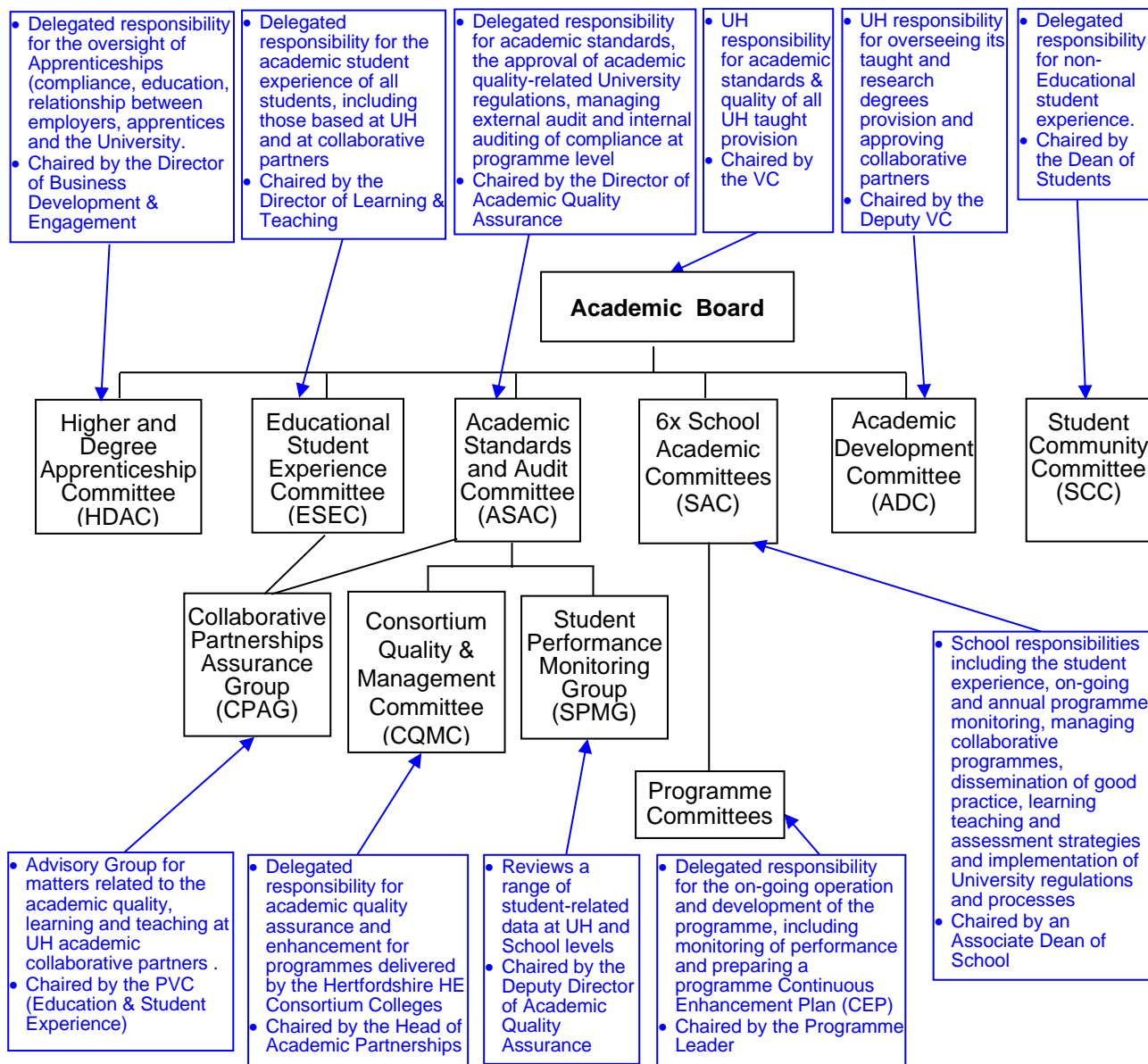


The University of Hertfordshire Quality Assurance System for its taught provision

The Key Committees and People



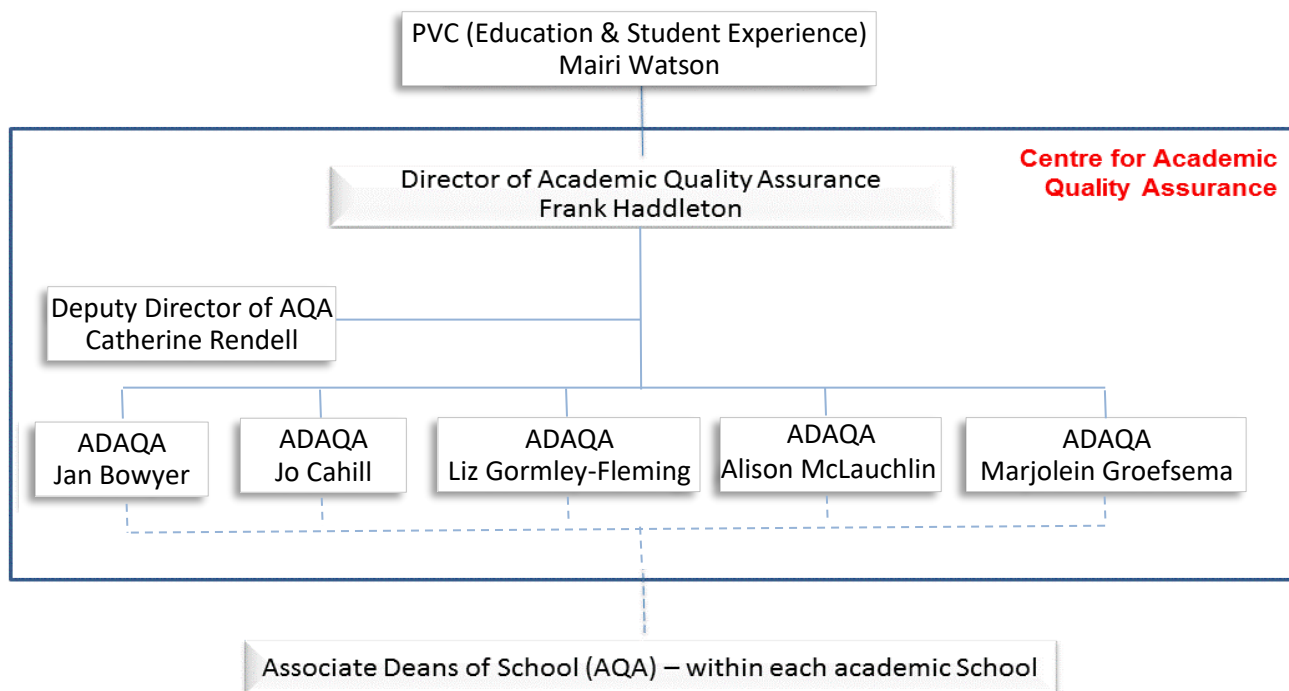
The PVC (Education and Student Experience), Dr Mairi Watson, has senior responsibility on behalf of the VC for all matters related to education and the student experience, including academic quality matters.

The Director of Academic Quality Assurance (DAQA), Prof Frank Haddleton, and the Deputy Director of Academic Quality Assurance (DDAQA), Catherine Rendell both report to the PVC (Education and Student Experience), along with the Director of Learning and Teaching (DLT), Prof Helen Barefoot, and her Deputy, Sarah Flynn.

The DAQA chairs ASAC, and is also Head of the Centre for Academic Quality Assurance (CAQA), which consists of the DAQA, the DDAQA and five Associate Directors of Academic Quality Assurance (ADAQAs). Each ADAQA takes responsibility for a School, with responsibilities including to:

- advice and support Schools in discharging their responsibilities for the maintenance of academic standards and the assurance & enhancement of the student educational experience;
- promote a culture of enhancement and the dissemination of good practice across Schools;
- support the School in the validation and periodic review of its home & collaborative provision;

- take an active role in the annual monitoring process;
- support the School in its compliance with UPRs & procedures;
- take an active role in the academic oversight of the University’s collaborative provision;
- develop and facilitate QA-related staff development activities.



The DLT is also Director of the Learning & Teaching Innovation Centre (LTIC), which consists of the DLT, the Deputy Director of LTIC (Sarah Flynn), several Learning & Teaching specialists and a team of E-Learning Technologists. She also chairs ESEC.

The Director of Academic Services Mrs Lisa Uttley, has responsibility for the Academic Services unit which supports the University on a range of academic quality-related matters (overseeing academic quality systems and procedures, guidance to Schools, administering validation & periodic review events, managing external examiner appointments and reporting, supporting preparation for external audit and administration of the University module feedback process and the National Student Survey).

Within Schools, Deans are ultimately responsible for quality and standards. They are assisted by Associate Deans of School (Academic Quality Assurance) (ADoS(AQA)s) and Associate Deans (Learning & Teaching) (AD(LT)s) who have a range of responsibilities. They work closely with LTIC and CAQA staff (and in particular, the ADAQA with responsibility for their School) to ensure a shared understanding of quality assurance and enhancement across the University. Programme Leaders are appointed to lead and take ownership of the quality and standards of the learning, teaching and assessment and the overall academic experience of students on a named programme.

Programme Approval, Monitoring, and Review

The University’s processes for programme approval, monitoring and review are described in [UPR AS17 Academic Quality](#).

Approval and Periodic Review of Programmes

The programme development process is initiated with a proposal to ADC, which looks at new proposals in the context of the University’s Strategic Plan, the market, resource implications and the impact on other programmes. Following ADC initial approval, a Planning Meeting is convened to agree the development and validation process. A Programme Development Committee is then established.

Validation events are chaired by a senior academic from a School not associated with the programme, and panel membership includes a member of CAQA and one or more independent external members with appropriate subject expertise. Both home-based and collaborative provision validation events are

administered by the Academic Services unit. The validation panel makes a recommendation to Academic Board concerning programme approval, which is subject to standard requirements and sometimes additional conditions which must be met within a specified timeframe. If conditions are satisfied, recommendations on programme approval are then signed-off by the DAQA (on behalf of the Academic Board).

The University requires that all taught provision is subject to periodic review (or revalidation in the case of its collaborative provision) at least every six years. Periodic review mirrors the validation process. However, the panel is also informed by an initial analysis of the past performance of the programme and a review document that is based on operational experience and development over the previous six years and takes account of issues raised in Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Reports (see below).

School and Programme Annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

On an ongoing basis the programme committee maintains a 'Continuous Enhancement Plan (CEP) to assure the quality of the University's taught provision and enhance the student learning experience through incremental and focussed improvement at all levels (this replaces the Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report (AMER), which is still used for some partner-delivered programmes). Programme leaders are responsible for maintaining the CEP, with ADoS(AQA)s and ADAQAs overseeing the actions.

Schools are required to submit an annual report to ASAC and ESEC, summarising matters relating to the academic standards and student experience in the School over the past year. After consideration by ASAC and ESEC, a summary of all School reports is prepared highlighting the items to be brought to the attention of the University.

Assessment and Awards

The University's assessment regulations are described in [UPR AS14 Structure and Assessment Regulations](#) and [UPR AS12 Assessments, Examinations and Conferments](#) (or [UPR AS13 Assessments, Examinations and Conferments](#) for partner-delivered provision).

Assessment Policies and Regulations

The University uses a numeric (0-100) grading system to report students' performance on modules and to calculate classification of awards. The University Assessment Principles require that (i) all assessments are internally reviewed and also externally reviewed if at academic levels 5, 6 or 7, and (ii) marked student work is internally moderated (on a sampling basis) and also externally moderated (on a sampling basis) if at academic levels 5, 6 or 7.

Boards of Examiners

The University operates a two-tier system of Module Boards and Programme Boards of Examiners. Module Boards are specifically responsible for reporting the awards of grades for candidates, and making decisions about referral/deferral options. They consider formal requests for serious adverse circumstances that may have affected individual performance, and decide on any changes to be made to grades in the light of evidence provided. The Module Board also decides on penalties to be imposed for proven cases of cheating, plagiarism, collusion or other academic misconduct. Module Boards monitor the performance of cohorts of students from different programmes attending a particular module, and report substantial differences in performance to Programme Boards.

Programme Boards of Examiners receive confirmed grades as awarded by Module Boards. They consider the achievement of students completing programmes, recommending the conferment of awards. At earlier stages of a programme they make decisions on the continuation or withdrawal of students on programmes.

External Examiners

In line with the Boards of Examiners system, the University employs both Module and Programme external examiners to support the maintenance of both quality and standards. External Examiners' annual reports are received by Academic Services, and initially read by one of two people (the Director of Academic Quality Assurance or the Deputy Director of Academic Quality Assurance, on behalf of the VC) to identify University-wide issues. The reports are then sent to the appropriate School for consideration and response.

University Policies and Regulations (UPRs)

The University policies and regulations (UPRs) are the principle means by which the University publishes its institutional policies, procedures and regulations. The key academic quality-related UPRs (available from [Academic Assessment and Awards | About us | Uni of Herts](#)) are:

- UPR AS11 (Schedule of Awards)
- UPR AS12 (Assessments and Examinations (Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate) and Conferments (University and UK Partner Organisations))
- UPR AS13 (Assessments and Examinations (Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate) and Conferments (Non-UK Partner Organisations))
- UPR AS14 (Structure and Assessment Regulations - Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes)
- UPR AS17 (Academic Quality)

Collaborative Provision

The University's collaborative provision is fairly complex, consisting of around 400 students on validated programmes at its four Hertfordshire HE Consortium Colleges, over 4000 students on franchised and validated programmes overseas and smaller numbers at other UK partners, including employer-based provision.

The University's quality management of this collaborative provision is essentially the same as that for University-based provision. However, some additional quality assurance procedures for their approval, support and monitoring have been developed:

- Approval and re-approval of collaborative partners is considered by ADC, and the partnership is formalised through the signing of a written agreement;
- A collaborative partnership leader (CPL) is appointed for each collaborative programme by the School. They support the partner, monitor the health of the programme and report to the University on any additional support required;
- Quality Liaison Managers, or their equivalent, are appointed for partner organisations with large and cross-University provision, and support the University and Partner Organisation in ensuring consistency of approach across different programmes delivered;
- There is an additional committee structure for the Hertfordshire HE Consortium provision. The Consortium Quality & Management Committee (CQMC) reports to ASAC and considers all academic quality and enhancement matters related to programmes delivered in Consortium Colleges.

External monitoring and review of the University

External monitoring of the University is undertaken by the Office for Students (OfS), which measures our compliance with the following 'Quality and Standards' conditions of OfS registration:

B1: Academic Experience: *The provider must ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high quality academic experience:*

- a. each higher education course is up-to-date;*
- b. each higher education course provides educational challenge;*
- c. each higher education course is coherent;*
- d. each higher education course is effectively delivered; and*
- e. each higher education course, as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills;*

B2: Resources, support and student engagement: *The provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure:*

- a. each cohort of students registered on each higher education course receives resources and support which are sufficient for the purpose of ensuring: (i) a high quality academic experience for those students; and (ii) those students succeed in and beyond higher education; and*
- b. effective engagement with each cohort of students which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring: (i) a high quality academic experience for those students; and (ii) those students succeed in and beyond higher education;*

B3: Student Outcomes: *The provider must deliver positive outcomes for students on its higher education courses. Delivering positive outcomes means that in the OfS's judgement, the outcome data for each of the indicators and split indicators are at or above the relevant numerical thresholds;*

B4: Assessment and Awards: *The provider must ensure that:*

- a. students are assessed effectively;*
- b. each assessment is valid and reliable;*
- c. academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible;*
- d. academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable higher education course*; and*

- e. *relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously.;*

B5: Sector-recognised standards: *The provider must ensure that, in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, the provider (whether or not the provider is the awarding body):*

- a. *any standards set appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards; and*
b. *awards are only granted to students whose knowledge and skills appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards;*

B6: Teaching Excellence Framework: *The provider must participate in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).*

OfS uses a risk-based approach to ongoing monitoring of these conditions, using (i) 'Reportable events' of potential concern that the University itself reports to OfS, (ii) notifications of potential concerns from third parties (students, staff, etc.), and (iii) monitoring of 'indicators' (a range of data on student outcomes, etc.). If this monitoring raises any concerns with the University's maintenance of academic standards or academic quality, then OfS would undertake an external review of the University.

In addition to OfS regulation:

- The University has accreditation, approval and/or exemption from a range of Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) for a number of courses. A schedule is maintained by ASAC;
- The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) quality assures standards of teaching for the University's apprenticeships.

Previous Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) review

A team of QAA reviewers visited the University of Hertfordshire in December 2015 and judged that our academic standards, the quality and enhancement of our students' learning experience, and the quality of information about this learning experience all meet UK expectations. In other words, the University meets national requirements for standards and quality. A copy of QAA's review report is available on the QAA website, at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/quality-assurance-reports/University-of-Hertfordshire>. The review identified the following areas of good practice:

- The University takes an inclusive, developmental and enhancement-oriented approach to its engagement with its extensive and complex range of collaborative partner institutions;
- The University promotes a strong cohort identity among its research degree students, within a stimulating and supportive learning environment.

The QAA team made no recommendations on matters for further improvement. This is a remarkable achievement, as only one other UK University received no recommendations following a HE Review.

Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

The TEF is a national exercise, introduced by the government to assess excellence in teaching at universities and colleges, and how well they ensure excellent outcomes for their students in terms of graduate-level employment or further study. The University of Hertfordshire was awarded Gold in the 2018 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) ranking and has been commended for providing a high level of support and consistently outstanding outcomes for students from all backgrounds. The Panel considered the University submission in relation to the TEF criteria and in making the award the assessment panel recognised:

- That students from all backgrounds achieve consistently outstanding outcomes
- University of Hertfordshire students' high rates of progression to work or further study
- The University's strong focus on employment, entrepreneurship and enterprise
- The way that employability and transferable skills are embedded into the curriculum
- That the university works in partnership with students, offering extensive learning opportunities outside traditional learning environments.

This award was valid for four years. The outcomes of the 2023 TEF will be published in September 2023.