



# **Academic Quality Enhancement Framework**

**Management of the Quality Enhancement of  
Academic Programmes**

**Approved by Academic Council**

**23 June 2021**

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## 1. Context

- 1.1. This document sets out the structures and procedures for the management of the quality enhancement and assurance processes for academic programmes. These structures and procedures ensure the effective and efficient implementation of all processes described within the Quality Framework, including the [Annual Quality Enhancement Process](#).
- 1.2. Discipline Programmes Boards are responsible for ensuring the completion of all relevant quality assurance and enhancement requirements for all programmes within their remit. Discipline Programmes Boards report to Faculty Boards which in turn report to the University Programmes Board.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this document is to describe the University policies and procedures as they apply to the management of the quality enhancement processes for the delivery and oversight of academic programmes.
- 2.2. The purpose of these procedures is to ensure the quality assurance and enhancement processes relating to all aspects of programme delivery, as described within the Quality Framework can be effectively and efficiently implemented.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1. A programme is defined as an approved curriculum leading to an award of the University. This section of the Quality Framework applies to all roles and functions involved in programme delivery, and in particular to School Management, Discipline Programmes Board Chairs, Programme Coordinators, Year Tutors and Class Representatives.
- 3.2. This chapter does not include resource management, which falls within the remit of the School delivering the programme.
- 3.3. Figure 1 shows the quality enhancement committee structure within the University. While this hierarchical structure aligns to the quality enhancement workflows and business processes, no single process will require approval at every level, as responsibility and approval authority is delegated to the appropriate level within the Quality Framework. For example, the validation and approval of new programmes of less than 30 ECTS credits is situated entirely within the Faculty Level, while Schools have the authority to approve all module changes.

3.4. Guidance documents are available to support all staff engaged in the quality enhancement processes. In addition, training and resources are provided for the key roles, such as the Programme Coordinator, to ensure a consistent approach across the University.

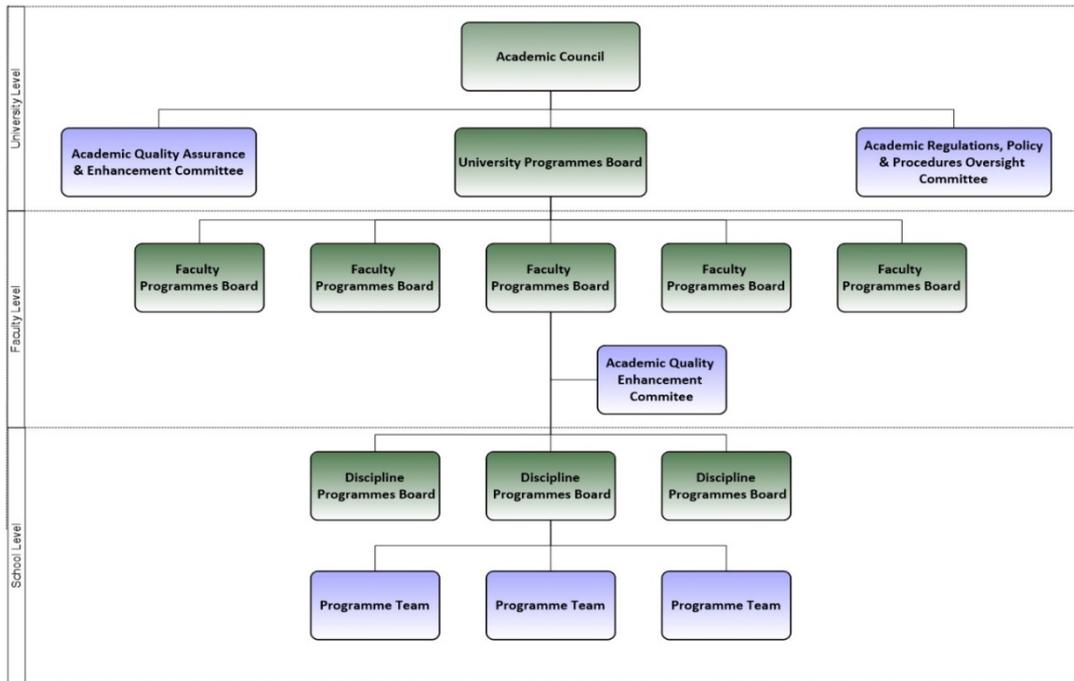


Figure 1 Quality Enhancement Committee Structure

#### 4. Role of School

4.1. To ensure the quality of delivery of its programmes, the School, Programme Teams and Discipline Programmes Board undertake the following broad duties:

- Ensure that programmes are delivered as per the approved programme schedule, module descriptors and student handbooks;
- Ensure programme design and delivery is aligned to the University Educational Model;
- Adhere to all relevant quality enhancement policies, processes and procedures;
- Communicate with students in relation to all aspects of programme delivery;
- Develop programme documentation including the student handbooks;
- Liaise with the Admissions office, International Office & Access & Civic Engagement Office (where applicable) to promote, market, recruit and enrol students onto its programmes;

- Work towards the achievement of TU Dublin and national student profile and diversity targets in relation to recruitment, retention, progression and completion;
- Liaise with the Examination Office, external examiners, industry and community representatives, professional bodies, visiting lecturers and other Schools involved with the programme;
- Receive and disseminate, as appropriate and per support service guidelines, details of students identified by student support services;
- Collate documents required by the Programme Team and Discipline Programmes Board, including student feedback forms, assessment schedules, timetables, registration and examination statistics and the [Annual Programme Enhancement Report](#);
- Implement programme-specific and student support actions from the relevant TU Dublin strategies, such as the Student Engagement Strategy, Widening Participation Strategy and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy;
- Ensure continuous and timely consideration and implementation of recommendations arising from student feedback, including communication to students of actions arising from the feedback process;
- Monitor student performance across all modules within the programme, and where necessary identify where students have difficulties and implement appropriate academic supports and interventions;
- Ensure the implementation of all relevant policies and strategies approved by Academic Council;
- Advise students on academic and related aspects of their programme of study as outlined in the Student Handbook;
- Work with the Students Union to facilitate the election of Class Representatives;
- Maintain a record of formal meetings with students and other stakeholders;
- Meet students on group and individual basis to assess support needs.

## 5. Role of Programme Team

5.1. The Programme Team consists of all lecturing staff teaching on the programme and shall be co-ordinated by the Programme Coordinator.

5.2. The Programme Team has responsibility, under the academic leadership of the Discipline Programmes Board, for delivering a programme or suite of programmes.

5.3. The Programme Team will liaise regularly and meet at least once per semester to:

- Coordinate the implementation of learning, teaching and assessment strategies for the programme;
- Provide feedback to the Programme Coordinator on the delivery of, and assessment within, the programme and feed into any quality reviews and the [Annual Quality Enhancement Process](#);
- Produce documentation required for programme delivery;
- Produce documentation required by professional and regulatory bodies and internal and external stakeholders;
- Update programme documentation and programme record systems, including the [Programme and Module Catalogue](#);
- Discuss and implement module and programme changes;
- Develop and implement requirements in programme-specific community and civic engagement including outreach activities.

## 6. Role of Programme Coordinator

6.1. The Programme Coordinator's primary role is to ensure all quality assurance and enhancement processes related to the delivery of the programme are successfully completed. As such, the Programme Coordinator's primary role is described in the following processes:

- [Annual Quality Enhancement Process](#);
- [Programme Review](#);
- [Making Changes to Programmes & Modules](#).

6.2. The Programme Coordinator is a member of the Programme Team and where the Coordinator is not a member of the School Executive, they undertake the role for a period of three years,

after which expressions of interest will be sought from other members of the Programme Team.

6.3. Programme Coordinators can be reappointed after three years if no suitable expressions of interest are forthcoming. Where multiple expressions of interest are submitted, the appointment decision will be made by the Head of School and the Chair of the Discipline Programmes Board. Priority should be given to academic staff who have yet to undertake the Programme Coordinator role.

6.4. Any staff member taking on the role of Programme Coordinator for the first time is expected to complete training provided by Academic Affairs.

6.5. The Programme Coordinator's quality assurance and enhancement responsibilities are:

- Convening Programme Team meetings;
- Downloading and completing the [Annual Programme Enhancement Report](#) and submitting documentation to the Discipline Programmes Board as described in the [Annual Quality Enhancement Process](#);
- Collating feedback from Programme Team members and Class Representatives;
- Monitoring the implementation of relevant University policies and alignment with the TU Dublin Education Model across the Programme, and reporting to the Discipline Programmes Board;
- Monitoring the status and progress of the actions within the [Discipline Quality Enhancement Plan](#) assigned to the Programme Team and providing updates to the Discipline Programmes Board;
- Reporting the views of the Programme Team to the Discipline Programmes Board and reporting decisions and actions taken at the Discipline Programmes Board back to the Programme Team;
- Consulting regularly with the Class Representatives to gather feedback and views, resolve any issues that emerge, and to bring issues to the attention of the Discipline Programmes Board or School;
- Meeting regularly with the Year Tutors to address any issues or bring those issues to the attention of the Discipline Programmes Board or School;

- Ensuring students are provided with a Student Handbook that includes all the required information, including assessment schedules;
- Collating programme documentation required by the Discipline Programmes Board and for programme reviews and professional and regulatory accreditation;
- Inputting programme data into the Programme & Module Catalogue and submitting proposed programme changes within the catalogue.

6.6. In addition, the Programme Coordinator can, as agreed with the Head of School, undertake some of the duties as outlined above in Section 4.

6.7. In the case where a programme's modules are a sub-set of a larger programme, the Programme Team and the Coordinator for the larger programme will also have responsibility for the embedded programme. For example, in the case where a Level 7 programme comprises of the first three years (stages) of a Level 8 programme, the Programme Team and Coordinator for the Level 8 programme should also have responsibility for the Level 7 programme.

6.8. If two or more related programmes share multiple stages and modules, the School can decide that only one Programme Team and Programme Coordinator are required to manage the quality enhancement procedures for all the programmes. For example, this can apply in cases where there are streams in the later stages of a programme or where two programmes differ only in the later stages of the programmes.

## **7. Role of Year Tutors**

7.1. Programme Coordinators may be supported in their role by year tutors. The year tutor, who is appointed by the Head of School or nominee, is assigned a group or groups of students before the commencement of teaching.

7.2. Year tutors may not be required in all programmes and in all years, for example at postgraduate level, but should be appointed in undergraduate programmes, particularly in first year.

7.3. Where programmes have large student numbers, it may be necessary to have more than one Year Tutor in a stage or stages of the programme. The School may decide on the need for Year Tutors and the number required.

7.4. The year tutor teaches on the programme in that year and hence is a member of the Programme Team. The year tutor may be assigned a selection of the following duties by the Head of School:

- Communicating with students in relation to the programme delivery, progression and pastoral issues including referral where appropriate to student services;
- Working closely with student support services to help identify students in need of higher levels of support and to streamline and maximise the provision of support;
- Advising students on academic and related aspects of their programme of study as outlined in the Student Handbook;
- Facilitating delivery of a holistic support service to students taking into account the interlinking of academic issues, University experience and personal issues and briefing academic colleagues on the supports available to students from the various student support services;
- Working with the Students Union to facilitate the students to elect Class Representatives;
- Maintaining a record of their formal meetings with students;
- Meeting students on group and individual basis to assess support needs.

## **8. Role of Class Representatives**

8.1. At least one Class Representative is elected for each stage of a programme to represent the students' views. Where programmes have large student numbers, it may be necessary to have more than one Class Representative for each stage of the programme. The decision to have more than one Class Representative in any stage can be made by the School in consultation with the Students Union.

8.2. The primary role of the Class Representative is to bring, on behalf of the class, issues to the attention of lecturers, Year Tutors and the Programme Coordinator.

8.3. One Class Representative from each programme will attend the Discipline Programmes Board to convey the views of the students across the programmes. The Programme Coordinator will meet with all the programme Class Representatives prior to the Discipline Programmes Board meeting to ensure all unresolved issues can be discussed. The Class Representatives on a

programme will need to nominate a representative to attend the Discipline Programmes Board meeting.

8.4. Class representatives are supported in their role by the Students Union. The roles and responsibilities of Class Representatives are described fully within the [Students Union Constitution](#).

8.5. In advance of Discipline Programmes Board meetings, Class Representatives will liaise with their class and the other Class Representatives on their programme and submit to the Programme Coordinator any topics they would like included on the Discipline Programmes Board agenda and any response to topics that the Programme Coordinator has requested their feedback on.

## **9. Role of Examiners**

9.1. Internal Examiners on programmes are full-time or part-time members of academic lecturing staff. Other examiners may be formally appointed each year by the Head of School on behalf of Academic Council. The role of the internal examiner is to: deliver learning as prescribed within the module descriptors; set appropriate assessments that align with the module learning outcomes; correct those assessments; input the marks into the relevant student record system; and attend assessment boards.

9.2. At least one external examiner is appointed for each programme. Where more than one external examiner is appointed, one may be from industry or relevant profession. Depending on the level of curriculum-based civic engagement in the programme, it may also be appropriate to have an external examiner from the community sector.

9.3. The role of the external examiner is to provide oversight and reassurance in relation to the academic standards and the integrity of assessments.

9.4. For a full description of the role and responsibilities of the external examiner, criteria for eligibility and the appointment process, please see the [External Examiner Policy](#).

## **10. Role of Discipline Programmes Board**

10.1. A Discipline Programmes Board, under the guidance and direction of the School Executive, manages and monitors quality assurance and enhancement processes and procedures on all

programmes within its remit. It is responsible for the quality of the programmes and for ensuring all relevant quality assurance and enhancement processes are completed.

10.2. The Discipline Programmes Board is a sub-committee of the Faculty Board, which is a sub-committee of the University Programmes Board (See [Figure 1](#)).

10.3. The Discipline Programmes Board will include at least one Class Representative from each of the programmes within the Discipline Programmes Board's remit

10.4. The membership of the Discipline Programmes Board comprises of:

- Head of School<sup>1</sup> (or nominee) from one of the School's responsible for the programmes (Chair);
- Heads of School (or nominees) from all other Schools involved in the delivery of the programmes;
- The Programme Coordinator from each Programme Team reporting to the Discipline Programmes Board;
- At least one Class Representative from each of the programmes;
- A representative of the technical officers who support programme delivery (where applicable).

10.5. The Discipline Programmes Board terms of reference are to:

- Oversee the totality of the student learning experience and student engagement across all stages and modules of the programmes and to ensure delivery is in line with University policy and the Educational Model;
- Ensure the programmes are delivered as per the approved programme schedules and alignment of individual module learning outcomes to overall programme outcomes;
- Ensure all programme learning outcomes and graduate attributes are consistently achieved;

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<sup>1</sup> This will be changed when the roles within a School have been decided through the Organisational Design process. For example, this could be assigned to the Assistant Head of School responsible for that discipline, or a Discipline Lead, etc.

- Provide advice and guidance to Programme Teams to encourage best practice in learning, teaching and assessment methodologies to enable all students to engage with the subject matter more effectively and highlight areas of good practice to Faculty Board;
- Ensure implementation of the University's Marks and Standards;
- Receive and consider external examiner reports;
- In conjunction with the Admissions Office, monitor student admission and registrations, including advanced entry and transfer, diversity and inclusion, and international participation;
- Monitor student assessment results and progression, completion, retention and graduation rates and report to Faculty Board;
- Draft the annual [Discipline Quality Enhancement Plan](#) which incorporates a report for each programme;
- Monitor the progress of actions assigned to the Programme Teams within the [Discipline Quality Enhancement Plan](#);
- Carry out the critical self-study of the programmes and the preparation of revised documentation and other tasks in relation to quality reviews and where applicable professional accreditation;
- Advise School Executive and Faculty Board on relevant matters relating to the programme;
- Ensure engagement with all stakeholders including those from the community and employers.

10.6. The Discipline Programmes Board may establish sub-committees, working groups and industry/community/profession advisory boards (as appropriate). Members of such sub-committees may be, with the approval of the Faculty Board, co-opted from outside the Programme Teams or from outside the University. For example, these may include industry and professional representatives, and/or community partners involved in projects within the programmes.

10.7. Each Discipline Programmes Board shall meet at least three times per academic year. Minutes should be recorded and submitted to the Faculty Board annually through the [Annual Programme Enhancement Process](#).

## 11. Role of Faculty Board

11.1. Each Discipline Programmes Board reports to a Faculty Board. Where a Discipline Programmes Board consists of programmes from Schools from more than one Faculty, one Faculty Board will be designated as the lead Faculty Board for that discipline and will take primary responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the quality assurance and enhancement procedures. In this case, the other Faculty Board(s) should be consulted and informed as appropriate.

11.2. Membership<sup>2</sup> of Faculty Boards includes staff and student representatives, and a representative from Academic Affairs.

11.3. The role of the Faculty Board<sup>3</sup> in respect of the management of quality enhancement and assurance processes for academic programmes is to:

- Maintain oversight of the programmes delivered within the Faculty and programme provision statistics, which include NFQ level, mode of delivery (e.g. part-time, full-time, blended, on-line) and award type;
- Monitor student data and profile trends across the Faculty, including but not limited to:
  - Registrations;
  - Progression and retention rates;
  - Completion and graduation statistics;
  - Diversity;
  - International participation.
- Oversee student engagement and the student experience for programmes in the Faculty and make recommendations to Discipline Programmes Boards, Heads of School and University professional services in this regard;

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<sup>2</sup> The membership of Faculty Boards will be determined after the structures, functions and roles within the Faculty are decided within the Organisational Design process.

<sup>3</sup> This list only includes Faculty Board's role in quality assurance and enhancement of programmes.

- Oversee the implementation of the University Quality Framework within the Faculty and report to the Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee of any barriers/issues in this regard;
- Oversee the implementation of the University's academic regulations, policies and procedures in the Faculty and report to the Academic Regulations, Policies & Procedures Oversight Committee of any barriers/issues in this regard;
- Consider reports from each Discipline Programmes Board and identify common trends and issues that require further consideration by Heads of School or the University Programmes Board or other Academic Council sub-committees;
- Ensure the completion of all [Discipline Quality Enhancement Plans](#) in order to develop the [Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan](#);
- Oversee the implementation of actions within the Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan;
- Provide a summary report on the issues, trends and actions that need to be included in the [University Quality Enhancement Plan](#) to University Programmes Board;
- Provide a mechanism for the recognition and dissemination of “good practice” in programme delivery within the Faculty.

## 12. Role of University Programmes Board

12.1. Each Faculty Board reports to the University Programmes Board. The University Programmes Board will be responsible for approving the establishment of Discipline Programmes Boards. Proposals for new Discipline Programmes Boards can be submitted to the University Programmes Board by any Faculty Board.

12.2. The role of the University Programmes Board in respect to the management of quality enhancement processes for academic programmes is to:

- Oversee the academic management of programmes through Faculty Boards and to provide recommendations to Faculty Boards in relation to the development and management of Academic Programmes;
- Oversee the development and monitoring of the procedures to examine trends in relation to the student profile, including but not limited to:

- Registrations;
  - Progression and retention rates;
  - Completion and graduation statistics;
  - Diversity;
  - International participation.
- Receive and consider the annual Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan arising from the [Annual Academic Quality Enhancement](#) process and identify common trends and issues that require further consideration by Academic Council or its sub-committees;
  - Consider the University Quality Enhancement Plan, as drafted by Academic Affairs, and oversee the implementation of actions;
  - Provide a summary report on the issues and trends to Academic Council;
  - Liaise with the Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee to:
    - Request that specific consideration be given to areas of concern within the validation or review of specific programmes;
    - Request the review of specific programmes based on the Board's consideration of the University's Programme Portfolio, student profile or reports from Faculty Boards;
    - Make recommendations on the review or amendment of the University's Quality Framework;
    - Develop best practice guidelines for the development and delivery of academic programmes.

### **13. Role of Academic Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee**

13.1. The role of the Academic Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee in respect to the management of quality enhancement processes for academic programmes is to:

- Oversee all academic quality assurance and enhancement procedures within the University and to critically review these procedures and make recommendations in this regard to Academic Council;

- Ensure that the outcomes from academic quality reviews have been incorporated, where appropriate, into the relevant quality enhancement plans;
- Receive and consider a summary report from the University Programmes Board on the issues, trends and actions that need to be included in the University Quality Enhancement Plan;
- Review and approve the Annual Quality Report (AQR), incorporating trends, issues and examples of good practice, which have been identified through the Annual Programme Enhancement Process;
- Make recommendations to the University Programmes Board and Faculty Board on the implementation of the quality enhancement procedures for academic programme management.

#### **14. Role of Academic Council**

14.1. Both the University Programmes Board and the Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee report directly to Academic Council. The role of Academic Council is to ensure that each sub-committee is fulfilling its responsibilities appropriately. Academic Council does this by:

- Receiving from the University Programmes Board the annual University Quality Enhancement Plan which will include:
  - Confirmation that each Faculty Board has completed an annual Faculty Quality Enhancement Plan;
  - An analysis of the student profile and trends in relation to the student profile with relevant actions identified;
  - Any issues or trends that the University Programmes Board wishes to bring to the attention of Academic Council;