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for Quality Assurance at Institutional Level“**

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IBAR Project Work-Package 5

# SURVEY OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS – UK

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## 1. Introduction

This report presents data from four UK higher education institutions, three from England and one from Scotland, about the management of their internal quality assurance systems. The report was produced between March and May 2011 by the IBAR Project team at the University of Strathclyde.

The report focuses on the policy and procedures for quality assurance as stated in standard 1.1 of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*:

### **Standard 1.1: Policy and procedures for quality assurance**

Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Policy context

The primary responsibility for academic standards and quality in UK higher education rests with individual universities and colleges, each of which is independent and self-governing. However, the main funding bodies (the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Scottish Funding Council) have a statutory duty to ensure that the teaching provision they fund with public money is of good quality. The funding bodies discharge this duty by contracting the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to devise and implement quality assurance methods. The QAA is responsible for reviewing the quality of all publicly funded higher education (HE) teaching provision in England on behalf of HEFCE, and QAA Scotland performs a similar role in Scotland on behalf of the SFC.

### **England**

In England, the QAA carries out institutional audit on behalf of HEFCE. Institutional audit is the review process for higher education institutions in England and Northern Ireland. Audits are carried out by a team of academics who review the institution's quality and standards, using their knowledge of higher education and reference points in the QAA's Academic Infrastructure. The Academic Infrastructure is a set of nationally agreed reference points which give all institutions a shared starting point for setting, describing and assuring the quality and standards of their higher education courses. QAA works closely with the UK higher education sector to develop these reference points. After each audit, QAA

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<sup>1</sup> See: [http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG\\_3edition%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20(2).pdf)

publishes a report on the audit team's findings. Institutional audit forms part of the Quality Assurance Framework established in 2002 following revisions to the UK's approach to external quality assurance. At the centre of the process is an emphasis on students and their learning.

The QAA's Academic Infrastructure is currently under review and in response to the findings of a recent evaluation, QAA proposes to restructure the components of the Academic Infrastructure into the **UK Code of Practice for standards, quality and enhancement in higher education**<sup>2</sup>. The Code of Practice will have two parts, one dealing with academic standards and one with academic quality and enhancement. This new Code of Practice will form the definitive reference point for all those involved in delivering higher education which leads to an award from or is validated by a UK higher education provider. It will cover all students, whatever their mode or location of study and both undergraduate and postgraduate.

QAA not only reviews institutions and makes recommendations for improvement, but also supports institutions in developing and enhancing the management of their quality and standards and the learning opportunities they provide for students. Activities include highlighting themes, questions, good practice and recommendations from audits, and publishing topical papers to stimulate debate.

#### **Scotland**

QAA has a separate Scottish office, QAA Scotland, to develop and operate quality assurance and enhancement arrangements that reflect the needs of higher education in Scotland. Between 2001 and 2003 the Scottish higher education sector conceived and planned a distinctive strategic approach to quality, the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF). This was a collaborative approach, with a strong focus on enhancement, mutually agreed by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Universities Scotland, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA Scotland), and representatives of the student body.

The QEF model, which became fully operational in 2003, has five main elements: 1) a comprehensive programme of subject reviews that are run by institutions themselves; 2) enhancement-led institution-level review (ELIR), which involves all Scottish higher education institutions over a four-year cycle; 3) improved forms of public information about quality, based on addressing the different needs of a range of stakeholders including students and employers; 4) a greater voice for student representatives in institutional quality systems; 5) a national programme of enhancement themes, aimed at developing and sharing good practice in learning and teaching in higher education. This latter programme has sought to 'encourage academic and support staff and students to share current good practice and collectively generate ideas and models for innovation in learning and teaching' (QAA 2010). Recent themes have included 'The First Year', 'Integrative Assessment' and 'Research-Teaching Linkages'. Current themes are 'Quality Cultures and Systems and Structures for Enhancement' and 'Graduates for the 21st Century'.

The Scottish model was intended to be distinctive in a number of ways: in its balance between quality assurance and enhancement; its emphasis on the student experience; its focus on learning as well as teaching; and in the spirit of cooperation and partnership that it has sought to achieve.

<sup>2</sup> For more information about this process, please see: [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/news/consultation/AI/academic\\_infrastructure\\_consultation.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/news/consultation/AI/academic_infrastructure_consultation.pdf)

As the QEF approaches the first decade since its inception its operation during that period has been examined by external evaluators, and an assessment made of its achievements to date, insights gained and lessons learned.

### 3. Institutions surveyed

The four institutions selected represent a sample of the variant types of higher education institution in the UK. After the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, polytechnics in the UK achieved degree awarding status and became universities. Our sample was selected to demonstrate the diversity of higher education in the UK and to ensure that the data collected offered a rich picture of practice across the sector.

Our sample includes:

**The University of Birmingham** is a member of the Russell Group of research universities and a founding member of Universitas 21. The University received its charter in 1900 as a successor to Mason Science College and the 1825 Birmingham Medical School. Birmingham was the first of the so-called "redbrick universities" (an informal term used to refer to six universities founded in the major industrial cities of England that achieved university status before World War I and were initially established as civic science and/or engineering colleges) to gain an official royal charter. The University of Birmingham is the 11th largest in the UK, with around 16,500 undergraduate and 8,000 postgraduate students. Birmingham has the ninth largest financial endowment of any British university at approximately £85 million in 2009. In August 2010, the University was ranked 10th in the UK and 59th best in the world by *QS World University Rankings*. The university is ranked 22nd in *The Times 2010 Good University Guide*, and 24th in *The Guardian's 2010 rankings*. It is rated 11th in the UK, 33rd in Europe and 99th best university in the world in the 2010 Academic Ranking of World Universities, and 85th-87th by Global University Ranking.

**Staffordshire University** is a former polytechnic and achieved university status in 1992. The University has around 16,000 students and two main campuses in Stoke on Trent and Stafford. In 1995 the University merged with Shropshire and Staffordshire College of Nursing and Midwifery, which provided teaching centres in Shrewsbury, Telford and Oswestry. The University also runs a number of vocational courses, including a wide range of employer-backed foundation degrees, through a long-established network of further education colleges throughout Staffordshire and into Shropshire. This nationally recognised consortium is known as SURF (Staffordshire University Regional Federation) In addition, more than 5,000 students are studying for Staffordshire University awards at overseas partner institutions based in Europe and across Asia. The University provides courses at foundation, certificate, diploma, degree and postgraduate level in the areas of: arts, media and design; business and law; computing, engineering and technology; and health and sciences and is committed to ensuring its courses have a strong employment focus.

**The University of Dundee** was founded in 1881 and was, for most of its early existence, a constituent college of the University of St Andrews. Following significant expansion, the University of Dundee became an independent body in 1967 whilst retaining much of its ancient heritage and

governance structure. In 1994 the University merged with Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and in 1996 with Tayside College of Nursing and the Fife College of Health Studies, more than doubling its size (there are currently 17000 students and more than 3000 staff). The University of Dundee graduates more students into the professions (such as law, accountancy, medicine and dentistry) than any other Scottish university. *The Guardian* newspaper named the university's medical school and dental school the best in the United Kingdom in 2008 and 2009. The university was *The Times* Good University Guide's "Scottish University of the Year" in 2004/05. The University ranked 140 among the world's top 200 universities in the Times Higher Education 2010-11 World University Rankings and in the top ten UK universities for teaching quality. Distance learning students account for almost 20 per cent of all students (including undergraduate and postgraduate).

**The University of Northampton** is one of the newest universities in the UK, with full university status achieved in 1995. The university builds on a number of institutions in Northampton dating from the early twentieth century including Nene College which enjoyed undergraduate degree awarding status from 1993. In 1994 the college merged with Leathersellers College and in 1997 the Sir Gordon Roberts College of Nursing and Midwifery. It became University College Northampton in 1999 prior to gaining full university status. In 2011 the University was ranked 102nd in the UK by the *Times Good University Guide*. The University has about 8000 undergraduate students, of which about 1300 are studying for further education qualifications. About 50% of the student population are mature students.

#### 4. Research methodology

Data collection for WP5 was conducted as a desk study only, with no additional contact with participating institutions. The research team focussed exclusively on documents publicly available on the websites of the four institutions. This approach is particularly relevant to the context of quality assurance because there is an explicit requirement in the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (see section 1.1)<sup>3</sup> that institutions make their strategy, policy and procedures for quality assurance publicly available.

The research team limited their data collection to documentation published by each institution under the institutionally-determined heading of "quality" and did not generally seek additional sources of data, including for example education or research strategies, to achieve a fuller picture of practice at each institution.

The team did not address the issue of barriers to local implementation in this study. This is because the institutional documentation describing quality assurance processes and systems does not offer any information about potential difficulties or challenges at local level. We approached this task as one primarily about base-lining the context of quality assurance management at each institution, with the assumption that local barriers will be uncovered and considered as part of the data collection supporting subsequent work-packages. We took the same approach in evaluating successful implementation or any examples of good practice, preferring instead merely to describe current quality assurance practices

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<sup>3</sup> See: [http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG\\_3edition%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20(2).pdf)

as described in the institutional documentation and make some comparative observations. Where appropriate, consideration of barriers to effective practice at sectoral or policy level have been included.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1 Is there an institutional quality assurance policy in place? If not, why?

Quality assurance in UK higher institutions is well-established and, as anticipated, each of the four institutions surveyed have comprehensive quality assurance documentation, which is published in English on their respective websites and fully publically accessible in line with the requirements of ESG Section 1.1. The word "policy" might be understood as problematic in this context because it implies a set of discretionary decisions. In each case, the institutions surveyed do not characterise their quality assurance arrangements in terms of policies, but instead the term framework is widely used to describe the context of quality assurance and the structures and procedures for the management of quality assurance across the institution. This terminology strongly aligns to that used by the QAA (see section 2 of this report). In fact, there is considerable similarity in the way that each institution describes its quality assurance procedures, both in terms of practices and in terms of the language used to describe those practices. One inference from the data is that, although institutions in the UK are autonomous and have primary responsibility for their own quality arrangements, the QAA and the standards and guidelines it has developed in collaboration with the HE sector has been highly influential at institutional level. One explanation for this is that institutions are required to describe and defend their practice during periodic review by QAA and it is much easier to defend a broadly compliant model of quality assurance with some local variation rather than present a widely variant model.

In all institutions surveyed, the quality assurance documentation is not confined to a single document, but comprises a nested set of guidance documentation for university stakeholders. A common model is that of a general overview, which takes the form of a set of web-pages which link to more detailed information, usually in the form of handbooks for staff. In most cases, additional handbooks or guidelines are offered where activities, for example, international collaborations or co-delivery of programmes with partner organisations pose particular challenges for the management and enhancement of the quality of student experience and the assurance and maintenance of academic standards.

Information about the basis for quality judgments (i.e. qualifications of staff, learning outcomes, equipment) is most likely to take a slightly different form from that implied by the questions in work-package 5. This extract from the University of Northampton's overview of quality arrangements, *Quality and Standards at the University of Northampton*<sup>4</sup> describes the principles that inform quality assurance activities at the institution:

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<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/187/quality-and-standards-at-the-university-of-northampton-an-overview>

"The institution's approach to processes and systems is based on a set of values, beliefs and principles, the key elements of which are as follows:

i) The need to be as explicit as possible. A commitment to deliver programmes with clearly defined outcomes is part of the mission of the University and is central to their design, delivery and assessment. The University therefore seeks to be as explicit as possible in setting and communicating academic standards and in supporting students to achieve them.

ii) The importance of devolving responsibilities for academic quality and standards to those areas that have the appropriate expertise and are as close as possible to the point of delivery. The University acknowledges the expertise and professionalism of its staff and is committed to nurturing a collegial culture of empowerment and accountability, rather than direction and compliance. At the same time, the University acknowledges the necessity for accountability so that the institution as a whole can be assured that it is fulfilling its responsibilities for quality and standards.

iii) The valuing of and the commitment to learning and research from the external world, especially the HE community, and all others with a stake in higher education. The significance the University attaches to externality is evident in the presence of external panel members on validation and review panels and research degrees committees; the role of external examiners at various levels of the monitoring and approval processes; increasing collaboration with partner organisations and employers; and the University's participation in and responsiveness to professional bodies and national educational developments.

iv) The commitment to systems of quality assurance and accountability, which are consistent, open, effective and efficient, and which are increasingly focused on standards and outcomes rather than inputs and processes.

v) The commitment to apply quality control rigorously at key points. The University recognises that the maintenance of academic standards demands central regulation at critical junctures, such as assessment and in the granting of awards.

vi) The determination to achieve quality enhancement through honest and open approaches to monitoring and evaluation and by spreading good practice across the institution and identifying opportunities to implement methods for improvement.

vii) Responsiveness to students at the centre of the University's approach. Student feedback is an important component of the quality strategy. It is elicited through a variety of mechanisms. These include elected student representatives being members of Boards of Studies and key committees and acting upon the outcomes of the National Student Survey, Internal Student Survey, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and other systems of evaluation."

This extract illustrates the extent to which quality management at UK universities has increasingly included a broad range of activities that imply a number of different perceptions of the role of quality, including quality as consistency, as fitness for purpose, as improvement, as customer-



responsive etc.<sup>5</sup> Within these principles can be found references to learning outcomes, to the attributes of staff and to the systematic collection and use of data from key audiences, including students and external sources. The principles are expressed as high-level aspiration rather than as prescriptive or measurable performance indicators. There is an explicit reference to the devolved nature of responsibility for quality "as close as possible to the point of delivery". This echoes the terminology used at national level, which describes the principle of institutional autonomy and responsibility for quality arrangements, but similarly those arrangements take place in a context of monitoring and scrutiny at both institutional and national level.

There is no explicit reference to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in any of the documentation surveyed. However, there are explicit references to the framework and guidelines created by the UK national agency (QAA) and, in the case of the University of Dundee, to the particular quality arrangements associated with the Scottish Enhancement Themes.

## **5.2 Does the policy involve the organisation of the quality assurance system?**

Although all of the institutions surveyed stress the importance of locating responsibility for quality assurance at local level (i.e. within schools, faculties and departments) each of them also maintain a central quality management unit which works across the whole institution to manage quality processes. Commonly, these processes include maintaining a single register of modules and programmes, managing the work of relevant committees and decision-making bodies and managing institution-wide student representation activities, collection of data from students (e.g. annual student surveys) and supporting processes associated with external scrutiny.

In all cases, these units also offer advice and guidance to sub-units of the institution on quality matters. The nature of this advice varies across institutions but might include dissemination of good practice, identification of areas for development, support for development projects etc. In some cases, there is explicit reference to a separate unit which offers expertise and support for educational development.

The role of quality assurance units as sources of expertise highlights a tension in the definition of quality as a process in institutions. In many ways, quality assurance activities can be understood as essentially bureaucratic. Expertise to help the institution manage these processes effectively is therefore very appropriately handled by members of the university administration team. However, an enhancement or developmental view of quality demands different expertises which are more likely to be academic (in the sense that they require engagement with, and probably contribution to, educational research). For example, whilst an administrative quality unit is likely to have considerable expertise in the effective management and analysis of student survey data, an educational development unit might be needed to consider educationally-appropriate responses to the findings of that data.

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<sup>5</sup> For a useful discussion of variant perceptions of quality, see: Stensaker, B (2005) Quality as fashion - exploring the translation of a management idea into higher education. Paper presented to the seminar "Dynamics and effects of quality assurance in higher education – various perspectives of quality and performance at various levels" Douro, October 2005

### 5.3 How does the policy involve the responsibilities of departments, faculties and other organizational units?

There is a universal recognition across all the institutions surveyed that responsibility for quality should be primarily focussed at the level at which teaching is experienced by students.

This extract from the University of Dundee's Quality Framework<sup>6</sup> illustrates a set of aspirations which help to define the territory in which quality is managed across sub-units of the university:

"A key principle of the Quality Assurance Framework is that the primary determinant of teaching quality is the relationship between those delivering and supporting teaching and the student. In accord with this, its policies and processes aim to:

- support regular reflective practice on the part of staff, teaching teams and academic managers
- promote active involvement of students and their representatives, including the students' association (DUSA)
- create a culture of continuous improvement and enhancement
- encompass the requirements of professional statutory bodies, when appropriate
- facilitate communication of needs and priorities both from the 'bottom up' and from the 'top down'"

Accordingly, responsibility for the design of quality assurance processes lies with the Schools of the University of Dundee, with the expectation that responsibility for much of the work will be assigned to module leaders or programme teams who have the expertise to make decisions appropriate to teaching within cognate subject areas.

In much the same way as institutions have autonomous responsibility for the design and implementation of their quality systems within the context of a national framework administered by QAA, devolved sub-units at universities decide on the detail of implementation within the framework of institutionally agreed frameworks. This approach offers the potential for the development of useful local variation.

However, just as the national agency provides detailed frameworks to inform institutional practice which is monitored via periodic review, each institution surveyed provides a considerable amount of guidance to its devolved sub-units. Standardisation of practice across the institution may be encouraged by the use of single forms to support module or programme approval, standard student feedback survey forms etc.

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<sup>6</sup> See: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/>

#### 5.4 How does the policy address the involvement of students? If not, why?

All of the institutions surveyed describe a number of different activities through which students are actively involved in quality processes. These include:

- departmental collection of student data about modules
- faculty or institutional collection of student data about the student experience
- representation on staff/student committees at departmental and faculty level
- representation on executive committees at departmental/faculty and institutional level
- representation on review panels

Practice across the institutions surveyed is very similar, reflecting the increasingly professional nature of student representation as managed through institutional student unions and the increased focus in the UK on student satisfaction data as one determinant of institutional quality and league table positioning<sup>7</sup>.

The University of Birmingham's Student Representation Scheme (SRS)<sup>8</sup> is a partnership between the University of Birmingham and the Guild of Students (or students union). The aim of the SRS is to ensure that every student at Birmingham is effectively represented to the University and the Guild by a fellow student. A guidance document sets out principles for selection, training and responsibilities for student representatives and describes the opportunities for student input at different levels of the organisation.

Similarly, at the University of Dundee a Student Representation Working Group, which includes members of DUSA as well as senior officers from each School reviews and develops policy and procedures to promote and support effective student representation in the University.

Student representatives are designated ex officio members of the following University committees:

- Court: DUSA President
- Senate: DUSA President, Deputy President and Vice President Student Activities
- Learning and Teaching Committee: DUSA President, Deputy President and Vice President Student Activities
- Library & Information Services Committee: Deputy President, Vice President Communications and Vice President Student Activities
- Academic Quality Sub-Committee: DUSA President and Deputy President,
- Postgraduate Affairs Committee: DUSA Deputy President

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<sup>7</sup> See: Douglas, J; Douglas, A and Barnes, B (2006) "Measuring student satisfaction at a UK university", Quality Assurance in Education, Vol. 14 Iss: 3, pp.251 - 267

<sup>8</sup> See: [http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/docs/POL\\_Student\\_Representation\\_Scheme.pdf](http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/docs/POL_Student_Representation_Scheme.pdf)

- Vice Principal's Review Group: DUSA President and Deputy President
- Student representatives including School Presidents, are normally designated ex officio members of school boards.

### 5.5 How does the policy involve specification of the relationship between teaching and research?

None of the institutions surveyed specified any relationship between research and teaching in their quality assurance documentation. This raises an important point about the status and purpose of quality assurance in the UK context. It is tempting to understand the quality assurance arrangements described in the institutional documents surveyed as being overwhelmingly about managing risk. Risks can come from a variety of sources: for example, the risk that an individual or group of students is assessed unfairly; the risk that a programme is no longer perceived as fit for purpose by key stakeholder groups; the risk that QAA are unconvinced by institutional procedures. The quality frameworks surveyed describe procedures for the management of educational provision that should, if implemented effectively, minimise risk to the institution. Detailed guidelines on how to manage appeals procedures or appoint external examiners are clearly part of this imperative. A more critical view might describe these processes as "impression management".<sup>9</sup>

However, "quality" in higher education is also concerned with concepts like improvement, with a concern for the student experience and with concern for fitness for purpose which might reasonably include mechanisms for determining the components of a high quality curriculum. In England, the QAA academic framework includes subject benchmark statements which offer guidance on the levels and content of curricula and provide material for the development of appropriate learning outcomes. In Scotland, the same subject benchmarks apply, but the increased focus on quality enhancement as an additional set of activities has created a renewed focus on both the content of the curriculum and the ways in which the curriculum is delivered rather than merely the ways in which teaching activities are managed. In Scotland, the Enhancement Themes managed by the QAA have included a specific theme on Research-Teaching linkages which looked at how best at institutional and programme level, links between research strategies and activities can support the student learning experience in ways that can enhance learner achievement of research-type attributes.<sup>10</sup>

The lack of data about the relationship between teaching and research might point to a dilemma or tension within the ESG itself but it also raises another question about the nature of higher education provision in the UK. Section 2 of the ESG states that "... the standards and guidelines relate only to the three cycles of higher education described in the Bologna Declaration and are not intended to cover the area of research or general institutional management." Yet Section 1.1 of the guidelines themselves state that "The policy statement is expected to include: the relationship between teaching and research at the institution". In the UK it has become increasingly common to conceptualise the core activities

<sup>9</sup> See: Newton, J (2000) 'Feeding the Beast or Improving Quality?: academics' perceptions of quality assurance and quality monitoring', *Quality in Higher Education*, 6:2, 153 - 163

<sup>10</sup> See: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/ResearchTeaching/overview.asp>

of higher education under three primary strands: research, teaching and knowledge exchange. These three areas of activity have been funded differently and perhaps therefore inevitably have increasingly been perceived as distinct from each other with the attendant implications for student education. The QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes project identified a number of barriers to institutional readiness in regard to research-teaching linkages, including:

- a dislocation of teaching and research locally
- research undertaken in centres exclusively devoted to research, where there are no teaching responsibilities
- a need for moves to ease pressure on researchers in the next iteration of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) a need to find routes to recognise and reward pedagogical research activity in schools/faculties/departments
- staff inexperienced in research and employed on teaching contracts of 20-plus hours a week
- the fact that Research Councils UK does not expect research grant allocations to recognise the value of research application to teaching (such as that in place with the National Science Foundation in the USA)
- a potentially unhelpful problem of division of responsibility between teaching and research at vice-principal level
- a need to encourage staff participation in cross-institution interest groups (the 'silo' problem)
- the fact that there is a greater awareness of research-teaching linkages in the teaching community than in the research community<sup>11</sup>

The documentation from the institutions surveyed suggests that local dislocations of research and teaching are indeed widespread. There are separate sets of documentation relating to educational quality and to research quality and limited references to the links between these two activities. However, the University of Dundee's quality framework does make explicit reference to the QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes, which include the work on Research-Teaching linkages described above. In Scotland, the process of external scrutiny of institutions (Enhancement -Led Institutional Review, or ELIR) asks specific questions about how each institution is engaging with the ideas explored across the sector through the Enhancement Themes.

The data from the University of Birmingham stresses the role of the university as a 'research-intensive' institution and emphasizes support for research and research-led teaching. It seems reasonable to accept that, as neither Staffordshire University or the University of Northampton are research-led institutions, their teaching activities are less likely to be associated with research activities.

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<sup>11</sup> See: Gordon, G and Land, R (2008) Research-Teaching Linkages :enhancing graduate attributes. Sector-Wide Discussions. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. [http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/ResearchTeaching/SectorWideDisc\\_vol1\\_final.pdf](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/ResearchTeaching/SectorWideDisc_vol1_final.pdf)

### 5.6 What are the ways of policy implementation, monitoring and revision?

Implementation, monitoring and review occur at different levels of the institution and at differing timescales according to need. Annual processes managed at department level collect data about the impact of modules and programmes. At the University of Dundee<sup>12</sup>, in relation to module monitoring, the module leader (or equivalent), in consultation with the module team, is expected to:

- consider aspects of student performance and achievement (as available)
- take account of feedback and observations from students, staff, and external examiners
- review past changes to the syllabus and its delivery, and consider how these aspects could be enhanced for the future
- review the module aims and intended learning outcomes and the success of assessment methods in evaluating student achievement
- identify good practice in teaching
- take into account recommendations or needs identified in annual monitoring or periodic review of cognate programmes or the School Learning and Teaching Development Plan
- ensure that recommendations for appropriate actions are followed up to remedy any identified shortcomings.

In relation to annual programme monitoring, the programme leader (or equivalent), in consultation with the programme team, board (or equivalent) is expected to:

- ensure that the programme remains current and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline, practice in its application, and internal and external initiatives
- evaluate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes are being attained by students
- ensure that external examiners' views are taken into account
- take account of student views as expressed by representatives or through internal and external feedback processes
- evaluate the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and of assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes, especially in relation to the coherence of teaching carried out in prescribed and optional modules
- identify and disseminate good practice within the programme
- take into account recommendations or needs identified in annual module monitoring or periodic programme review or the School Learning and Teaching Development Plan
- ensure that recommendations for appropriate actions are followed up to remedy any identified shortcomings.

At institutional level, the University of Northampton's Academic Quality and Standards Committee produces an annual overview report to Senate on outcomes and quality at the University. This report checks that the University's quality assurance systems are working and forms the basis for

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<sup>12</sup> See: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/annualmonitoringoverview.htm>

significant actions both to correct any weak practice and disseminate good practice. The report draws upon outcomes from several processes in order to inform Senate about quality and standards: a commentary on reports from external examiners; statistical information on student progression and achievement; a commentary on issues from validation and periodic subject review events; outcomes of visits by external bodies; an overview of collaborative provision; a commentary on first destination statistics; outcomes from the National and Internal Student Surveys.

At the University of Birmingham, quality assurance policies are implemented and monitored through the Birmingham Integrated Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (BIQAES), which reviews processes the University has put in place “to monitor, review and enhance academic standards, the quality of its learning, teaching and assessment, and the academic support given to students.”

The university also uses the external examiner system to generate evaluative feedback<sup>13</sup>:

“Feedback from external examiners forms a vital part of the University's quality assurance processes for taught programmes. External examiner recommendations are reported to quality assurance and enhancement committees both at University and College level”

#### **5.7 How does the policy involve the statement regarding the collaboration with the secondary education sector?**

None of the institutions surveyed provided any information about collaboration with the secondary education sector in the context of their quality assurance activities or policy statements. Where engagement with the secondary sector does take place, this is in the context of student recruitment and is managed by the recruitment and admissions function of the institution.

Whilst it is tempting therefore to write off the issue of secondary school collaboration in the context of quality assurance, there is considerable evidence from other sources to suggest that the early experiences of students in higher education, particularly in first year, is crucial in developing the skills required to become a successful autonomous learner. If students find the transition from secondary to tertiary education dislocating, this may have considerable negative consequences.<sup>14</sup> This might reasonably be understood more as a quality enhancement challenge for institutions than an issue of relevance to quality assurance.

All the institutions surveyed, in common with all HE institutions across the English, Welsh and Northern Irish sectors and the Scottish sector develop their programmes within the context of national qualifications frameworks. In November 2008, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) verified that *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* is compatible with the

<sup>13</sup> See: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/index.aspx>

<sup>14</sup> Some relevant research and quality enhancement activities in Scotland in the area of secondary to tertiary transition can be found at: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/firstyear/Transition%20-%20Final.pdf>

*Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*. This verification represents an important landmark in the journey to implement the goals of the Bologna Process. There is a parallel higher education qualifications framework document for Scotland that reflects the features of its different education system, while making clear the many similarities and alignments with the FHEQ. The two frameworks share many core purposes and features. Scotland verified the compatibility of its national qualifications framework against the FQ-EHEA in 2006<sup>15</sup>.

## 6. Conclusions and emerging issues

The data collected in support of this work-package highlights the similarity in practice (or at least the similarity in the rhetoric of practice) at the four institutions surveyed. This would appear to be a characteristic of a mature higher education sector in which national and institutional arrangements for quality assurance are well-understood and well-embedded.

Of particular note in the context of the project is the lack of evidence of any explicit reference to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) in any institutional document surveyed. There are however multiple references to the framework and guidelines developed by the UK national quality agency QAA. The obvious inference is that the national guidelines (i.e. those created in collaboration with the UK higher education sector by the QAA and QAA Scotland) are the primary reference points for UK institutions. One issue for further consideration is the extent to which the guidelines created by the national agency are in alignment with the ESG. If there is strong evidence for alignment at national level it might be reasonable to assume that the local implementation of the national guidelines are *de facto* in alignment with ESG, regardless of any explicit local mapping. However, because UK institutions are recognised as autonomous and have the right to develop their own quality assurance systems and procedures, there is a strong political imperative for QAA to work with the UK sector to develop mutually agreeable guidelines rather than to adopt wholesale a set of recommendations developed outside the UK context. Moreover, institutional autonomy does not require UK universities to comply with national guidelines, but merely to create local procedures which are defensible within the context of a national framework.

It might be reasonable to assume that the national agencies (i.e. QAA and QAA Scotland) are the natural points of intersect between UK higher education and work undertaken to support the Bologna Process at a European level, including the development of the ESG. However, the lack of explicit reference to the ESG or to any international benchmarks for practice might also suggest a certain solipsism in the arrangements for quality at UK higher education institutions. It seems very likely that there would be extremely low levels of recognition at institutional level for the ESG and it is interesting to speculate about the extent to which local arrangements for quality assurance are influenced by European considerations, particularly those associated with Bologna. Of general interest as the project progresses might be a consideration of the

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<sup>15</sup> See [www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/SCQF](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/SCQF).



influence of other sectors on national and local practice, in particular ideas from the US and Australasia. This might be particularly relevant in national contexts where quality enhancement has become important.

On reflection, a limitation of the research methodology used to collect data for this work-package is the lack of opportunity to explore these inferences with senior managers and other at the institution responsible for the development of quality systems. Similarly, a more comprehensive study of the influences on institutional practice might have included data collection conducted with national quality agencies. The IBAR project team may wish to consider opportunities for collecting further data at institutions at and sectoral level as the project progresses.

## 7. Matrix of institutional data

University 1: University of Northampton

Questions	Data
<p><b>1. Is there an institutional quality assurance policy in place? If not, why?</b> Does the policy at national level prescribe the creation of internal quality assurance system? Is the institutional QA policy a separate policy? What is it based upon (learning outcomes, qualification of staff, equipment)? Is there an explicit reference to ESG? To what degree it is accessible publicly? In what major EU languages is it available?</p>	<p>The University of Northampton's quality strategy has two primary aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Academic standards for taught programmes</b> can be defined in terms of learning outcomes. All of the University's programmes have intended learning outcomes which set standards and stipulate the level and extent of knowledge, understanding and skill which a student is expected to achieve. In order to be awarded a particular University of Northampton qualification, a student must demonstrate that s/he has met these learning outcomes</li> <li>• <b>Academic standards for research degree programmes</b> can be defined in terms of explicit statements which stipulate the level of research, understanding and skill and the contribution to new knowledge that a student is expected to demonstrate in order to be awarded a particular University of Northampton award.</li> </ul> <p>Source: <a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20286/academic-and-curriculum-administration/346/quality-and-standards">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20286/academic-and-curriculum-administration/346/quality-and-standards</a></p> <p>The university's primary policy document on quality assurance is <b>Quality and Standards at the University of Northampton</b>, an overview of which is available from:</p> <p><a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/187/quality-and-standards-at-the-university-of-northampton-an-overview">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/187/quality-and-standards-at-the-university-of-northampton-an-overview</a></p> <p>The overview document sets out the quality framework within which university procedures for quality assurance are managed, including those for validation, review, annual monitoring and change of approval, which are described in greater detail in a number of separate handbooks and guidance documents.</p> <p>Section 3 of this document sets out a rationale for quality assurance at the university which describes the relationship between internal quality assurance activities and the requirements of national bodies:</p>

	<p>“As an institution with degree awarding powers, the University needs to assure itself that the standards of awards given in its name are appropriate and that students have suitable opportunities to meet those standards.</p> <p>The need for quality assurance is also rooted in the accountability of the University to students, employers, including professional and statutory bodies, and funding organisations. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is required to satisfy itself that the University’s provision is of appropriate quality. In order to assure itself that provision is satisfactory, it empowers the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to undertake institutional level audits. In this context, the University needs to have mechanisms which assure itself, and thereby the QAA, that academic standards are being maintained and that the quality of education is appropriate.”</p> <p>There is no explicit reference to ESG in the University of Northampton’s quality assurance documentation.</p> <p><b>Quality and Standards at the University of Northampton</b> is published on the University of Northampton’s website in English at:  <a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/187/quality-and-standards-at-the-university-of-northampton-an-overview">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/187/quality-and-standards-at-the-university-of-northampton-an-overview</a> and is fully available to internal and external audiences.</p> <p>Separate documents describe in more detail the university’s arrangements for certain aspects of the quality assurance process including:</p> <p>Validation and review of modules and programmes:  <a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/121/validation-and-review-handbook">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/121/validation-and-review-handbook</a></p> <p>Academic regulations:  <a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20286/academic-and-curriculum-administration/1229/academic-regulations">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20286/academic-and-curriculum-administration/1229/academic-regulations</a></p> <p>Collaborative activities:  <a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/198/collaborative-handbook">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/198/collaborative-handbook</a></p> <p>Exams and assessment:  <a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20310/exams-and-assessment">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20310/exams-and-assessment</a></p> <p>Policies, procedures and guidelines:  <a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20286/academic-and-curriculum-">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20286/academic-and-curriculum-</a></p>
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	administration/754/policies-procedures-and-guidelines)
<p><b>2. Does the policy involve the organisation of the quality assurance system? If yes, please describe. Who is the person responsible?</b></p>	<p>Quality and standards at the University of Northampton are managed by a unit of the institution called Quality and Curriculum Services (QCS). The role of QCS is to support and assist academic staff in ensuring that courses meet quality standards. Responsibility for academic quality standards resides with academic staff who deliver programmes, but QCS assist with the monitoring and delivering of quality processes and can help staff ensure that they are meeting standards of best practice. QCS also creates and maintains complete and accurate records of the programmes and curriculum designed to meet the quality and standards defined.</p> <p>More specifically, QCS manages the university's quality assurance systems, including managing partnership arrangements with external collaborators including Further Education colleges and others who co-deliver modules and programmes; manages the work of relevant university committees; maintains and manages the university's curriculum records including the catalogue of modules and programme specifications; co-ordinates the university's approach to external scrutiny, including that by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies who accredit programmes in each of the six schools in the university; and manages university validation and review activities including the work of the programme approval committee.</p>
<p><b>3. How does the policy involve the responsibilities of departments, faculties and other organizational units?</b></p>	<p>The university maintains a webpage for staff which includes links to a large number of documents setting out the responsibility of departments, schools, course teams and other organisational units at: <a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20140/staff">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20140/staff</a></p> <p>The main source of information about academic and curriculum administration, which includes quality and standards is at: <a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20286/academic-and-curriculum-administration">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20286/academic-and-curriculum-administration</a></p>
<p><b>4. How does the policy address the involvement of students? If not, why?</b> Is there a requirement for students to be involved in the preparation of self-evaluation reports? If yes, in what status (observer, expert, member of a governing body?) Is there a requirement for students to be involved in decision-making as an outcome of evaluation? Who selects and appoints the</p>	<p>The University has a well-developed system of student representation on Boards of Studies. All students are provided with information on quality assurance processes at the University and how they can participate as individuals or as elected representatives. A formal system for electing representatives takes place at the start of the academic year. In partnership with the Quality and Curriculum Services, the Student Union organises training sessions for newly elected student representatives. All programmes are required to obtain formal feedback from their students on a regular basis. This includes the use of questionnaires. Irrespective of the specific means used to generate feedback, academic staff are expected to provide students with a prompt summary of</p>

<p>representatives of students?</p>	<p>the feedback and, where appropriate, a response to it. In addition, the annual review system requires specific references to be made to student feedback and outcomes from it. AQSC and QSECs consider the outcomes of both the National and Internal Student Survey and formulate actions in response. A summary of action taken in response to the previous survey is published on the University's website.</p> <p>Full and part-time students are represented on the RDBs and the RDC. Students receive appropriate training to enable them to be full and active members of these committees. The Graduate School facilitates the operation of the Student Research Committee which is run by students and is open to all members of the postgraduate research student community.</p>
<p><b>5. How does the policy involve specification of the relationship between teaching and research?</b> To what extent is research considered as a quality criterion of the institution and its structural units/employees/students? Are there specific incentives (e.g. financial) to promote the importance of teaching/research quality of staff and structural units?</p>	<p>There is no mention of the relationship between teaching and research in the university's primary documents relating to quality.</p> <p>The university maintains a site with information for research active staff which includes guidance information on the administration of research degrees.</p>
<p><b>6. What are the ways of policy implementation, monitoring and revision?</b> Is the implementation mainly top-down or bottom-up? Is it monitored continuously or sporadically (e.g. as part of an external evaluation)?</p>	<p>The university's primary policy document on quality assurance, <b>Quality and Standards at the University of Northampton</b> (<a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/187/quality-and-standards-at-the-university-of-northampton-an-overview">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/187/quality-and-standards-at-the-university-of-northampton-an-overview</a>) describes the process of monitoring and evaluation of educational provision as follows:</p> <p><b>6.3 Monitoring and Evaluation</b></p> <p><b>6.3.1 Boards of Studies</b> Once a new programme has been validated and approved by Senate, the University requires a Board of Studies to be set up to monitor the quality of provision on an ongoing basis. Student representatives are integral members of these Boards and provide, together with the formal feedback sessions, an important source of student perceptions of provision.</p> <p><b>6.3.2 Annual Review</b> Annual review is conducted within the University at three levels: Academic Subject; School; Institution</p> <p>Annual reviews are in all cases expected to be reflective and action-centred. They provide an opportunity for review of the effectiveness of academic provision and, in the light of this, to take</p>

	<p>steps to improve the quality of provision.</p> <p><b>6.3.3 Annual Subject Review</b>  An annual forum requires reflection by the subject team on the effectiveness of the provision. Deliberation among the subject team eventually culminates in the production of an annual subject review. This is expected to take into account both the comments of external examiners and student feedback, as well as progression and achievement data. School Quality Standards and Enhancement Committees are responsible for ensuring that subject teams produce effective annual reviews and the Academic Audit and Review Committee audits the process to assure AQSC and thereby Senate that academic provision is being properly reviewed and to share good practice arising from the reviews.</p> <p>The process is informed by review at four levels – module, field, programme and collaboration. Review at the module level is primarily based on a statistical review of the performance of the students on the module (across sites of delivery as appropriate) and student feedback. Field chair and team review all the modules within the field, taking into account the external examiners’ reports. At the same time, the programme team considers the overall student experience, and progression and success rates, including first destinations data. The Link Tutor is 10 responsible for contributing to this process in relation to collaborative provision in the subject area and for producing an Annual Report on a Collaborative Programme(s) for a specific focus on the collaborative elements. The review process is both reflective and action-centred facilitating the identification of any need to amend modules, devise new ones and modify assessment procedures in order to ensure ongoing currency of the curriculum, responsiveness to external examiner and student feedback, any issues arising in respect of collaboration with partners and to reflect developments in the subject area and the composition of the team.</p> <p><b>6.3.4 Annual School Reviews</b>  School annual reviews provide a mechanism that facilitates reflection on the academic health of each School and informs the development of School plans. These reviews, which are audited by the Academic Audit and Review Committee, provide an opportunity for Schools to reflect on their comparative performance on a number of indicators, including student retention and achievement and partnership matters. School audits of Annual Subject Reviews identify any areas of provision in need of additional support and AARC uses this as one criteria for selecting Annual Subject Reviews for audit. AARC also uses a range of other performance indicators as criteria for audit and in this way the outcomes across the University’s range of monitoring and evaluation, including student data, are used to inform the process.</p>
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	<p><b>6.3.5 Annual Institutional Review</b>  At the institutional level, AQSC produces an annual overview report to Senate on outcomes and quality at the University. This report checks that the University's quality assurance systems are working and forms the basis for significant actions both to correct any weak practice and disseminate good practice. The report draws upon outcomes from several processes in order to inform Senate about quality and standards: a commentary on reports from external examiners; statistical information on student progression and achievement; a commentary on issues from validation and periodic subject review events; outcomes of visits by external bodies; an overview of collaborative provision; a commentary on first destination statistics; outcomes from the National and Internal Student Surveys.</p> <p><b>6.4 Change of Approval</b>  The Change of Approval process is based on the premise that continual change within taught programmes is the norm and a sign of a healthy developing course/subject and, therefore, to be encouraged. The impetus for change may come from a variety of sources. These include annual monitoring and evaluation; external examiners' reports; new staff with different research specialisms; and responses to national developments in learning and teaching. The level of scrutiny varies according to the nature of the change, but in all cases modifications need to be approved. Simple and minor changes can be approved and logged by the Head of Framework and Quality and Curriculum Services. Significant and major changes require a more rigorous process. These more fundamental changes are submitted to the Programme Approval Committee, which may consider the proposals or refer them to an approval event. The panel, which reports to AQSC, operates primarily as an audit team ensuring that proposals are appropriately documented and have the support of key stakeholders, including external examiners.</p> <p><b>6.5 Periodic Subject Review</b>  Periodic subject review (PSR) offers the opportunity for a quinquennial holistic overview of the programmes within a subject area. It considers whether they should be re-approved for a further five years together with the re-approval of any collaborative arrangements. It reflects upon the quality of the programmes and the academic standards achieved by students and allows the subject team to evaluate the currency of the curriculum, the cumulative effect of changes over the years, to express their plans for developing the provision and to use the PSR event itself to approve changes. It is also an opportunity to look comparatively at quality and standards between internal and collaborative provision and to reflect upon the management of partnership. The self critical appraisal and forward planning of the team benefits from the presence of external peers on the panel, including academics from other HEIs, employers and often representatives of professional, regulatory or statutory bodies where appropriate. There is also a graduate of one of the programmes under consideration on the panel and members meet with a range of student</p>
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	<p>representatives in order to elicit student views about their experience of the provision. The panel's deliberations are informed by current programme and module specifications, a selection of student programme and module guides, a critical appraisal document, an update on learning resources, the most recent Annual Subject Review (and Annual Reports on Collaborative Programmes) and three years of external examiners' reports. Panel members also meet with students and staff from partner colleges and visit to review facilities. PSR reports go through the usual auditing procedures but Schools are also required to produce responses to the outcomes which are considered by AQSC and Senate. In this way it can be assured that opportunities for development and enhancement in subject areas are disseminated through the University.</p> <p>More detailed description of these processes are contained in the university's Validation and Review Handbook at: <a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/121/validation-and-review-handbook">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/121/validation-and-review-handbook</a></p>
<p><b>7. How does the policy involve the statement regarding the collaboration with the secondary education sector?</b> Are there any activities directed to schools and pupils and aimed to enhance quality of secondary education? Please give examples of activities.</p>	<p>There is no mention in the quality assurance policy of collaboration with the schools sector.</p> <p>The university offers open days to secondary school pupils as part of its recruitment activities see: <a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20052/study/441/open-days">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20052/study/441/open-days</a></p> <p>The University's Schools and Colleges Liaison team provides guidance and support regarding university options and study skills to students in regional schools and colleges.</p> <p>The University publishes a newsletter Universe for secondary school teachers and advisors. See: <a href="http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/339/newsletter-for-teachers-and-advisers/20052">http://www.northampton.ac.uk/downloads/download/339/newsletter-for-teachers-and-advisers/20052</a></p>



University 2: University of Dundee

Questions	Data
<p><b>1. Is there an institutional quality assurance policy in place? If not, why?</b> Does the policy at national level prescribe the creation of internal quality assurance system? Is the institutional QA policy a separate policy? What is it based upon (learning outcomes, qualification of staff, equipment)? Is there an explicit reference to ESG? To what degree it is accessible publicly? In what major EU languages is it available?</p>	<p>The University of Dundee has a Quality Assurance Framework, which describes in detail the main policies, procedures and guidance related to quality assurance, learning and teaching enhancement and academic standards at the institution. The University Senate approved the outline of the Quality Assurance Framework in 2008 following a review based on the findings of the 2004 Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) conducted by QAA Scotland.</p> <p>The policy at national level, managed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA/QAA Scotland) does not prescribe the details of institutional quality assurance systems, but it does require that each institution is able to defend its quality assurance arrangements. The University of Dundee's Quality Assurance Framework has been constructed to ensure the institution and its staff operate in a manner consistent with the Code of Conduct and Academic Infrastructure of the Quality Assurance Agency (<a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeofpractice/">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeofpractice/</a>) and the Scottish Funding Council Guidance to Higher Education Institutions on Quality (<a href="http://www.sfc.ac.uk/effective_institutions/qualityassurance/quality_scotlands_universities.asp">http://www.sfc.ac.uk/effective_institutions/qualityassurance/quality_scotlands_universities.asp</a>).</p> <p>The Framework applies to all taught programmes and modules, undergraduate and postgraduate, which are accredited by the University. This includes online and distance learning programmes and modules, and accredited teaching taking place as part of collaborative agreements. There are also Codes of Practice for Taught Postgraduate (<a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk/registry/main/pg/rdo/pgtcode.htm">http://www.dundee.ac.uk/registry/main/pg/rdo/pgtcode.htm</a>) and Research Postgraduate (<a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk/registry/main/pg/">http://www.dundee.ac.uk/registry/main/pg/</a>) degrees.</p> <p>The Framework includes 12 sections which include guidelines for implementation across the institution as follows: Learning and Teaching strategies and plans; Annual monitoring; Programme review; Assessment; Accreditation by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies; National Student Survey; New taught provision; Changes to provision; Teaching collaborations; Student representation; Enhancement; Research Degrees.</p> <p>There is no explicit reference to ESG in the University of Dundee's Quality Assurance Framework.</p> <p>The Quality Assurance Framework is published on the University of Dundee's website in English at <a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/">http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/</a> and is fully available to internal and external audiences.</p>

<p><b>2. Does the policy involve the organisation of the quality assurance system? If yes, please describe.</b> Who is the person responsible?</p>	<p>The Quality Assurance Framework is developed at institutional level and the formal mechanism for discussion matters of related to QA is the Academic Quality Sub-Committee reporting to Learning and Teaching Subcommittee and Senate. The senior officer at institutional level who provides advice to institutional sub-units and heads the university's Academic Affairs QA team is the Director of Quality Assurance (currently Dr Jonathan Weyers).</p> <p>The Academic Affairs QA team regularly meets with the university's School Secretaries' Forum, which is a key mechanism for discussing the day-to-day operation of the framework. Another important forum is the Student Representation Working Group. The Academic Affairs staff team also meet frequently with college and school boards, programme review teams, heads of learning and teaching and heads of QA to give the background to the QAF, outline the QA procedures and discuss good practice.</p> <p>Working closely with the university's department of Academic and Professional Development, the QA team also helps to organise conferences and workshops with a focus on quality enhancement.</p>
<p><b>3. How does the policy involve the responsibilities of departments, faculties and other organizational units?</b></p>	<p>The University's Quality Assurance Framework is intended "to connect strategic developments at University and college levels to the planning and delivery of academic programmes at school level" (<a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/">http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/</a>) and therefore the implementation of the framework is managed at College and School level.</p> <p>A key principle of the Quality Assurance Framework is that the primary determinant of teaching quality is the relationship between those delivering and supporting teaching and the student. In accord with this, its policies and processes aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support regular reflective practice on the part of staff, teaching teams and academic managers</li> <li>• promote active involvement of students and their representatives, including the students' association (DUSA)</li> <li>• create a culture of continuous improvement and enhancement</li> <li>• encompass the requirements of professional statutory bodies, when appropriate; and</li> <li>• facilitate communication of needs and priorities both from the 'bottom up' and from the 'top down'</li> </ul> <p>Each of the 12 sections of the Framework describes the institutional expectation for how the relevant processes are managed at College and/or School level. For example, the section on Annual monitoring (<a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/annualmonitoringoutlineprocess.htm">http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/annualmonitoringoutlineprocess.htm</a>) sets out the areas to which this section of the Framework is applicable, the timing of activities and who is responsible for activities.</p>

<p><b>4. How does the policy address the involvement of students? If not, why?</b>  Is there a requirement for students to be involved in the preparation of self-evaluation reports? If yes, in what status (observer, expert, member of a governing body?) Is there a requirement for students to be involved in decision-making as an outcome of evaluation? Who selects and appoints the representatives of students?</p>	<p>The University, in partnership with the Dundee University Students Association (DUSA), encourages students to become actively involved in providing constructive feedback to colleges, schools and the student &amp; academic support services with the aim of improving academic programmes and enhancing students' learning experience.</p> <p>DUSA supports four student sabbatical officers, elected by the student body, who each represent one of the four Colleges of the University. These officers work closely with a network of student School Presidents, who are elected by students in the relevant School, to facilitate the collection and dissemination of students' views on the quality of their learning experience, at all levels in the institution, and to provide students with feedback on the actions taken by the University to enhance their learning experience.</p> <p>The University's Student Representation Working Group, which includes members of DUSA as well as senior officers from each School reviews and develops policy and procedures to promote and support effective student representation in the University.</p> <p>Student representatives are designated ex officio members of the following University committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court: DUSA President</li> <li>• Senate: DUSA President, Deputy President and Vice President Student Activities</li> <li>• Learning and Teaching Committee: DUSA President, Deputy President and Vice President Student Activities</li> <li>• Library &amp; Information Services Committee: Deputy President, Vice President Communications and Vice President Student Activities</li> <li>• Academic Quality Sub-Committee: DUSA President and Deputy President,</li> <li>• Postgraduate Affairs Committee: DUSA Deputy President</li> <li>• Vice Principal's Review Group: DUSA President and Deputy President</li> <li>• Student representatives including School Presidents, are normally designated ex officio members of school boards.</li> </ul> <p>It is regarded as good practice, although not prescribed, to involve student representatives in the implementation of many activities detailed in the Quality Assurance Framework, for example, in Programme Review, Annual Monitoring etc. The detail of how these interactions are managed is at the discretion of the sub-units responsible for the implementation of these activities.</p> <p>The University participates in a number of national student surveys delivered by external bodies including the National Student Survey (NSS), the International Student Barometer (ISB), the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES). The outcomes of these</p>
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	surveys are used to inform the future development of academic programmes and to enhance central service support through annual programme monitoring, programme review and the development of School Learning & Teaching Development Plans.
<p><b>5. How does the policy involve specification of the relationship between teaching and research?</b> To what extent is research considered as a quality criterion of the institution and its structural units/employees/students? Are there specific incentives (e.g. financial) to promote the importance of teaching/research quality of staff and structural units?</p>	<p>The University of Dundee's Quality Assurance Framework does not make any explicit reference to the quality of research as a quality criterion of the institution, except for offering guidelines and advice on the management of research degrees (see: <a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/qaresearchdegreesoverview.htm">http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/qaresearchdegreesoverview.htm</a>)</p> <p>The Framework does include a section on Enhancement of quality (see: <a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/qualityenhanceoverview.htm">http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/qualityenhanceoverview.htm</a>) which describes the University's engagement with the QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes [note: 404 file not found message 5/4/11]. One of the QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes is on Research-Teaching Linkages (see: <a href="http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/ResearchTeaching/outcomes.asp">http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/ResearchTeaching/outcomes.asp</a>) and there is an expectation that the institution may be asked about its work in this area as part of the cycle of Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR).</p> <p>The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy (2006-10) does not make explicit mention of the development of Research-Teaching Linkages. The university was however involved in the QAA Scotland Research-Teaching Linkages project (see: <a href="http://www.computing.dundee.ac.uk/ac_research/projectdetails.asp?id=301&amp;source=all">http://www.computing.dundee.ac.uk/ac_research/projectdetails.asp?id=301&amp;source=all</a>)</p> <p>The University does recognise that research output is a determinant not only of quality, but of financial survival and Aim 4 of its current strategic plan sets out a number of objectives to grow research activity (see: <a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk/media/dundeewebsite/principalsoffice/documents/strategicframeworkto2012.pdf">http://www.dundee.ac.uk/media/dundeewebsite/principalsoffice/documents/strategicframeworkto2012.pdf</a>). There is however, no explicit mention in the strategy of developing student capacity to engage in research activities as part of taught provision.</p>
<p><b>6. What are the ways of policy implementation, monitoring and revision?</b> Is the implementation mainly top-down or bottom-up? Is it monitored continuously or sporadically (e.g. as part of an external evaluation)?</p>	<p>One of the aims of the university's Quality Assessment Framework is to "facilitate communication of needs and priorities both from the 'bottom up' and from the 'top down'" (source: <a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/">http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/</a>).</p> <p>A continual enhancement ethos underpins the whole of the University's Quality Assurance Framework. At the level of individual practitioners, the framework aims to promote and support "regular reflective practice on the part of staff, teaching teams and academic managers" (source: <a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/">http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/</a>).</p> <p>Information about the framework is communicated to staff via the QAF website and through a staff newsletter <i>Highlights</i>. Staff development activities are supported by the University's Academic and Professional Development unit. The Academic Affairs staff team also meets frequently with college and school boards, programme review teams, heads of learning and teaching and heads of QA to give the background to the QAF,</p>

	<p>outline the QA procedures and discuss good practice. Individual practitioners are also able to apply for awards for innovation, excellence and lifetime achievement.</p> <p>Annual module and programme monitoring is intended to formalise a process of reflection on the delivery of teaching and thereby to enhance taught provision. The reporting structure is designed to link this process to planning and strategy at school, college and University levels.</p> <p>In relation to module monitoring, the module leader (or equivalent), in consultation with the module team, is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider aspects of student performance and achievement (as available)</li> <li>• take account of feedback and observations from students, staff, and external examiners</li> <li>• review past changes to the syllabus and its delivery, and consider how these aspects could be enhanced for the future</li> <li>• review the module aims and intended learning outcomes and the success of assessment methods in evaluating student achievement</li> <li>• identify good practice in teaching</li> <li>• take into account recommendations or needs identified in annual monitoring or periodic review of cognate programmes or the School Learning and Teaching Development Plan</li> <li>• ensure that recommendations for appropriate actions are followed up to remedy any identified shortcomings.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to annual programme monitoring, the programme leader (or equivalent), in consultation with the programme team, board (or equivalent) is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that the programme remains current and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline, practice in its application, and internal and external initiatives</li> <li>• evaluate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes are being attained by students</li> <li>• ensure that external examiners' views are taken into account</li> <li>• take account of student views as expressed by representatives or through internal and external feedback processes</li> <li>• evaluate the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and of assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes, especially in relation to the coherence of teaching carried out in prescribed and optional modules</li> <li>• identify and disseminate good practice within the programme</li> <li>• take into account recommendations or needs identified in annual module monitoring or periodic programme review or the School Learning and Teaching Development Plan</li> <li>• ensure that recommendations for appropriate actions are followed up to remedy any identified shortcomings.</li> </ul>
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	<p>(Source: <a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/annualmonitoringoverview.htm">http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qaf/annualmonitoringoverview.htm</a>)</p> <p>The programme review process focuses on enhancement at the discipline context, providing members of the school with an opportunity to reflect on progress and plan new developments. This process informs the development of, and is informed in turn by, College Learning and Teaching Strategies and by each School's Learning and Teaching development plan which are in turn informed by the University Learning and Teaching Strategy. These strategies are reviewed through an "annual commentary" process as follows:</p> <p>College Annual Learning and Teaching Commentary: This brief annual submission to the Vice Principal (Educational Development) is intended to summarise college-level outcomes from the Quality Assurance Framework.</p> <p>It is jointly written by the College Vice-Principal, College Head of Learning and Teaching and College Head of Quality Assurance (or equivalents) and would normally be presented to the College Board prior to submission to the Vice Principal ahead of the annual Learning and Teaching Discussion between the Vice Principal's Review Group and college and school representatives.</p> <p>It should review the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• progress in meeting action points arising from the University Learning and Teaching Strategy</li> <li>• progress in meeting action points arising from the College Learning and Teaching Strategy</li> <li>• issues arising through School Learning and Teaching Development Plans (and thereby, the School's programme reviews and annual programme and module monitoring)</li> <li>• college-level outcomes from the Quality Assurance Framework processes at school and levels (i.e. programme review, accreditation events, and annual programme and module monitoring)</li> <li>• any other college-level issues relating to learning and teaching, including identified needs in academic professional development.</li> </ul> <p>The report should highlight aspects of good practice and performance as well as issues of concern.</p> <p>Similarly, School Learning and Teaching Development Plans are reviewed annually and revised or partially revised as required.</p> <p>At institutional level, The QAA Scotland Enhancement-led institutional review (ELIR) operates on a five-year cycle and examines three main aspects of quality assurance and academic standards within Scottish HEIs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• management of the student learning experience</li> <li>• institution-led monitoring and review of quality and standards</li> <li>• strategic approach to quality enhancement.</li> </ul>
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	As part of this process, the University produces a Reflective Analysis which provides a self-assessment of attainment under each of these headings.
<p><b>7. How does the policy involve the statement regarding the collaboration with the secondary education sector?</b>  Are there any activities directed to schools and pupils and aimed to enhance quality of secondary education? Please give examples of activities.</p>	<p>The University's Quality Assurance Framework makes no reference to the secondary education sector.</p> <p>The University has an Admissions and Student Recruitment Office that offers services to secondary schools, including presentations by Liaison Officers, organised visits to the University and publications. These services are intended primarily to support recruitment to the institution and do not have any direct impact on the quality of secondary educational provision. For more information (see: <a href="http://www.dundee.ac.uk/undergraduate/information_for_schools_colleges/">http://www.dundee.ac.uk/undergraduate/information_for_schools_colleges/</a>)</p>

Questions	Data
<p><b>1. Is there an institutional quality assurance policy in place? If not, why?</b> Does the policy at national level prescribe the creation of internal quality assurance system? Is the institutional QA policy a separate policy? What is it based upon (learning outcomes, qualification of staff, equipment)? Is there an explicit reference to ESG? To what degree it is accessible publicly? In what major EU languages is it available?</p>	<p>Staffordshire University's framework for quality assurance is informed by the following objectives: assurance of academic standards; quality learning experience; and opportunities for student achievement. These objectives are underpinned by the following principles: responsibility and accountability; communication; quality assurance as a process; and quality enhancement.</p> <p>The University's framework for quality assurance is informed by the following objectives:</p> <p><b>Assurance of Academic Standards:</b> At the level of modules and the award(s) to which they lead; the content of programmes and modules; the extent to which the aims and objectives of the programmes and the modules are met.</p> <p><b>Quality Learning Experience:</b> Effective approaches to teaching and learning; interesting and relevant modules designed to develop students' knowledge, understanding or competence to the required level; the management of programmes and their individual components; support for students and staff from academic support services and the University's administrative infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Opportunities for Student Achievement:</b> Formal assessment and student progression; students' personal level of satisfaction during their studies; the achievement of the University's graduates in securing employment on the completion of their studies.</p> <p>The objectives outlined above form a quality assurance framework that is underpinned by a set of principles:</p> <p><b>Responsibility and Accountability</b> All staff are responsible for the assurance and improvement of quality, as individuals and through their Faculties/Schools. Students themselves also have a responsibility for quality through their representation on committees of the University and participation in feedback mechanisms. There must also be clear lines of accountability. This is demonstrated in the process of self- monitoring, review and report that is one of the main characteristics of the University's quality assurance framework, within the University's committee structure and externally to HEFCE, the QAA and professional and statutory bodies.</p> <p><b>Communication</b> Requirements of the quality assurance process should be communicated to all staff via this website; formal and</p>



	<p>informal advice and support is available from the Quality Improvement Service. University Committees, in particular the Learning, Quality and Performance Committee, the Quality Sub-Committee and Faculty/School Quality Committees, play an important role in the dissemination of good practice, the review of policies and procedures and the propagation of the national agenda in relation to quality issues.</p> <p><b>Quality Assurance as a Process</b>  Quality assurance and enhancement is not sporadic but a continual process of reflection, evaluation, report and feedback. This process is framed within a University-wide system of agreed procedures, specifications and pro-formas, the aim of which is to promote transparency and a shared understanding of the fundamental requirements. This shared understanding, together with co-ordination via QIS and senior officers should in turn promote consistency of standards and procedures.</p> <p><b>Quality Improvement</b>  The University's aim is to provide the best possible student experience and to foster quality enhancement whenever possible. Good practice within the University at Faculty, School, Service or University level and from other institutions should be shared. The University's quality assurance framework itself is subject to regular monitoring and review to take account of changing needs within the University and the Higher Education sector. The University's Learning, Quality and Performance Committee and Quality Sub-Committee play an important role in the monitoring and enhancing of the quality assurance framework.</p> <p>The University's Quality Assurance Handbook describes in detail the framework of procedures that Staffordshire University has established for the quality assurance and improvement of its educational provision. The handbook can be accessed at:  <a href="http://www.staffs.ac.uk/about_us/university_departments/quality_improvement/qa_handbook/">http://www.staffs.ac.uk/about_us/university_departments/quality_improvement/qa_handbook/</a></p> <p>Additional handbooks describe the procedures for quality assurance of other educational activities conducted at the University. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures developed by Staffordshire University and its college partners for the quality assurance and improvement of SURF programmes. These procedures are designed to safeguard the quality of the learning experience for students studying Staffordshire University Regional Framework (SURF) awards:  <a href="http://www.staffs.ac.uk/about_us/university_departments/quality_improvement/surf_qa_handbook/">http://www.staffs.ac.uk/about_us/university_departments/quality_improvement/surf_qa_handbook/</a></li> <li>• Procedures for managing overseas provision:  <a href="http://www.staffs.ac.uk/about_us/university_departments/quality_improvement/overseas_qa_handbook/">http://www.staffs.ac.uk/about_us/university_departments/quality_improvement/overseas_qa_handbook/</a></li> <li>• Procedures developed by Staffordshire University for the quality assurance and improvement of programmes delivered by UK partner institutions not within the Staffordshire University Regional</li> </ul>
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	<p>Federation:  <a href="http://www.staffs.ac.uk/about_us/university_departments/quality_improvement/uk_non-surf_qa_handbook/">http://www.staffs.ac.uk/about_us/university_departments/quality_improvement/uk_non-surf_qa_handbook/</a></p> <p>None of the above handbooks or the University's quality framework makes explicit reference to the ESG.</p> <p>All relevant documentation is published in English at:  <a href="http://www.staffs.ac.uk/about_us/university_departments/quality_improvement/">http://www.staffs.ac.uk/about_us/university_departments/quality_improvement/</a></p>
<p><b>2. Does the policy involve the organisation of the quality assurance system? If yes, please describe. Who is the person responsible?</b></p>	<p>At Staffordshire University, the Quality Improvement Service (QIS) provides a range of quality assurance and improvement services to the Faculties, Schools and Services of the University. The Service works in partnership with other areas of the University to provide a means by which the University community can be assured of the quality of educational provision and its relevance to students.</p> <p>QIS is responsible for the administration of the University's quality assurance and improvement procedures. The Service has the following primary responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to advise Faculties, Schools and Services on quality policy and process both internal to the University and those of external bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)</li> <li>• to arrange the validation of new awards/programmes and the critical review of existing awards</li> <li>• to provide administrative support for the quality assurance of the University's collaborative provision</li> <li>• to provide officer support for a number of University Boards and Committees</li> </ul> <p>Members of QIS act as officers to a range of University Boards and Committees, for example, Quality Sub-Committee, Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, plus other ad hoc working parties related to quality matters when required;</p> <p>External examiner nominations and appointments are administered within QIS, as are the reports external submit at the end of each year;</p> <p>QIS is responsible for establishing and overseeing the annual monitoring of University awards;</p> <p>University validation events and reviews, both on and off campus, are administered by the</p>

	<p>Service. Institutional-level visits, prior to a validation event involve an officer from the Service.</p> <p>The Service supports the University in the preparation for audits and reviews conducted by the QAA.</p> <p>Primary responsibility for quality assurance and improvement rests with the Academic Board and is exercised through the Learning, Quality and Performance Committee (LQPC) and its sub-committees.</p> <p>LQPC oversees all quality policy and procedures within the University, including, reports on undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, the appointment of internal and external examiners.</p> <p>Responsibility for the approval, amendment and withdrawal of modules is undertaken by Faculty Quality Committees, within processes agreed by LQPC.</p>
<p><b>3. How does the policy involve the responsibilities of departments, faculties and other organizational units?</b></p>	<p>All staff are responsible for the assurance and improvement of quality, as individuals and through their Faculties/Schools. Students themselves also have a responsibility for quality through their representation on committees of the University and participation in feedback mechanisms. There must also be clear lines of accountability. This is demonstrated in the process of self-monitoring, review and report that is one of the main characteristics of the University's quality assurance framework, within the University's committee structure and externally to HEFCE, the QAA and professional and statutory bodies.</p>
<p><b>4. How does the policy address the involvement of students? If not, why?</b> Is there a requirement for students to be involved in the preparation of self-evaluation reports? If yes, in what status (observer, expert, member of a governing body?) Is there a requirement for students to be involved in decision-making as an outcome of evaluation? Who selects and appoints the representatives of students?</p>	<p>The University's QA handbook (Section C3 <a href="http://www.staffs.ac.uk/assets/sect_c3_tcm44-34941.pdf">http://www.staffs.ac.uk/assets/sect_c3_tcm44-34941.pdf</a>) offers advice to Faculties/Schools on the systematic collection of students' views regarding its educational provision. The Faculty/School Dean is required to ensure that there are in place systematic procedures for giving students the opportunity to feed back views of the education provision offered by the Faculty/School, for example, through the use of evaluation questionnaires.</p> <p>Student-Staff Liaison Committees ensure that there is an effective channel for formal communication between students and staff in every part of the University.</p> <p>SSLCs should have a clear remit and consider such issues as:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the provision of academic facilities and general Faculty/School or University facilities;</li> <li>arrangements for induction and study skills provision;</li> <li>local monitoring of academic standards through, for example, consideration of annual monitoring reports on undergraduate/postgraduate teaching, first destination statistics and the results of student evaluation questionnaires</li> </ul> <p>Membership should be representative of the student body within the Faculty/School concerned. Staff representation should be a matter for each Faculty/School to establish. Some SSLCs may agree that members of academic support services e.g. an Information Services representative can attend all or specific meetings.</p> <p>There is no mention in the policy of student representation on executive committees or other decision-making bodies.</p>
<p><b>5. How does the policy involve specification of the relationship between teaching and research?</b> To what extent is research considered as a quality criterion of the institution and its structural units/employees/students? Are there specific incentives (e.g. financial) to promote the importance of teaching/research quality of staff and structural units?</p>	<p>There is no mention of the relationship between teaching and research in the university's primary documents relating to quality.</p> <p>The university maintains a site with information for research active staff which includes guidance information on the administration of research degrees at: <a href="http://www.staffs.ac.uk/research/">http://www.staffs.ac.uk/research/</a></p>
<p><b>6. What are the ways of policy implementation, monitoring and revision?</b> Is the implementation mainly top-down or bottom-up? Is it monitored continuously or sporadically (e.g. as part of an external evaluation)?</p>	<p>The University's primary QA handbook describes in detail the processes for policy implementation, but there is no explicit reference to monitoring or revision of the policy.</p>
<p><b>7. How does the policy involve the statement regarding the collaboration with the secondary education sector?</b> Are there any activities directed to schools and pupils and aimed to enhance quality of secondary education? Please give examples of activities.</p>	<p>There is no mention in the quality assurance policy of collaboration with the schools sector.</p>

University 4: University of Birmingham

Questions	Data
<p><b>1. Is there an institutional quality assurance policy in place? If not, why?</b> Does the policy at national level prescribe the creation of internal quality assurance system? Is the institutional QA policy a separate policy? What is it based upon (learning outcomes, qualification of staff, equipment)? Is there an explicit reference to ESG? To what degree it is accessible publicly? In what major EU languages is it available?</p>	<p>The University of Birmingham has a Quality Assurance Framework for assuring academic quality and standards, supported by a central Academic Quality Unit, entitled Birmingham Integrated Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (BIQAES) (<a href="http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/biqaes.aspx">http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/biqaes.aspx</a>). BIQAES is an independent, institutional set of review processes which the University has put in place to monitor, review and enhance academic standards, the quality of its learning, teaching and assessment, and the academic support given to students.</p> <p>BIQAES was created to signal the importance of quality issues at all levels and to bring together the breadth and depth of experience across the University and the HE sector as a whole. It is informed by the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA's) Academic Infrastructure, which comprises the Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education, Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, Subject Benchmark Statements and Programme Specifications. Further information is available at <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/default.asp">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/default.asp</a>.</p> <p>BIQAES consists of the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Module and Programme Review</li> <li>• Comprehensive Programme Review (CPR)</li> <li>• School Quality Review (SQR)</li> <li>• Review of Collaborative Arrangements</li> <li>• Specific Checks</li> <li>• Thematic Review</li> </ul> <p>A core body of data is central to BIQAES review processes. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The QAA's Academic Infrastructure (the Code of Practice, Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, Subject Benchmark Statements and Programme Specifications; see <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/default.asp">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/default.asp</a> for further information)</li> <li>• Student feedback information, module questionnaires and reports from Staff- Student Committees (SSCs)</li> <li>• Results of the National Student Survey and internal student surveys</li> <li>• External assessments of the School's provision, in particular External Examiner reports, external accreditation reports and reports on reviews of collaborative provision by the QAA and University-appointed Collaborative Programmes Officers</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on student complaints, appeals, conduct and fitness to practise provided by Academic Services</li> <li>• The University's annual Statistical Profile and BIQAES statistical datasets, in particular the datasets concerning entrant profiles, retention and completion rates, classification of degrees, and employability, assessed in relation to equality and diversity factors (gender, age, ethnicity, disability and overseas status); see below for further guidance.</li> </ul> <p>There is no explicit reference to ESG in the University of Birmingham's Quality Assurance Framework.</p> <p>The BIQAES Framework is published on the University of Birmingham's website in English at <a href="http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/biqaes.aspx">http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/biqaes.aspx</a> and is fully available to internal and external audiences.</p>
<p><b>2. Does the policy involve the organisation of the quality assurance system? If yes, please describe.</b> Who is the person responsible?</p>	<p>The Quality Assurance Framework is developed at institutional level and the Academic Quality Unit (AQU) is responsible for the implementation and development of BIQAES. This includes advising Schools and Colleges and monitoring the outputs of the various review processes, in support of the University Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (UQAEC). The AQU reviews the effectiveness of BIQAES on a regular basis, taking account of feedback and external developments, and updates the guidance annually.</p> <p>The components within BIQAES are monitored and drawn together by the UQAEC, with support from the AQU. Meetings of the UQAEC provide a broad-based check on the effectiveness of academic quality systems in place within Schools and Colleges, and across the University. The membership of the UQAEC is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning and Quality)</li> <li>• Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Teaching, Learning and Quality)</li> <li>• Directors of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (DQAEs)</li> <li>• Director of the Graduate School</li> <li>• Guild of Students Vice-President (Education and Access)</li> <li>• Director of Academic Services or nominee</li> </ul> <p>Staff in attendance, either regularly or for specific items, include the Director of Educational Development, the Director of Student Support and Development, staff from the Centre for Learning and Academic Development (CLAD), and staff from Academic and Student Administration. The Academic Quality Manager is Secretary to the Committee. The Terms of Reference for the UQAEC are available on the web at <a href="http://www.committees.bham.ac.uk/committees/QualityAssuranceandEnhancementCommittee.shtml">http://www.committees.bham.ac.uk/committees/QualityAssuranceandEnhancementCommittee.shtml</a>.</p>

<p><b>3. How does the policy involve the responsibilities of departments, faculties and other organizational units?</b></p>	<p>The Academic Quality Unit (AQU) works with schools and colleges on the implementation and development of BIQAES, seeking to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To monitor the quality of the student learning experience, and of learning and teaching opportunities</li> <li>• To identify, encourage and disseminate good practice, and to identify and eliminate weaknesses</li> <li>• To provide an opportunity for Schools, Colleges and the University to test the effectiveness of systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing academic quality and standards</li> <li>• To encourage the development and enhancement of these systems, in the context of current and emerging provision</li> <li>• To provide public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards</li> <li>• To provide a framework for the consideration of feedback from students and External Examiners about academic quality and standards.</li> </ul> <p>All bodies within the institutional are expected to work in concert with one another to assure quality. Specifically, the School Quality Review (SQR) is designed to test and improve the effectiveness of the internal processes carried out by Schools. SQR draws on the outcomes/outputs from other University and School processes (e.g. Annual Review and Comprehensive Programme Review) but does not seek to duplicate these processes. SQR takes place on a six-year cycle. (excerpted from <a href="http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/quality/biqaes-full.pdf">http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/quality/biqaes-full.pdf</a>).</p>
<p><b>4. How does the policy address the involvement of students? If not, why?</b> Is there a requirement for students to be involved in the preparation of self-evaluation reports? If yes, in what status (observer, expert, member of a governing body?) Is there a requirement for students to be involved in decision-making as an outcome of evaluation? Who selects and appoints the representatives of students?</p>	<p>The Guild of Students (GoS) Vice-President (Education and Access) sits on the UQAEC, which oversees much of the QA procedures at Birmingham. The GoS Vice-President (Education and Access) is an elected representative. In addition, Schools are actively encouraged to include student representation in their Annual Review bodies and during Comprehensive Reviews. School Quality Reviews must include either the Vice-President (Education and Access) or another Sabbatical Officer from the Guild of Students, not formerly a member of the School. (<a href="http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/quality/biqaes-full.pdf">http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/quality/biqaes-full.pdf</a>)</p> <p>In addition, the university boasts a Student representation system (<a href="http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/docs/POL_Student_Representation_Scheme.pdf">http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/docs/POL_Student_Representation_Scheme.pdf</a>). The student representation system is founded on the belief that through effective representation students become partners in their education, allowing them a more active involvement in, and ownership of, their learning. Elected Student Representatives from every subject area, undergraduate and postgraduate, are given responsibility for reporting on student issues within their subject to University staff and to the Guild of Students.</p>

<p><b>5. How does the policy involve specification of the relationship between teaching and research?</b></p> <p>To what extent is research considered as a quality criterion of the institution and its structural units/employees/students? Are there specific incentives (e.g. financial) to promote the importance of teaching/research quality of staff and structural units?</p>	<p>The University of Birmingham's Quality Assurance Framework does not make any explicit reference to the quality of research as a quality criterion of the institution, but does stress the role of the university as a 'research-intensive' institution and emphasizes support for research and research-led teaching (<a href="http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/our/index.aspx">http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/our/index.aspx</a>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a research-intensive university, Birmingham is committed to research that is world-leading in terms of its originality and distinctiveness, significance and rigour. Our vision is to inspire today's brightest researchers to make a major impact on global society, and to become the leaders of tomorrow in whatever field they pursue.</li> <li>• Our research-excellence underpins the content and delivery of all our teaching programmes - undergraduate and postgraduate. We are committed to enabling all of our students to profit from a culture of learning aligned with our research and knowledge transfer ethos, which is based upon critical enquiry, debate and self-motivation</li> </ul> <p>The BIQAES Framework does not include a specific section on Enhancement of quality, but rather sees Enhancement as a integral function of the QA process (see: <a href="http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/biqaes.aspx">http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/biqaes.aspx</a>). Explicit reference to enhancement is given in the context of individual review types.</p> <p>The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy (2007-12; <a href="http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/study/assess/learnandteach.shtml">http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/study/assess/learnandteach.shtml</a>) derives directly from the University's Strategic Framework (<a href="http://www.fiveyearplan.bham.ac.uk/">http://www.fiveyearplan.bham.ac.uk/</a>). It sets out 'A Vision for Birmingham Learning' through a framework of five core strands. These core strands are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff (Staff engagement with excellence in teaching and learning);</li> <li>• Learning Development and Environment (Pedagogical environment and infrastructure);</li> <li>• Students (Student skills and support);</li> <li>• Quality Enhancement and Communications (Educational enhancement process management and promotion of learning and teaching);</li> <li>• Curriculum (Curriculum development and cross-curricular issues)</li> </ul> <p>BIQAES encompasses all of the arrangements that the University has put in place to monitor, review and enhance academic standards, the quality of its learning, teaching and assessment and the academic support given to students. The BIQAES processes allow for the continual monitoring and enhancement of the implementation of the Key Principles in the Learning and Teaching Strategy.</p>
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<p><b>6. What are the ways of policy implementation, monitoring and revision?</b> Is the implementation mainly top-down or bottom-up? Is it monitored continuously or sporadically (e.g. as part of an external evaluation)?</p>	<p>Birmingham University is “committed to the continual enhancement of the quality of its provision. Colleges and Schools work within a framework of systems and policies for assuring academic quality and standards, supported by a central Academic Quality Unit” (<a href="http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/index.aspx">http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/index.aspx</a>).</p> <p>Largely top-down and largely sporadic, QA policies are implemented and monitored through the Birmingham Integrated Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (BIAQES), which reviews processes the University has put in place “to monitor, review and enhance academic standards, the quality of its learning, teaching and assessment, and the academic support given to students.”</p> <p>The university also uses the external examiner system to generate evaluative feedback: “Feedback from external examiners forms a vital part of the University’s quality assurance processes for taught programmes. External examiner recommendations are reported to quality assurance and enhancement committees both at University and College level” (<a href="http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/index.aspx">http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/index.aspx</a>). Information on requirements for external examiners is available at <a href="http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/examiners/index.aspx">http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/examiners/index.aspx</a>. This type of monitoring is sporadic.</p> <p>Quality assurance of programmes and courses is governed via the programme approval process. All proposed programmes of study go through a rigorous two-stage approval process. During the first stage, the plan for the programme is considered at College and University level. The second stage of the process is the preparation of a much more detailed Programme Proposal which will include evidence of market research, external comments and a skills audit. Schools and Colleges are involved throughout the process, and are supported by a dedicated Curriculum Development Unit.</p> <p>The university aspires to continual educational enhancement, seeing enhancement as core to the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy: “The University supports mechanisms for the collaboration and sharing of information on pedagogic development and good practice in teaching, learning and assessment across the institution. Current areas of focus include the promotion and development of research-informed teaching and enquiry-based learning. The University also looks to develop an effective relationship between teaching and learning related Quality Assurance activity (including audit) and Quality Enhancement and development”(<a href="http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/index.aspx">http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/quality/index.aspx</a>).</p>
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<p><b>7. How does the policy involve the statement regarding the collaboration with the secondary education sector?</b> Are there any activities directed to schools and pupils and aimed to enhance quality of secondary education? Please give examples of activities.</p>	<p>Birmingham University's Quality Assurance Framework makes no reference to the secondary education sector.</p>
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