UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE
ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Amendments to UPR AS17 (Academic Quality) for 2024/25

This paper summarises the proposed amendments to UPR AS17 for the 2024/25 academic year.

1. Recognition of the Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Committee in assuring standards

The UPR has been amended to reflect the role of the Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Committee (HDAC) in assuring the quality and standards of Apprenticeships. The following amendment to UPR AS17, section A2.4 has been approved:

A2   Key staff and committee structures

A2.4   *The Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Committee (HDAC) is responsible to the Academic Board for the University's provision of Apprenticeships, with respect to the compliance, education, and the relationship between employers, apprentices, and the University. It oversees and scrutinise the University's apprenticeship provision and is accountability for the strategies and mechanisms that maintains this provision. HDAC monitors and reviews the performance and progress of apprentices and make recommendations to support their progression and completion. Deans of School are members of this HDAC and report on their SBUs apprenticeships performance.*

2. Amendments to the Continuous Enhancement Planning (CEP) process to clarify responsibilities

An ASAC audit of the CEP process revealed that there was insufficient ownership of the risk-based aspect of the CEP process, and that more oversight and support was needed for some Programme Leaders in developing and maintaining impactful action plans. Changes include the need for a risk-based schedule of dates showing how the CEP action plan for each programme in the School will be reviewed during the forthcoming academic year and how Programme Leaders will be supported in developing their Programme's action plan. Also, programme enhancement actions no longer need to be drawn from School enhancement events. The following amendments to UPR AS17, section C2.2 have been approved:

C2.2   The Continuous Enhancement Planning (CEP) Process

C2.2.3   The regulations seek to reflect a risk-based approach and to maintain a self-critical academic community supporting programme teams in their continual efforts to maintain academic standards, educational challenge and the currency of the curriculum, to improve the quality of learning opportunities and to enhance the student experience by an ongoing, evidence informed monitoring process, with effective oversight at School and University level.

   *Associate Deans of School (Academic Quality Assurance) will work with the School's Associate Dean of School (Learning and Teaching), the allocated CAQA Associate Director and the CLASS Learning and Teaching Specialist, to prepare and present to the first School Academic Committee (SAC) of the academic year a **risk-based** schedule of how the CEP action plan for each programme in the School will be reviewed during the forthcoming academic year and how Programme Leaders will be supported in developing their Programme's action plan. Relevant Subject Heads/Heads of Department should be consulted.*

C2.2.4   Each Programme Committee is required to agree a CEP action plan on an ongoing basis. The CEP action plan will be a standing item on the Programme Committee agenda. The ownership of the action plan is with the Programme Team and with the agreement of the Programme Committee, the Programme Leader may add actions as issues arise.

C2.2.5   The maintenance of the CEP action plan is the responsibility of the Programme Leader, on behalf of the Programme Committee. The Programme Leader (or nominee) must attend and engage in specified enhancement activities organised by the School. ~~and add any agreed actions to the programme's CEP action plan.~~

C2.2.6   The Programme Leader must consult the University-generated metric summary data after each specified data release point and where a particular data set is rated red for the programme against the relevant benchmark, an action must be initiated within six weeks of the data release point.

C2.2.7   The Programme Leader must develop an action point in the CEP action plan for all recommendations made by an External Examiner in their Annual Report (not just those in section 8 and 9 of the report).

C2.2.8   Associate Deans of School (Academic Quality Assurance) are responsible for:

   i   *preparing and presenting to the first SAC of the academic year a risk-based schedule of how the CEP action plan for each programme in the School will be reviewed during the forthcoming academic year and how Programme Leaders will be supported in developing their Programme's Action Plan.*

   ii   ensuring that School enhancement activities take place that meet the requirements of the CEP process by giving consideration to how programme CEP action plans might adopt (i) good practice and (ii) reflect School- and Department-wide enhancement actions and the University's strategic direction. They will *work with the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) and will* invite the appropriate Associate Director of Academic Quality Assurance and the CLASS Learning and Teaching Specialist and monitor the engagement of Programme Leaders and programme teams; and

   iii   maintaining oversight of all the School's CEP action plans and signing off completed actions in the CEP database. Associate Deans (AQA) will (a) check that data sets rated red from Tableau, External Examiner Reports, SVQs and qualitative student feedback that requires an action have been included in the CEP action plan and that an action has been initiated within an appropriate timescale, ~~(b) check actions agreed as part of enhancement activities have been included,(c)~~ (b) work with Associate Deans (L&T), Subject /Associate Heads and other academic managers as prescribed by the School, to advise programme teams on the appropriateness of the actions and the response times, and to evaluate the impact of actions; and

   iv   ensuring that ……………………

C2.2.15 Each School has responsibility to set up at least one School- or Department-wide enhancement activity per academic year requiring Programme Leaders and programme teams to attend to~~:~~

   i   ~~share good practice, including actions that have led to improved data outcomes~~~~; and~~

   ii   ~~develop further their CEP action plan to reflect (i) School- and Department-wide enhancement actions; and (ii) the University's strategic direction~~.

3. Criteria for the appointment of external examiners

An ASAC audit of UKSQA external examining principles in May 2023 identified the need to strengthen the University's processes for avoiding conflicts of interest in the appointment of external examiners. The following amendment to UPR AS17, section C1.2 has been approved:

C1.2   Criteria for the Appointment of External Examiners

C1.2.1   The following criteria are to be applied during consideration of proposed External Examiner nominations:

     ix   the proposed External Examiner should not:

        a   be personally associated with the sponsorship of students or the award of prizes;

        b   have a personal association with a student in their area of responsibility (for example, colleague, relation, partner etc);

        c   *have a personal association with a member of staff at the University (or partner organisation, where relevant) in their area of responsibility;*

        d   be in a position to influence significantly the future employment of students in their area of responsibility;

        e   be working in an organisation or company providing placements for students in their area of responsibility;