works with the Research Office in the preparation of such agreements.

These agreements generally include: financial arrangements; arrangements for seeking ethical approval for the work; arrangements for reporting progress and outcomes of the work; confidentiality arrangements; and ownership of intellectual property arising from the research. Some funding bodies make specific requirements for the training and support of the researcher, and in others there may be specific project-based requirements (for example, security clearance, DBS checks etc.).

The Graduate School should consider the agreement before it is signed.

A common feature of such agreements is clarification of the fact that the PGR and the University manage the research, and the sponsor cannot dictate the direction in which the research develops.

Chapter 10
New Procedures

Updated October 2021

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 3

INTRODUCTION

The Quality Management Handbook is the principal source of guidance on quality management processes and procedures for staff of Edge Hill University and its partner organisations. These processes are subject to continuing review, evaluation and adaptation in order to respond to changing circumstances and requirements but frequent revisions would be impractical and potentially confusing to users. Chapter 10 *New Procedures* has therefore been developed as a 'holding area' for in-year procedural changes that have been approved by the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC). As a consequence, there is no unifying theme to its contents other than that they are innovative and to some extent experimental, and it is intended that they will be reviewed and incorporated within the relevant chapters when the complete Handbook is re-published at the start of each academic year.

Appendix: Glossary

Updated October 2021

Table of Contents

ACRONYMS 6
GLOSSARY 10
Academic Assurance Report 10
Academic Board 10
Academic Partnership 10
Academic Planning Committee (APC) 10
Academic Quality Enhancement Committee 10
Academic Registry 11
Accessible Information 11
Access and Participation Plan 11
Advance HE 11
Alternative (Exit) Award 11
Anonymous Marking 11
Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 12
Annual Process Review (APR) 12
Annual Review Form 12
Application for Development Consent (ADC) 12
Articulation 12
Articulations Approval Panel (AAP) 12
Awarding Body 13
Benchmark Statements 13
Benchmarking 13
Blackboard 13
Bologna Process 13
Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) 13
Characteristics Statements 14
Combined Honours 14
Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) 14
Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CATS) 14

Credit Rating 14
Cross Institutional Retention Group 14
Degree Apprenticeship 15
Degree Outcomes Statement 15
Delivery Plan 15
Desk-Based Assessment 15
Development Consent 15
Developmental Enquiry 15
Diploma Supplement 15
Directorate 16
Double Marking 16
Dual Degree 16
Due Diligence 16
Electronic Validation Documentation System (E-Val) 16
Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) 16
Employability Sub-Committee 16
End-Point Assessment 17
European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) 17
Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances (EMC) 17
External Examiners 17
External Examiners Sub-Committee (EESC) 17
Extraordinary Audit 17
Faculty Board 18
Flexible and Distributed Learning 18
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) 18
Franchising 18
Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework Unit (GQASC) 18
Graduate Outcomes 18
Graduate School (Board of Studies) 18
Higher Apprenticeship 19

Higher Education Provider 19
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) 19
Honorary Awards Committee 19
Human Tissue Management Sub-Committee (HTMSC) 19
Initial Proposal for Major Modification (IPM) 19
Initial Teacher Education (ITE) 19
Integrated Masters 20
Integrated Single Honours 20
Intended Award 20
Internal Audit 20
Joint Degree 20
Joint Honours Degree 20
Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) 20
Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) 21
Major/ Minor Degree 21
Major Modifications Panel (MMP) 21
Minor Modifications Review 21
Moderation (of assessment) 21
Module Approval Panel (MAP) 21
MOOC 21
Masters by Research 22
Module Assessment Board 22
Notional Learning Hours 22
Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) 22
Office for Students (OfS) 22
Outreach Delivery 22
Periodic Review 22
Personal Development Planning/Portfolio (PDP) 23
PhD by Publication 23
POLAR 23

Professional Doctorate 23
Programme Board 23
Programme Specification 23
Programme Validations and Modifications Group (PVM) 23
Progression and Award Board 24
Protected Characteristics 24
Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) 24
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) 24
Regulations Review Sub-Committee (RRSC) 24
Research Innovation Committee (RIC) 24
Research Excellence Framework (REF) 25
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Prior (Certificated) Learning, RP(C)L; Recognition of Prior (Experiential) Learning, RP(E)L 25
Sandwich Programme 25
School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) 25
School Direct 25
Student Experience Sub-Committee (SESC) 25
Student Experience Team (SET) 25
Student Pulse Survey 26
Student-Staff Consultative Forum (SSCF) 26
Synchronous Learning 26
Tableau 26
Taught Degrees Framework 26
Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) 26
Technology Enhanced Learning 26
Turing Scheme 27
UK Quality Code for Higher Education 27
University Research Ethics Sub-Committee (URESC) 27
Validation 27
Validation and Audit Standing Panel (VASP) 27

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).....27
Work-Based Learning/Work-Related Learning (WBL/WRL).....27

ACRONYMS

AAP	Articulations Approval Panel (of VASP)
AAR	Academic Assurance Report (Board of Governors)
ADC	Application for Development Consent
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
APC	Academic Planning Committee
APR	Annual Process Review
AQEC	Academic Quality Enhancement Committee
CATS	Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme
CLT	Centre for Learning and Teaching
CMA	Competition and Markets Authority
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CVU	Council of Validating Universities
DBA	Desk Based Assessment
DMG	Directorate Management Group
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EESC	External Examiners Sub-Committee (of AQEC)
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EMC	Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances

EPA	End-Point Assessment (apprenticeships)
EPAO	End-Point Assessment Organisation (apprenticeships)
ESC	Employability Sub-Committee (of LTC)
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
E-Val	Electronic Validation Documentation System
FDL	Flexible and Distributed Learning
FEC	Further Education College
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (QAA)
GSBOS	Graduate School Board of Studies
HAC	Honorary Awards Committees (of Academic Board)
HEAR	Higher Education Achievement Report
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HTMSC	Human Tissue Management Sub-Committee (of RS)
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
IPM	Initial Proposal for Major Programme Modification
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training (generally replaced by 'ITE', above)
LEO	Longitudinal Education Outcomes data
LTC	Learning and Teaching Committee
MAP	Module Approval Panel
MMP	Major Modifications Panel (of VASP)
MMR	Minor Modifications Review
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course

MRes	Masters Degree by Research
NSS	National Student Survey
NUCCAT	Northern Universities Consortium (for Credit Accumulation and Transfer)
OfS	Office for Students
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PDP	Personal Development Planning/Portfolio
PGCE	Professional Graduate Certificate in Education/Postgraduate Certificate in Education[1]
PLO	Programme Learning Outcome
PSRB	Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body
PVC	Pro Vice-Chancellor
PVM	Programme Validations and Modifications (group)
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework
QME	'Quality Management and Enhancement'
QMH	Quality Management Handbook
QTLS	Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (*FE Sector)*
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RIC	Research and Innovation Committee
RO	Research Office
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RPCL	Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning

[1] Professional Graduate Certificate in Education at Level 6; Postgraduate Certificate in Education at Level 7.

RPEL	Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning
RRSC	Regulations Review Sub-Committee (of LTC)
SCITT	School-Centred Initial Teaching Training
SED	Self-Evaluation Document
SEEC	Southern England Consortium (for Credit Accumulation and Transfer)
SESC	Student Experience Sub-Committee (of LTC)
SET	Student Experience Team
SPPU	Strategic Planning and Policy Unit
SSCF	Student-Staff Consultative Forum
SSR	Student-Staff Ratio
TEF	Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UCAS Postgraduate	The UK Postgraduate Search Tool and Application Service
UKPSF	UK Professional Standards Framework (Advance HE, formerly Higher Education Academy)
URESC	University Research Ethics Sub-Committee (of RIC)
VASP	Validation and Audit Standing Panel
WBL	Work-Based Learning
WRL	Work-Related Learning

GLOSSARY

Academic Assurance Report

Produced annually by the Director of Governance and Assurance, the AAR summarises the quality processes and outcomes of the previous year as evidence for the Academic Board and Board of Governors that the University remains in compliance with the Office for Students' General Ongoing Conditions of Registration for Quality and Standards.

Academic Board

Academic Board is the supreme academic authority within the University's deliberative committee structure. Its major committees are the *Academic Planning Committee (APC), Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC), Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), Research and Innovation Committee (RIC) and Faculty Boards*. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

Academic Partnership

Academic partnerships cover any module, course or programme that is delivered in whole or in part by or with another organisation and for which the University has responsibility for academic standards and quality. Academic partnerships also include articulation arrangements. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 5.

Academic Planning Committee (APC)

APC is responsible for advising Academic Board and the Directorate on the broad institutional implications of strategic academic developments and gives development consent for new programmes and major programme modifications. See Quality Management Handbook Chapters 4 & 8.

Academic Quality Enhancement Committee

The Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC) oversees the academic quality and standards of the University's taught programmes. It is responsible to the Academic Board (AB) for the operation of the University's quality management strategy with specific regard to academic standards and quality enhancement, including programme approval, annual monitoring, periodic review, internal audit, academic partnerships and the outputs from external examining. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

Academic Registry[2]

The primary responsibilities of the Academic Registry are for the management of student assessment and the maintenance of student records.

Accessible Information

Information presented or made available in appropriate formats so that it can be found and understood by all intended audiences.

Access and Participation Plan

Formerly known as Access Agreements, Access and Participation Plans set out how an institution will seek to improve equal opportunities for under-represented groups, as defined by the Office for Students.

Advance HE

Created out of the former Higher Education Academy and Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, a sector organisation with a remit for enhancing teaching and supporting learning in higher education, developing academic managers and leaders, and supporting governing bodies to discharge their responsibilities for academic and corporate governance. Owners of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) which provides the reference point for HEA Fellowship and accreditation.

Alternative (Exit) Award

Students who exit their degree programme prematurely and have achieved the requisite number and level of credits may be awarded an intermediate award as confirmed at validation, e.g. 120 credit Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) or 240 credit Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE). Alternative awards are also available for students on PSRB-regulated programmes who have the requisite number/ level of credits but have not met the requirements for professional registration. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4.

Anonymous Marking

The marking of students' submitted work without their identity being revealed to the person carrying out the marking at the time the work is marked, so that the assessment is unbiased.

[2] www.edgehill.ac.uk/registry/.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

Department-level AMRs provide evaluation of the quality and standards of the University's taught provision drawing on programme performance data and other primary evidence. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 3.

Annual Process Review (APR)

The Annual Process Review (APR), which is conducted on behalf of AQEC, contains evaluation of one or more elements of the University's quality management strategy informed by consultation with, and feedback from, Faculties and academic-related support services. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 1.

Annual Review Form

The Annual Review process operates for all academic partners at Category C+ and provides an opportunity to review and monitor the currency and effectiveness of academic partners and the associated delivery of Edge Hill provision. The Annual Review of Academic Partnerships operates in conjunction with Departmental Annual Monitoring but is a separate process. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 5.

Application for Development Consent (ADC)

The process by which Faculties seek approval from the Academic Planning Committee for new programmes of study or the re-validation of existing programmes. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4.

Articulation

An agreement by the University to recognise an external qualification for entry with advanced standing to an Edge Hill programme, e.g. direct entry to the final year (level 6) of an undergraduate degree or to the dissertation stage (final 60 credits) of a Masters degree. Articulation arrangements enable advanced entry for all students holding the approved qualification and are therefore distinct from applications for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) which are made by individuals. An articulation arrangement may be accompanied by a progression agreement with the qualification provider. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 5.

Articulations Approval Panel (AAP)

A sub-group of the Validation and Audit Standing Panel with responsibility for approving articulation arrangements (as above). See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

Asynchronous Learning

Asynchronous learning is a general term used to describe forms of education, learning and teaching that do not occur in the same place or at the same time. It uses resources outside the constraints of time and place among a network of people.

Awarding Body

An organisation with power to award its own qualifications. UK degree awarding bodies have their powers conferred either by Royal Charter, Act of Parliament or (as is the case for Edge Hill University) the Privy Council.

Benchmark Statements

The QAA's subject benchmark statements[3] set out national expectations about the standards of undergraduate (and some Masters) degrees in a range of subjects and are designed to assist those involved in programme design, approval, delivery and review. See also *UK Quality Code for Higher Education.*

Benchmarking

A process for establishing the comparability or equivalence of the University's provision and practices with those of other higher education providers (or vice versa).

Blackboard

Proprietary brand of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) chosen by many education institutions including Edge Hill University's Learning Edge VLE. See also *Virtual Learning Environment.*

Bologna Process[4]

The European Commission's process to establish a European Higher Education Area with a common framework for higher education qualifications and standards. See also *European Credit Transfer System.*

Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT)[5]

An Edge Hill service department focused on enhancing student and staff learning and promoting the objectives of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy[6]. The CLT manages the Advance HE-accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher

[3] www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements.
[4] www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/.
[5] www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/.
[6] www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/learning-teaching-strategy/.

Education and UKPSF Continuing Professional Development Framework. See also *Advance HE*.

Characteristics Statements[7]

Published by the QAA, the five Characteristics Statements define the distinctive features of: Foundation degrees; Masters degrees; Dual and Joint degrees; Doctoral degrees; and HE Apprenticeships.

Combined Honours

A mixed undergraduate programme of study derived from two subjects, either 60 credits per subject per level (Joint Honours), or 80/ 40 credits per level (Major/Minor). See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4.

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)[8]

Non-ministerial government department responsible for strengthening business competition and preventing and reducing anti-competitive activities. Monitors compliance with consumer protection legislation with specific guidance for higher education providers and students.

Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CATS)

Credit accumulation provides students with the opportunity to acquire academic credit for their learning achievements which then counts progressively towards a qualification award. Credit transfer is an arrangement by which credit granted by one awarding body is recognised by another.

Credit Rating

The award of specific or general credit to modules or programmes that are designed and delivered by the University or by other organisations. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 5.

Cross Institutional Retention Group

A working group of the Student Experience Sub-Committee to provide an institutional focus for issues concerning student retention and promote the dissemination of good practice.

[7] www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/supporting-resources. Characteristics Statements (qaa.ac.uk)
[8] www.gov.uk/government/organisations/competition-and-markets-authority.

Degree Apprenticeship

Degree Apprenticeships are practical vocational degree courses at FHEQ levels 6 & 7, regulated by the Office for Students, which allow people to combine both the academic study from a traditional university degree with practical vocational experience, assessed against a national Apprenticeship Standard. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 5.

Degree Outcomes Statement

Degree Outcomes Statements are produced and published by higher education providers and analyse their degree outcomes in the context of arrangements for teaching, learning and assessment, academic regulations (degree classification algorithm), and academic governance.

Delivery Plan

A systematic and comprehensive record of the responsibilities that are retained by the University and those that are delegated to another organisation in the management and delivery of partner-delivered provision. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 5.

Desk-Based Assessment

The annual monitoring process at department level consists of a Desk-Based Assessment of Academic Standards and Quality, and the creation of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) which contains details of how the department intends to improve performance in specific areas and showcases examples of good practice linked to higher performance. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 3.

Development Consent

See '*Application for Development Consent*'.

Developmental Enquiry

A form of internal audit that explores cross-cutting themes or practices across Faculties with the aim of identifying and promoting good practice. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 3.

Diploma Supplement

A document issued to graduates describing the nature and content of their qualification and the structure of the higher education system within which it was awarded. Includes (at Edge Hill) the student's transcript of modules/credit and Award Statement.

Directorate

The executive management team of Edge Hill University consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and five Pro Vice-Chancellors including three Faculty Deans.

Double Marking

Assessment of students' work by two or more independent markers as a means of safeguarding or assuring academic standards by controlling for individual bias.

Dual Degree

An academic partnership in which two (or more) awarding institutions together deliver a programme leading to separate awards being granted by each (all) of them using their own academic regulations. Edge Hill University does not deliver dual degrees at this time.

Due Diligence

Enquiries related to the governance, ethos, status, capacity, reputation and general sustainability of a potential delivery organisation or support provider to satisfy the requirements of a degree-awarding body for an arrangement to deliver learning outcomes.

Electronic Validation Documentation System (E-Val)

A database that uses a web front-end to assemble and publish electronic programme and module specifications, Applications for Development Consent and Initial Proposals for Major Programme Modification for all Edge Hill University awards.

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)[9]

Government agency with responsibility for funding skills training for further education in England, including Higher and Degree Apprenticeships.

Employability

A set of achievements, skills, understanding and personal attributes that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations.

Employability Sub-Committee

The Employability Sub-Committee (ESC) is responsible to the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) for advising on issues relating to employability and enterprise activity and its impact on learning and teaching and the overall student experience.

[9] www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency.

End-Point Assessment

The independent assessment of apprentices at the conclusion of Higher and Degree Apprenticeship programmes. Conducted by registered End-Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs).

European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)[10]

Part of the Bologna accord for the establishment of a single European Higher Education Area, ECTS supports student mobility within the EHEA through credit transfer with one ECTS credit being equivalent to two UK HE credits.

Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances (EMC)

Part of the University's Academic Regulations[11], the Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances process provides for students whose health or personal circumstances at the time of assessment are deemed deserving of special consideration by a Scheme Progression and Award Board - see Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

External Examiners

A peer review system operated by UK higher education providers which engage academic staff of other providers to review (moderate) assessed student work. External examiners verify that qualifications meet or exceed national threshold standards and that standards beyond threshold are comparable with other providers. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 2.

External Examiners Sub-Committee (EESC)

Makes recommendations to AQEC on the engagement of external examiners using criteria defined in Quality Management Handbook Chapter 2. For EESC's constitution and terms of reference, see Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

Extraordinary Audit

A type of internal audit commissioned by AQEC to address a specific presenting issue or set of circumstances. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 3.

[10] http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/ects_en.htm. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) | Education and Training (europa.eu)
[11] Available via www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/collection/academic-regulations/.

Faculty Board

Responsible to *Academic Board* for the monitoring, evaluation and review of academic provision within the Faculty, including programmes delivered by or with academic partners. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

Flexible and Distributed Learning

Distinguished from conventional classroom-based activity on the basis of *location*, where the time and place of learning are to some extent controlled by the student; or *prescription*, where there is some flexibility to negotiate the content, learning outcomes and assessment activities.

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)[12]

This describes the achievement represented by higher education qualifications at levels 4-8 with reference to generic qualification level descriptors. See also *UK Quality Code for Higher Education.*

Franchising

The transfer of significant responsibilities for the delivery (in whole or in part) of a University programme or module/s to another organisation. See also *Academic Partnership* - Quality Management Handbook Chapter 5.

Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework Unit (GQASC)

A central service department of the University with responsibility for the development, management and administration of processes for academic quality management and academic planning including academic partnerships. GQASC also provides the secretariat for Academic Board, its committees and principal sub-committees.

Graduate Outcomes

A UK-wide survey of graduates fifteen months after completion which aims to help current and future students gain an insight into career destinations and development in the context of performance by individual degree providers. Has replaced the previous Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey.

Graduate School (Board of Studies)

The Graduate School Board of Studies (GSBOS) acts as the progression and award board for MRes, MPhil, PhD and professional doctorate students.

[12] www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks.

Higher Apprenticeship

Higher Apprenticeships are practical vocational courses at FHEQ levels 4 & 5, inspected by Ofsted, which allow people to combine both the academic study from a traditional university higher education programme with practical vocational experience assessed against a national Apprenticeship Standard. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 5.

Higher Education Provider

Organisations that delivers higher education. In the UK this may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of one or more degree-awarding bodies.

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)[13]

The central source for the collection and dissemination of statistics about publicly-funded UK higher education. The Office for Students' Designated Data Body for England.

Honorary Awards Committee

A committee of the Academic Board with responsibility for receiving nominations and making recommendations for recipients of the University's honorary degree awards.

Human Tissue Management Sub-Committee (HTMSC)

The Human Tissue Management Sub-Committee (HTMSC) is responsible for overseeing activity conducted under the University's Human Tissue Research Licence and reports directly to the University's Research Innovation Committee. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

Initial Proposal for Major Modification (IPM)

Initial Proposal for Major Modification of an Existing Validated Programme received by the Academic Planning Committee and completed using the E-Val system. See also Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

Undergraduate and Postgraduate (PGCE) programmes with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for School-based provision, and Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status for Further Education. See also *National College for Teaching and Leadership.*

[13] www.hesa.ac.uk/.

Integrated Masters

A four-year programme that combines undergraduate and postgraduate study at levels 4-7 in proportions of 120 credits per level.

Integrated Single Honours

A mixed subject undergraduate programme in which subjects are combined in roughly equal proportions across the three years/ levels of study. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4.

Intended Award

Intended awards are promoted in the University's course prospectus and equate to successful completion of a full programme of study. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4.

Internal Audit

A generic term which at Edge Hill encompasses various styles of internal quality audit. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 3.

Intersections of characteristics

The intersection of two or more indicators of underrepresentation (for example, white British males from low socioeconomic backgrounds) to enable a broader understanding of a provider's student population. This is used to identify barriers to equality of opportunity.

Joint Degree

An academic partnership arrangement in which two (or more) awarding institutions together provide a programme of study which results in a single award of both/ all institutions operating under a common set of academic regulations. Edge Hill University does not validate Joint degrees at this time.

Joint Honours Degree

A mixed undergraduate degree derived from two subjects in equal proportions, i.e. 60 credits per subject per level. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4.

Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)

Responsible to the *Academic Board* for leading on enhancements to the University's strategies for learning, teaching, and assessment, and with overall strategic responsibility for the student experience. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

Level Descriptors

A statement of the generic characteristics of outcomes of learning at a specific level of a qualification framework, used as a reference point.

Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO)

A set of official experimental statistics on employment and earnings outcomes of higher education graduates by degree subject studied and university attended.

Major/ Minor Degree

A mixed undergraduate degree derived from two subjects in the ratio of 80/ 40 credits per level. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4.

Major Modifications Panel (MMP)

A sub-group of the Validation and Audit Standing Panel with responsibility for approving major programme modifications. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

Minor Modifications Review

Minor Modifications Reviews are conducted by the Validation and Audit Standing Panel (VASP) and consider the totality of modifications made since the previous Institution-level validation or review activity to confirm that a programme's award title, aims and learning outcomes remain valid and achievable. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4.

Moderation (of assessment)

A process for sampling assessment which tests for consistent application of marking criteria across the range of student achievement (grades). Internal moderation, which normally precedes moderation by an external examiner, confirms that the marks awarded are in the appropriate range and in exceptional cases may include the scaling of marks or a requirement to re-mark a whole cohort (see also *Second marking*). See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 7.

Module Approval Panel (MAP)

Faculty process for approving new modules. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4.

MOOC

Massive Open Online Courses are aimed at large-scale interactive participation and open access via the internet. Courses are typically free and tend not to offer academic credit. See Quality Management Handbook Chapters 4 and 6.

Masters by Research

A Level 7 research degree - see also Quality Management Handbook Chapter 9.

Module Assessment Board

Receives the marks from module assessment and makes recommendations for the award of credit to the associated *Progression and Award Board*.

Notional Learning Hours

The number of hours that (it is expected) a learner at a particular level will spend, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes at that level.

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)[14]

A single inspectorate for schools and providers of initial teacher education and apprenticeships at levels 2-5 including Higher Apprenticeships.

Office for Students (OfS)[15]

National regulator of higher education in England, replacing the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Office for Fair Access (OFFA). Responsible for teaching standards, market entry and widening participation including responsibility for monitoring the Prevent duty[16].

Outreach Delivery

A form of academic partnership in which the University retains full responsibility for the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of a programme that is delivered by its own staff at another location (also occasionally referred to as 'flying faculty'). Includes learning venues (Edge Hill Category B academic partnership) and supported learning centres (Category C academic partnership). See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 5.

Periodic Review

Five-yearly cyclical internal review of an academic department's taught degrees. Periodic review establishes that academic standards are being maintained and the quality of

[14] www.ofsted.gov.uk/.
[15] www.officeforstudents.org.uk/.
[16] Prevent duty: relevant higher education bodies must give due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism – see: www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/revised-prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales.

students' learning opportunities enhanced. Successful periodic review confers continuing approval of current taught programmes. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 3.

Personal Development Planning/Portfolio (PDP)

A process used within programmes to help students plan, record and reflect on their personal development as learners, often linked with the development of academic and graduate transferable skills.

PhD by Publication

A doctorate awarded through submission of a coherent portfolio of peer-reviewed published work which provides an original contribution to knowledge - see Quality Management Handbook Chapter 9.

POLAR

POLAR (participation of local areas) is a classification of small areas across the UK according to the participation of young people in higher education. There have been several iterations of POLAR, which are referred to as POLAR1, POLAR2, POLAR3, and POLAR4.

Professional Doctorate

Professional doctorates are equivalent to a PhD, the key difference being that the student's research is informed by, and ultimately contributes to, their professional practice context – see Quality Management Handbook Chapter 9.

Programme Board

Reporting to Faculty Board, Programme Boards are located in academic departments and provide opportunities for the formal discussion and evaluation of programme-related issues. Participants comprise teaching staff and student representatives (see also *Student-Staff Consultative Forum*). See Quality Management Handbook Chapters 6 & 8.

Programme Specification

At Edge Hill University, programme specifications are used to describe the knowledge, understanding, skills and other attributes that students will have developed on successful completion, and the teaching and assessment activities that support their learning. Programme specifications form the core of the documentation required for programme approval (See *Validation*).

Programme Validations and Modifications Group (PVM)

Information on module and programme approvals, modifications and closures is circulated by email to a group of key Edge Hill University stakeholders comprising Faculties, Academic

Registry, , Admissions, Careers Centre, Corporate Communications, Learning Services, Governance, Quality Assurance and Student Casework unit, Strategic Planning and Policy Unit and Student Recruitment.

Progression and Award Board

Progression and Award Boards operate with delegated authority from the Academic Board to confirm the award and classification of Edge Hill University credit and awards. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8, also *Module Assessment Board*.

Protected Characteristics

Certain characteristics – age, disability, gender re-assignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race (ethnic origin or national identity), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation – which in the context of the Quality Code, may require particular consideration in ensuring equal access to educational opportunities for all.

Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

Replacement for the National Qualification Framework (NQF), the QCF recognises Further Education qualifications and units through the award of credit, typically at levels 1-3 but also at higher levels for some professional programmes. The QCF is regulated jointly by England's regulator Ofqual, Wales' DCELLS and Northern Ireland's CCEA.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)[17]

Established in 1997 to provide an integrated quality assurance service for UK higher education institutions. The Office for Students' Designated Quality Body for England.

Regulations Review Sub-Committee (RRSC)

A sub-committee of the Learning and Teaching Committee with responsibility for making recommendations for changes and additions to the *Academic Regulations*. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

Research Innovation Committee (RIC)

Responsible to the Academic Board for assuring the standards and quality of research and knowledge exchange activity undertaken by both staff and students. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

[17] www.qaa.ac.uk/.

Research Excellence Framework (REF)

Assesses the quality of research in UK higher education institutions and used by the four UK higher education funding bodies (Research England, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), and the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE)) to determine the allocation of research funding.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Prior (Certificated) Learning, RP(C)L; Recognition of Prior (Experiential) Learning, RP(E)L

The process of recognising previous learning that is either formally certificated or *experiential*, i.e. derived from the workplace or other life experience. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 7.

Sandwich Programme

A programme of study that includes a significant time – normally a year – spent studying away from the university or college (typically a work-based setting).

School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT)[18]

Initial teacher education designed and delivered by groups of neighbouring schools and colleges in which trainees are usually based in a lead school and complete their teaching practice at others within the group.

School Direct

Initial teacher education delivered by a school or group of schools in partnership with a university or SCITT (see above). See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 5.

Student Experience Sub-Committee (SESC)

A sub-committee of the *Learning and Teaching Committee* with specific responsibility to advise on issues related to the operation of learning, teaching and student support and their impact on the student experience. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

Student Experience Team (SET)

Comprises dedicated sub-teams with responsibilities for managing student communications and feedback (Student Pulse Survey), and developing, promoting and managing initiatives that encourage students to engage in non-academic enrichment activity.

[18] www.ucas.com/postgraduate/teacher-training/train-teach-england/postgraduate-teacher-training-england.

Student Pulse Survey

A survey of students' learning experience at module and programme level conducted electronically on a schedule managed by the Student Experience Team. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 6.

Student-Staff Consultative Forum (SSCF)

A mechanism for staff and students to discuss programme- related issues (see also *Programme Board*). See Quality Management Handbook Chapters 6 & 8.

Synchronous Learning

Synchronous learning refers to a learning event in which a group of students are engaging in learning at the same time.

Tableau

Tableau software is used for creating data visualisations, publishing data sources and publishing workbooks with particular application to Edge Hill's Annual Monitoring and Periodic Review processes.

Taught Degrees Framework[19]

Guiding principles, support and resources for the design and delivery of Edge Hill's undergraduate and postgraduate taught degrees focused on student induction and transitions; learning, teaching and assessment; academic and pastoral support; graduate employability; and civic awareness and internationalisation. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 6.

Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)

A government mechanism for recognising teaching quality among higher education providers (analogous to the *Research Excellence Framework*).

Technology Enhanced Learning

Involves the use of electronic media, educational technology and information and communication technologies (ICT) in the delivery of face-to-face, blended or distance learning programmes (see also *Virtual Learning Environment*). See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 6.

[19] www.edgehill.ac.uk/clt/taught-degrees-framework/.

Turing Scheme[20]

The Turing Scheme is a student exchange programme established by the UK Department for Education in 2021 as a Brexit replacement for the EU Erasmus Programme.

UK Quality Code for Higher Education[21]

The *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* is used by higher education providers to assure the standards and quality of their degree programmes, and by the Office for Students and other UK national regulators to review the standards and quality of HE providers. Aligned with baseline requirements for market entry by new higher education providers.

University Research Ethics Sub-Committee (URESC)

The University Research Ethics Sub-Committee (URESC) of the Research Innovation Committee oversees the ethical good practice of research and knowledge exchange activities carried out by staff and students across the Institution. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 8.

Validation

The formal Institutional procedure for the academic approval of an Edge Hill University programme of study. See Quality Management Handbook Chapter 4.

Validation and Audit Standing Panel (VASP)

An appointed body of qualified and experienced academic and senior support staff who receive training to serve on Edge Hill validation, review and audit panels. See Quality Management Handbook Chapters 3 & 4.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

A software system designed to facilitate online learning. See also '*Blackboard*'.

Work-Based Learning/Work-Related Learning (WBL/WRL)

Programmes or modules that embody practical employability skills to complement students' academic knowledge and skills. *Work-based* learning occurs mainly in the workplace and includes a significant amount of work-based assessment, while *work-related* learning may involve industry simulations, projects and case studies.

[20] https://www.britishcouncil.org/study-work-abroad/outside-uk/turing
[21] www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.