

From: Sascha Athey, Acting Head of Academic Quality and Standards

To: Circulation list (at end of this document)

M E M O R A N D U M

31 October 2023

IN-YEAR UPDATES TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE CODE OF PRACTICE

Dear Colleagues

1. All Quality Assurance Code of Practice Statements have been reviewed and updated in line with general housekeeping principles (e.g., updating weblinks or job titles).
2. A number of revisions to the [Quality Assurance Code of Practice](#) (QA CoP) have been approved by Education, Quality and Standards Committee (EQSC) for immediate implementation. The online version of the QA CoP is the primary source, and any previous paper or electronic copies held should be deleted or marked as obsolete. These changes, where appropriate, received scrutiny and feedback from relevant departments and technical specialists.
3. In addition to the changes highlighted above, all QA CoP statements have been reviewed in the context of apprenticeship provision. Some CoP statements have required only a minor change to include a reference to Student Apprentices; however, other codes have required significant change to ensure they are fit for purpose. In these instances, bespoke versions specific only to apprenticeship courses have been approved by EQSC.
4. **Please ensure that members of staff are aware of and use the updated statements and related forms (including the new bespoke forms for apprenticeship provision).**
5. For queries regarding the changes that have been/will be made please contact Academic Registry. For queries regarding the content and implementation of QA statements please contact your Assistant Registrar in the first instance:

Faculty of Engineering & Design	Rachel Summers, R.Summers@bath.ac.uk Jo Hatt, sh65@bath.ac.uk
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences	Rachel Acres, r.acres@bath.ac.uk Sophia Ward, sw2865@bath.ac.uk
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Appendix 1 - Amendments for immediate implementation

- This table details the incremental and generic amendments to the QA CoP for immediate implementation.
- Details of previous updates are available [online](#).

QA CoP Statement	Update for 23-24
<p>QA3 Approval of New Courses of Study</p>	<p>Some clarifications (rather than changes to practice) have been made to the text to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better illustrate proportionate requirements for low-risk proposals, and further explain the sections on ‘fast tracking’/ ‘light touch’ • Confirm input from relevant stakeholders should take place where the new course has a doctoral element • Confirm the use of Curriculum Planner to support approvals in 2023/24 and to clarify further the information requirements for approval • Capture at Stage 1 approval, via a new Form QA3.6, unit summary information required for the prospectus, as per (existing) QA3 para 5.2.
<p>QA4 Amendments to Existing Units and Courses and the Approval of New Units</p>	<p>Following revised guidance on consumer law for HE providers, published by the CMA in May 2023, some changes have been made to support CMA compliance and internal processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation that substantive changes to the course specification (including some intermediate course changes) will normally require the consent of affected students. This change is being made to ensure that we comply with the CMA expectation that we seek consent from students if we make any changes to the “material” information provided when they applied. • Intermediate changes proposed after the QA4 annual deadlines effectively become major and therefore will need University-level approval. The deadlines (see QA4 Annex A) have been set to ensure that we are able to meet the CMA expectation that we communicate course changes to applicants in sufficient time for them to make alternative arrangements. These deadlines are also key to internal processes such as timetabling. • Major changes to postgraduate courses should be approved by the end of July 2024 for courses starting in July 2025. This ensures that major changes are not made once we have started to make offers. The OfS has recently emphasized that the CMA’s guidance on consumer law is applicable to postgraduate courses as well as undergraduate.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor changes for all courses must be approved by the end of June. This will ensure sufficient time for the unit catalogue to be checked and published for the new academic year. • For CT courses, assessment maps and mapping of course ILOs to units should be kept up to date if changes are made. This will ensure that we maintain the many benefits of Curriculum Transformation. • Confirmation that changes will be made via Curriculum Planner. <p>Marketing teams must be involved in the writing of any text in the course specification that is also used in the prospectus. Aligning the text used in marketing and in course specifications ensures consistency in our information and CMA compliance.</p>
<p>QA-CT Approval of Courses under Curriculum Transformation during 2023/24</p>	<p>Updates to confirm the process used for approval of CT PGT proposals during 2022/23 will be applied in 2023/24, including corresponding timelines, with the following updates to the templates used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather than providing a separate CT course specification template, the template provided under QA44 (Annex B) is to be used to ensure consistency and ongoing convergence of our CT and business-as-usual processes. (This has meant re-ordering of the other, CT-specific, forms) • Some minor updates to QA-CT Form C (now the Oversight and Design Information form), principally to ensure alignment with QA16 for 2023/24 (previously approved by EQSC) on group assessment. <p>A <u>new form, QA-CT Form E</u>, has been created to ensure that appropriate option block text for the prospectus is approved as part of this process.</p>
<p>QA7 Research Degrees</p>	<p>Introducing new parameters for doctoral thesis restrictions (section 18 replacing 12.11) following UDSC and Senate approval.</p> <p>Clarification that independent chairs for vivas should always be appointed if internal examiner is acting in the role for the first time at Bath (14.10).</p> <p>Allowing Chair of Board of Studies (Doctoral) to approve short extensions of normal 30-day deadline for minor corrections to theses (17.9)</p>
<p>QA9 Professional Development and Recognition for All Staff and Students who Teach and Support Learning</p>	<p>Clarification that Departments are responsible for ensuring training for students who teach as well as relevant induction for new staff.</p>

QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback	Text in paragraph 6.7 replaced with a requirement that group assessment be addressed at the point of approval through the use of assessment strategies and mappings.
QA28 Conduct of Examinations	Remaining suspended.
QA31 Support of International Students	Clarification added that Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) is responsible for ensuring adequate space is available for inductions (3.12) and that Recruitment and Admissions will ensure effective signposting of prospective international students to relevant information throughout the recruitment and admissions process (3.17).
QA37 Student Exchange Arrangements	Clarification that the authority to sign legal agreements for student exchanges has been delegated to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education (7.1).
QA44 Course Handbooks and Course Specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor clarificatory updates to the main statement. • Some updates to Annex B, the course specification template, to ensure alignment with the digital prospectus. This alignment ensures that we maintain consistent for applicants and students, essential for CMA compliance.
QA51 Education Annual Review and Enhancement (Formerly Annual Monitoring of Units and Programmes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to terminology and process in line with developments in practice in 2022/23, specifically the introduction of the Education Annual Review and Enhancement (EARE) exercise. • Reporting will continue to be required at department level, focussed on key themes of relevance to the University. Course level reporting is risk-based. • Department EARE will be supported centrally this year, with analysis and presentation of data coordinated by the Department of Planning, Performance & Strategic Change.
QA53 Examination and Assessment Offences	Clarification added that before each stage of the process for handling alleged offences, students should be offered an opportunity to share any Disability Access Plan (DAP) and that if they do, Faculty/School should liaise with the student and the Disability Service to discuss reasonable adjustments (sections 6, 7 and 8).

Appendix 2 – New QA CoP statements for Degree Apprenticeship Provision for immediate implementation

- This table details the newly written QA CoP statements specific to apprenticeship provision for immediate implementation.
- These statements also come with modified forms and templates specific to apprenticeship courses.

QA CoP Statement	New for 23-24 to clarify Degree Apprenticeship Requirements
QA12(A) External Examining (Apprenticeship Courses)	<p>QA12(A) has been adapted to address the requirement for a distinction between the roles of External Examiner for the period of on-programme training and assessment, External Examiner for End Point Assessment and External Assessor.</p> <p>End Point Assessment (EPA) is a synoptic assessment of the Student Apprentice's knowledge, skills and behaviours at the end of the apprenticeship, and confirmation that the Student Apprentice has met the requirements of the relevant, approved Apprenticeship Standard. An External Examiner must be appointed to both the period of on-programme training and assessment and EPA.</p> <p>External Assessors are appointed as independent and impartial assessors with assessment expertise responsible for external quality assurance (EQA) monitoring of EPA on behalf of the OfS. OfS are responsible for EQA of EPA for integrated standards. An External Examiner for EPA can also act as External Assessor, or a separate External Assessor will have to be appointed.</p>
QA33(A) Personal Tutoring (Apprenticeship Courses)	<p>QA33(A) has been adapted to address the expectations of an Apprenticeship Tutor (Personal Tutor) and the Tripartite Review process.</p> <p>Apprenticeship Tutors perform the same role as a Personal Tutor for other taught courses, with the additional requirement of conducting regular, Tripartite Review meetings, and at least every 12 weeks, with the Student Apprentice and their employer to review the Student Apprentice's progress towards meeting the requirements of the apprenticeship and within the timescales agreed.</p>
QA38(A) Induction of Student Apprentices	<p>QA38(A) has been adapted to outline the process of inducting a Student Apprentice to the University of Bath and the apprenticeship course. Student Apprentices should be provided with details regarding course structure, to include End Point Assessment, progress monitoring through Tripartite Reviews, as well as information on the wider skills, health and wellbeing services the University offers to provide a well-supported and high-quality learning experience.</p>
QA51(A) Monitoring and Enhancement (Apprenticeship Courses)	<p>QA51(A) has been adapted to establish a more regular cycle of quarterly and annual monitoring to ensure effective oversight of a Student Apprentice's progress and the timely completion and successful achievement of the apprenticeship to meet external quality standards and benchmarks for apprenticeship courses.</p>

**QA45(A) Recognition of Prior Learning
(Apprenticeship Courses)**

Unlike the above (A) statements, which are designed to replace the original codes, QA45(A) is intended to be read alongside QA45, to meet the requirements for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) set out in the ESFA Funding Rules. Where RPL also requires accreditation of prior learning (APL), the processes outlined in QA45 will then be applied.

RPL refers to the process by which the University recognises both certified and experiential learning and adjusts the content, duration and price of an apprenticeship course accordingly. Prior to a Student Apprentice registering onto an apprenticeship course, the University must undertake a detailed Initial Needs Assessment (INA) with the Student Apprentice and their employer to review the Student Apprentice's qualifications, training and experience. The INA should establish the content of the apprenticeship course which needs to be removed, or additional learning support that needs to be provided, to develop a personalised plan of training to comply with the expectations set out in the ESFA Funding Rules. Apprenticeship funding must not be used to pay for training that a Student Apprentice does not need, or has already undertaken, but contribute to the development of *new* knowledge, skills, and behaviours.

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Please forward this information to any others to whom it may be of interest.