

Framework for Academic Quality and Standards

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RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

[Securing student success: Regulatory framework for Higher Education in England](#)

RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS

- [Academic Framework Regulations](#)
- [Research Degrees Framework](#)
- [Guidance for Validation and Periodic Programme Review](#)
- [Guidance for Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement](#)
- [Guidance for External Examining](#)
- [Guidance for Programme Suspension and Closure](#)
- [Guidance for Engagement with PSRBs](#)
- [Guidance for Programme and Module Amendments](#)
- [Guidance for Boards of Study](#)
- [Guidance for Joint and Dual Awards](#)
- [Academic Partnerships Operational Guidance](#)

- [Guidance for Approval and Monitoring of Articulation Arrangements](#)
- [Link Tutor Guidance](#)

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Chapter 1: Context and Principles

The university's Framework for Academic Quality and Standards provides a risk-based, transparent, robust and proportionate approach to quality management. The Framework governs the university's mechanisms for assuring the quality and standards of its taught qualifications and awards, ensuring that they deliver positive outcomes for all Liverpool John Moores University students and apprentices, including those from underrepresented groups, wherever and however they study.

The university is responsible for the quality and standards of all its academic provision, and of all awards made in its name, regardless of where the learning opportunities are offered, or who provides them. The mechanisms encompassed within the Framework for Academic Quality and Standards (see also [Related Policies and Documents](#) and [Chapter 6](#)) play a key role in enabling the university to discharge this responsibility. These mechanisms are continuously reviewed (see also [Chapter 5](#)) to ensure ongoing alignment with the latest external regulatory requirements, Sector best practice, the university's Strategic Framework, and other, applicable, internal requirements/expectations/policies.

Office for Students

The university is regulated by the Office for Students (OfS), the independent regulator for Higher Education in England. The OfS's primary aim is to ensure that English Higher Education providers deliver high quality courses, which deliver successful outcomes for all students, and that their qualifications hold their value at the point of qualification, and over time, in-line with Sector recognised standards.

All publicly funded Higher Education providers in England are required to register with the OfS. Registration with the OfS is subject to satisfying the Initial Conditions of Registration. Having satisfied these conditions, Liverpool John Moores University was entered onto the Register of English Higher Education Providers in September 2018.

As a registered provider, the university is subject to continuous monitoring by the OfS and is measured against their Ongoing Conditions of Registration. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is the OfS's Designated Quality Body (DQB) for Higher Education in England with responsibility for managing the quality assurance elements of the Higher Education Regulatory Framework.

As an End Point Assessment Organisation, the university is also subject to the OfS's oversight of the quality assurance of integrated End Point Assessments. The QAA, as DQB, is commissioned by the OfS to provide external quality assurance of integrated End Point Assessments.

The OfS's approach to the regulation of quality and standards is principles-based, risk-based and proportionate.

The university's Framework for Academic Quality and Standards enables the university to comply with the OfS's [Ongoing Conditions of Registration](#), set out within the Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in England, specifically the following conditions relating to "quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students":

Condition B1: “The provider must ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high-quality academic experience.

A high-quality academic experience includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that each higher education course:

1. Is up-to-date;
2. Provides educational challenge;
3. Is coherent;
4. Is effectively delivered; and
5. Requires students to develop relevant skills”.

Condition B2: “The provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure:

1. Students registered on a higher education course receive resources and support to ensure:
 - a. A high-quality academic experience for those students; and
 - b. Those students succeeding in and beyond higher education; and
2. Effective engagement with students to ensure:
 - a. A high-quality academic experience for those students; and
 - b. Those students succeed in and beyond higher education”.

Condition B3: “The provider must deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers, and/or enable further study”.

Condition B4: “The provider must ensure that:

1. Students are assessed effectively;
2. Each assessment is valid and reliable;
3. Academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible;
4. Academic regulations are designed to ensure effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner that appropriately reflects the level and content of the course; and
5. Relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously”.

Condition B5: “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):

1. Any standards set appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards; and
2. Awards are only granted to students whose knowledge and skills appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards”.

Condition B6: “The provider must participate in the Teaching Excellence Framework”.

Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulate and inspect Higher Education Institutions that provide education and training services in England. Although Academic Board, via the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC), holds responsibility for the quality assurance of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), operational arrangements for external Ofsted inspection of ITE are managed by the School of Education, within the Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies.

Furthermore, Ofsted hold responsibility for the inspection of apprenticeship training at all levels, ensuring that training is high-quality and meets the needs of employers and apprentices. Ofsted's inspection of apprenticeship training is carried out in accordance with the [Further Education and Skills Inspection Framework](#).

The mechanisms encompassed within the Framework for Academic Quality and Standards support the university's preparedness to engage with inspection and/or monitoring activity undertaken by Ofsted.

Compliance with the requirements of Ofsted, and other applicable [bodies](#), is overseen by the university's Degree Apprenticeship Steering Group, which reports to AQSC.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

The university has forged strong and effective links with a range of professional and public sector bodies, with many of its taught programmes being accredited/recognised by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB). These links result in identifiable benefits for students and apprentices of Liverpool John Moores University, for example confirming that they have demonstrated the necessary professional competencies to acquire registered practitioner status; membership of a professional body; or exemption from the requirement to undertake some professional examinations.

Taught programmes accredited/recognised by a PSRB are normally subject to the organisations' monitoring/review/re-accreditation processes. Under the direction of the applicable Director of School, programme teams are responsible for the operational arrangements and management of these activities.

AQSC, via the PSRB Oversight Panel, has ultimate responsibility for the oversight of programme-level engagement with PSRBs.

The university's register of programmes accredited/recognised by a PSRB is published on its website.

Chapter 2: Management Responsibilities for Academic Quality and Standards

Governance Structure

Academic Board has overall responsibility for the university's awards; for the academic quality and standards of the university's academic programmes, both taught and research; and for the Framework for Academic Quality and Standards. Academic Board approves changes to the Academic Framework Regulations and Research Degree Regulations.

AQSC is responsible to Academic Board for progressing the development, monitoring and review of institutional policy relating to academic quality and standards. AQSC is accountable to Academic Board for the assurance of the quality and standards of the university's academic portfolio, ensuring that it is delivering positive outcomes for all Liverpool John Moores University students and apprentices, including those from underrepresented groups, wherever and however they study.

To support AQSC in discharging its responsibilities it is underpinned by the following panels:

- Validation and Review Oversight Panel.
- Programme and Module Amendment Panel.
- External Examining Panel.
- PSRB Oversight Panel.
- Dual Award Oversight Panel.
- Degree Apprenticeship Steering Panel.
- Academic Oversight Panels.

On an annual basis, the Board of Governors receives an Academic Quality Assurance Report, which provides assurances with regard to the effectiveness of the university's quality management systems in assuring, maintaining and enhancing the academic quality and standards of its provision.

Executive Responsibilities

The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive is responsible to the Board of Governors and has ultimate responsibility for the quality and standards of the university's awards and is supported by the university's Executive Leadership Team.

Chapter 3: Elements of the Framework for Academic Quality and Standards

The Academic Framework

The university's [Academic Framework](#) is a common framework for its taught awards. The Academic Framework specifies those awards, and their credit requirements, aligned with the [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#) (FHEQ). The Assessment Regulations are integral to the Academic Framework. The university operates standard assessment regulations for taught awards that define progression, classification requirements, academic misconduct, and conduct of assessments and examinations. Variances from the academic framework are allowed in order to meet professional body conditions, or according to specific academic conditions, such as subject or disciplinary sector practice. Variances must be approved by AQSC, via the PSRB Oversight Panel.

The Research Degrees Framework

The university's [Research Degrees Framework](#) provides a common framework for postgraduate research programmes. The Framework defines the mandatory requirements for enrolment, registration, monitoring, progression, supervision and assessment of all research programmes.

Chapter 4: Student and Apprentice Engagement in Quality Assurance

Students and apprentices provide representation and feedback through a variety of quantitative and qualitative processes, for example:

- Completion of surveys at module, programme, and institutional level. Where possible, surveys allowing external benchmarking are used, for example the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES).
- All of the university's taught programmes are subject to a Board of Study, which are responsible for their academic assurance and enhancement. Students and apprentices are represented on all Boards of Study.
- Data from surveys informs the Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement (CME) and Periodic Programme Review processes.
- Students and apprentices are involved in Periodic Programme Review through consultation during the development of the self-evaluation and at the Periodic Programme Review event.
- Students and apprentices are involved in the validation process during the programme development phase and at the validation event.
- Student/apprentice representative(s) are panel members at validation/Periodic Programme Review events.
- Formal feedback from research students is via the national Postgraduate Research Student Experience Survey (PRES). Data from PRES is disseminated via the university's Research Degrees Board, Postgraduate Research Committee and Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committees.
- Research students are members of Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committees and the university's Postgraduate Research Committee.

Chapter 5: Revisions to the Framework for Academic Quality and Standards

The elements of the framework are revised regularly to ensure their fitness for purpose, including:

- Alignment with developments in external requirements.
- Annual evaluation of processes through appropriate governance structures.
- Annual review of the Academic Framework.
- Annual review of Research Degrees Framework.

Changes to the Framework for Academic Quality and Standards require approval from Academic Board. Changes to the mechanisms, encompassed within the Framework, require approval from AQSC, on behalf of Academic Board.

Chapter 6: Key Quality Assurance and Enhancement Processes that Underpin the Framework for Academic Quality and Standards

Detailed guidance for each process is available (see [Related Policies and Documents](#))

External Examining Process

The university values its engagement with External Examiners, as impartial, independent, critical friends, in assuring the quality and standards of its taught programmes. The university seeks confirmation from External Examiners in relation to the academic standards of programmes, the assessment of student/apprentice progression, and student/apprentice achievement. External Examiners highlight opportunities for the enhancement of students'/apprentices' learning opportunities. The university makes use of External Examiner reports in the CME process.

Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement Process

CME is a real time programme monitoring process, focussed upon enhancement, which facilitates consideration of key information in a timely manner. This approach enables programme issues to be addressed as soon as they are identified.

The process is designed to enable programme teams and Schools to evaluate achievement against institutional expectations for academic quality and standards and to identify any potential enhancements.

Evidence used to evaluate academic standards and programme performance includes student/apprentice progression and achievement data, External Examiners reports, student/apprentice feedback, reports from PSRBs and other relevant external bodies. CME is based on a series of reports on performance against threshold indicators, such as completion in time, retention, and module performance, using data derived from student/apprentice performance at module and programme level.

The monitoring process, at every level, is proportionate, risk-based and reporting is by exception. This inclusive process facilitates opportunities to ensure that all stakeholders are fully engaged. Programme teams develop and then maintain a Programme Enhancement and Development Plan that details actions to address any identified issues. The CME process supports timely changes to programmes, where appropriate, to enhance the experience for the subsequent student/apprentice cohort.

Programme Approval (Validation) Process

Validation of a new programme is the quality assurance process used to scrutinise a proposed new programme of study in order to assure Academic Board that it meets university and external expectations of quality and standards.

Periodic Programme Review Process

Periodic Programme Review is a reflective, evaluative, quinquennial process. The Periodic Programme Review process mirrors programme approval (validation), however, the focus is on self-evaluation rather than curriculum development and design.

The process allows for the identification of programme enhancement opportunities, and these may result in changes to the programme. It is important to note that existing

students/apprentices will normally complete the extant version of their programme of study i.e. the programme of study aligned to the agreed terms of enrolment. This is to ensure compliance with [Competition Markets Authority \(CMA\) Guidance](#). Should programme teams wish to transfer existing students/apprentices to a new version of a programme, following Periodic Programme Review, then, in-line with the requirements of the CMA, written consent must be obtained from all affected students/apprentices, including those who are currently not engaging or are on a Leave of Absence.

The process for programme and module amendments aligns with external requirements, for example the CMA.

Programme Suspension and Closure Process

The processes of programme suspension and closure (for all taught programmes including collaborative provision) ensure that safeguarding the interests of students/apprentices is paramount and any action must include an exit strategy that preserves the integrity and continuity of their education and the student/apprentice experience. The university fully recognises, and accepts, its responsibilities towards any students/apprentices remaining on a programme and ensures that they can complete the award on which they originally enrolled.

The process normally includes a closure meeting that confirms the arrangements to secure the quality of both the provision and the student/apprentice experience following complete withdrawal of a programme. There must be explicit articulation of the strategy that will secure the quality of experience for continuing students/apprentices and includes an external perspective.