

# Academic Quality and Standards Committee

## Terms of Reference and Constitution

**Governance reporting line:**.....Reports to Senate

**Document owner:**.....Senate

### 1. Origin

Senate is the ultimate academic authority within the University, but it cannot be directly involved in decision making on all matters for which it is formally responsible: the range of business undertaken inevitably means that delegation of powers and responsibility to individuals and to committees is necessary. The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) is a committee of Senate and has delegated responsibility from Senate to oversee the provision of all education delivered under the name of the University of Southampton.

### 2. Purpose

- The AQSC oversees on behalf of Senate the provision of all education delivered under the name of the University of Southampton.
- The Chair is responsible for ensuring that any equality impacts against each project/policy/process/procedure have been considered as part of the decision-making process.

### 3. Responsibilities and activity

- To maintain, subject to the approval of Senate where applicable, the University's regulatory framework for all taught and research degree programmes, including regulations for admissions, recruitment and outreach and all forms of collaborative provision in the UK and overseas, and to regularly review the framework to take due account

of external reference points such as the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

- To own and maintain on behalf of Senate the University's quality assurance framework for taught and research degree programmes including all forms of collaborative provision in the UK and overseas and to review the framework to take due account of national developments. Consideration of quality for all postgraduate research programmes will be routed through the Postgraduate Research Quality Monitoring and Enhancement Subcommittee.
- To develop policy and guidelines, subject to the approval of Senate where applicable, in the areas of quality, monitoring and enhancement.
- To direct Faculties and Schools on the implementation of new policies and guidelines to agreed timelines.
- To scrutinise and, where appropriate, approve new taught or doctoral programmes and major and minor modifications to existing programmes and to approve the Programme Specification(s) and Doctoral Programme Profiles for those programmes.
- To approve the closure of programmes and implement the Student Protection Plan when programmes are at risk of closure.
- To monitor, through a specified schedule of reporting, the compliance of Schools and Faculties with the requirements of the regulatory and quality assurance frameworks to ensure the standards of awards, the quality of the students' learning opportunities, the enhancement of students' learning opportunities and the quality of public information, providing feedback to enable Schools and Faculties to take action where necessary.
- To consider and, where appropriate, approve on behalf of Senate any requests submitted by Schools for exemption from harmonised regulations.
- To consider and make recommendations to Senate for the approval of new awards.

- To ensure compliance with regulatory bodies and similar requirements, e.g. Competition and Markets Authority, when approving new and existing policy, procedures and guidance across the University's quality assurance framework.
- To report to the Doctoral College Board on all postgraduate research matters, as appropriate.
- To receive reports, as appropriate, from the External Research Degrees Committee, the Collaborative Provision Subcommittee, the Postgraduate Research Quality Monitoring and Enhancement Subcommittee, and the Admissions Policies Subcommittee.
- To prepare responses to national quality exercises, (e.g. Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, QAA, Office for Students) in accordance with University strategy and policy.
- To receive minutes from Faculty Education Committees and School Programmes Committees.

#### **4. Reporting arrangements**

- The AQSC reports to Senate.
- The Annual Assurance Statement, approved at the first meeting of the AQSC, will be shared with Senate before being submitted to Council.
- The AQSC has 5 subcommittees:
  - Admissions Policies Subcommittee
  - Postgraduate Research Quality Monitoring and Enhancement Subcommittee
  - Collaborative Provision Subcommittee
  - External Research Degrees Subcommittee (currently held in abeyance)
  - Flexible Learning Subcommittee
- The AQSC appoints Scrutiny Groups to undertake some aspects of its work, providing the AQSC with overview reports. The Scrutiny Groups include

- Annual Monitoring Scrutiny Group
  - External Examiners Scrutiny Group
  - Programme Regulations Scrutiny Group
- The Committee may set up and disband from time to time such working groups and subcommittees as it decides are required to execute its business.
  - Between ordinary meetings of the Committee, the Committee Chair shall have power to act on behalf of the Committee on any matter requiring an immediate or early decision. Any decisions taken by the Chair under these delegated powers shall be reported to the next meeting of the Committee. Matters requiring an immediate or early decision include such items as:
    - routine business that would not normally merit discussion at a meeting of the Committee;
    - matters relating to the implementation of policies that have already been approved by the Committee;
      - where permission is given by the Committee to finalise approval on completion of specified actions related to an item previously scrutinised at a meeting;
      - matters where delaying a decision would disadvantage the University or put it at risk;
      - in an emergency, or unforeseen circumstances, provided that such action is taken only in exceptional circumstances and, where practicable, in consultation with selected Committee members with expertise relevant to the issue.

## **5. Constitution**

- Chair: Vice-President (Education)
- Deputy Chair: Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)
- President and Vice-Chancellor (or delegate)
- Associate Dean (Education) (ex-officio)

- Two further academic representatives (nominated by Associate Dean (Education) from each Faculty
- Director of the Doctoral College
- Representative of the CHEP
- Representative from UoS Malaysia
- Academic Registrar
- Head of Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team (QSAT)
- Director of Library Services & Arts Strategy (or nominee)
- Two Faculty Academic Registrars as nominated by the Academic Registrar
- Students' Union - Vice-President Education & Democracy
- Students' Union - Two other student representatives
- Chair of Postgraduate Quality, Monitoring and Enhancement Subcommittee
- Chair of Collaborative Provision Subcommittee
- Chair of Admissions Policies Subcommittee
- Chair of Flexible Learning Subcommittee
- Secretary

## **6. Quorum and frequency**

### **6.1 Quorum**

The AQSC will be quorate with one third of membership plus one in attendance.

### **6.2 Frequency of meetings**

The AQSC will meet at least once per term.

## **7. Resources**

Secretariat support is provided by Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team.

## 8. Terms of Reference review

Date of last review:..... October 2022

Date of next review: ..... October 2023

### Annex 1 – Member names 2022-23

Chair: Vice-President (Education)		Professor Deborah Gill
Deputy Chair: Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)		Professor Anna Barney
President and Vice-Chancellor (or delegate)		Professor Deborah Gill (delegate)
Associate Dean (Education) (ex-officio)	Faculty of Arts and Humanities	Professor David Wheatley
	Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences	Professor Sarah Stevenage
	Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences	Professor Andrew Hector
	Faculty of Medicine	Professor Jane Wilkinson
	Faculty of Social Sciences	Professor Chris Downey
Two further academic representatives (nominated by Associate Dean (Education) from each Faculty)	Faculty of Arts and Humanities	Dr James Minney Amanda Bragg-Mollison
	Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences	Dr Shui-I Shih Dr Phil Williamson
	Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences	Dr Steve Boyd Professor Anthony Bird
	Faculty of Medicine	Dr Tracey Newman
	Faculty of Social Sciences	Ms Anita Krishnan Dr David Gammack
Director of the Doctoral College		Professor Christopher Howls
Representative of the CHEP		Dr Jonathan Leader
Representative from UoS Malaysia		Sagaya Amalathas

Academic Registrar	Claire Atkins
Head of Quality, Standards and Accreditation (QSAT)	Susan Ponsford
Director of Library Services & Arts Strategy (or nominee)	Anna Hvass
Two Faculty Academic Registrars as nominated by the Academic Registrar	TBC TBC
Students' Union: Vice-President Education & Democracy Two other student representatives	Emily Bastable TBC
Secretary	Sara Dixon
Chair of Postgraduate Quality, Monitoring and Enhancement Subcommittee	Dr Ashley Pringle
Chair of Collaborative Provision Subcommittee	Dr Clio Padovani
Admissions Policies Subcommittee	Professor Andrew Hector
Flexible Learning Subcommittee	Professor Jim Anderson