



# Academic Governance and Academic Standards Management



## Academic Governance and Academic Standards Management

### Introduction

This policy clarifies the Caspian School's approach to Academic Governance and the safeguarding of academic standards which also assures and enhances the quality of the student learning experience. In addition, the systematic and regular reviewing of the School's provision makes a vital and significant contribution to student learning and business success including through teaching observations and assessment moderation.

The policy complements and links with other relevant policies and procedures, most significantly Learning Teaching and Assessment Policy and Procedures, the Admission, Recruitment and Widening Access Policy and Procedures, the Learning Resources Procedure and the Student Support and Engagement Policy. The Quality Assurance Handbook, Students' Handbook and programme and assessment guidance also underpin aspects of this policy.

This policy also clarifies the School's approach to academic regulations, which is regarded as vital to the success both to the School and its students.

### External references

The Academic Governance and Management of Academic Standards Policy has been drafted in accordance with external regulatory and quality guidance including:

- UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance on the Theme Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access, Assessment, Enabling Student Achievement, External Expertise, Learning and Teaching and Partnerships.
- Published guidance linked to the Regulated Qualifications Framework and the requirements of individual awarding bodies.
- Other professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements (PSRBs).

### Terminology and definitions

'*Academic regulations*' covers the arrangements for regulating academic conduct and for dealing with any departure from these standards of conduct. It also covers the measures taken to safeguard academic standards.

'*Academic standards*' are defined as the levels of achievement that students have to reach in order to achieve an award. Academic standards are determined against nationally agreed reference points for the academic standards of higher education qualifications as set out in the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications* and Subject Benchmark Statements, whilst for Entry to Level 3 the standards are linked to the *Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)* and level descriptors.. Academic standards are concerned with the appropriateness of learning outcomes (aims, content and level) and curriculum, and the effectiveness of assessment (in relation to attainment of learning outcomes).

'*Quality of the learning experience*' refers to the ways in which the School provides students with the best possible opportunity to meet the stated outcomes of their course and the academic standards of their intended award, through engaging in the activities provided. The types of activities which are likely to contribute to the student experience include learning, teaching, assessment and academic

guidance practices; deployment of learning resources; recruitment and admission; careers advice and guidance; pastoral support; provision of information and academic appeals, complaint and grievance procedures.

`*Programme review*` means a regular process by which all programmes are reviewed and evaluated. `*Annual monitoring*` indicates a reflective, holistic, cross-institution review process which considers historic and current data and also looks forward to the coming year.

## Scope

The policy applies to all provision that leads to an award accredited by its awarding bodies. This policy covers rules and regulations for normal academic conduct, including arrangements for appeals, student complaints, associated expectations and programme and annual monitoring. This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy 1 Governance and Policy 4 Teaching Learning and Assessment

## Principles

The School's quality assurance and enhancement procedures operate within a framework of policies and course management procedures, as well as the regulation of awarding bodies. Guidance documents, including the Quality Assurance Handbook, Student Handbook and Course Handbooks make clear responsibility for academic quality and standards. The requirements set out in these documents are regularly reviewed in consultation with staff and students. The requirements set out in these documents are regularly reviewed in consultation with staff and students and changes are approved by Academic Board.

The School aims to ensure its processes operate efficiently and wherever possible avoid duplication and align with other quality assurance processes (including those of awarding bodies) and the requirements set out in the *UK Quality Code for higher education and the RQF/QCF*.

## Aims

The overall aim of the policy is to ensure that the School takes appropriate measures to define and publish clear expectations for academic conduct and also the consequences of infringing these measures. The policy's associated procedures also sets out the ways in which students can appeal or complain in those cases when they feel that they have a legitimate concern and indicates the arrangements for providing records of academic achievement.

The policy also sets out the School's approach to programme approval, programme monitoring and annual review.

## Objectives

The objectives of the Academic Governance and Academic Standards Management Policy and its related procedures are to ensure effect maintenance of standards and compliance with internal procedures and external regulations..:

## Academic Governance:

- to ensure that each programme has a current programme specification which is revised on a regular basis in line with awarding body updates and published appropriately
- to ensure that each course/module is subject to rigorous monitoring and review to ensure appropriate standards and enhance the quality of the learning experience
- to ensure that each course/module has a programme specification and unit/module information with clearly stated learning outcomes and assessment strategies
- to ensure that each course/module operates in accordance with the School's academic regulations, term periods and assessment requirements
- to provide associated documentation which is accessible to staff and students either electronically or in hard copy
- to take ultimate responsibility, through the Academic Board, for safeguarding of the academic standards of awards and enhancement of the quality of the student learning experience
- to ensure that all staff, whether directly providing teaching and learning or supporting services and systems, have responsibility for contributing to the maintenance of academic standards and enhancement of the quality of the students` learning experience
- to maintain institutional oversight of quality assurance and enhancement processes so as to ensure that local responsibilities are met and to identify generic issues and opportunities that may arise through consideration of data, external quality monitoring and annual monitoring reports
- to make appropriate use of input and judgements from those external to the School within quality assurance and enhancement processes, including but not limited to, review, and assurance of comparability of standards with other UK Higher Education Institutions
- to take account of relevant external quality assurance and enhancement expectations, benchmarks, reference points and requirements, particularly those articulated in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, the RQF and awarding bodies
- to ensure that all programmes are approved or accredited by appropriate professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
- to ensure that relevant stakeholders are consulted about their views on the quality of provision and to take account of these views in the quality assurance and enhancement

Academic Governance and Academic Standards Management- September 2023

processes. (This includes the views of staff, students, alumni, employers, partners and professional, regulatory and statutory bodies)

- to ensure that the School operates appropriate and effective processes to enable programme review to take place
- to ensure that the process of programme review is given an appropriate degree of oversight within School structures and that students are appropriately involved in the process
- to set out the detailed arrangements for module and programme review and to define responsibilities for undertaking the review process to ensure relevance to support future progression and employability
- to make appropriate use of external contributions to the process of the management of academic standards including those of external examiners
- to specify and publish detailed regulations which describe expectations of academic conduct
- to take steps to ensure that students are informed about academic regulations and that they understand the penalties for infringing them
- to publish clear procedures for handling student complaints and academic appeals
- to ensure that complaints and appeals procedures are conducted in a fair, reasonable and timely manner and that appropriate action is taken following a complaint or appeal
- to ensure that appropriate guidance and support is available for students who make a complaint or appeal and also for staff who may be involved
- to monitor the operation and effectiveness of the complaints and appeals procedures, reflect on the outcomes and consider broad implications.

### **Academic standards**

The key principles in assuring academic standards of qualifications and awards offered are:

- to ensure that each course/module is subject to rigorous monitoring and review to ensure appropriate standards are consistently met and enhance the quality of the student learning experience
- to ensure that each course/module is delivered at the appropriate level
- to ensure that each course/module has a clear and appropriate specification and unit/module information includes clearly stated learning outcomes and assessment methods
- to ensure that each course/module operates in accordance with stated academic regulations, term periods and assessment requirements

- to take ultimate responsibility for safeguarding of the academic standards of awards and enhancement of the quality of the student learning experience
- to make appropriate use of input and judgements from those external to the School within quality assurance and enhancement processes including those of external examiners
- to take account of relevant external quality assurance and enhancement expectations, benchmarks, reference points and requirements, particularly those articulated in the UK Quality Codes for Higher Education in the Advice and Guidance in the 12 Themes
- to ensure that the School operates appropriate and effective processes for module and programme review, in line with the School's strategic objectives
- to produce an annual review report, drawing upon programme review and other sources of quantitative and qualitative data including analysis of student feedback
- to take steps to evaluate and report upon the overall quality of student learning across the School and to present findings as part of the annual reporting exercise
- to reflect on the School's activities in order to improve both the quality of the student learning experience and the processes for quality assurance and enhancement through a process combining systematic reflection and active planning, including:
  - annual priorities established, monitored and evaluated by Academic Board and Senior Leadership Team
  - consideration of evidence and data derived from annual monitoring, student feedback and assessment and progression data, including targets and objectives
  - routine and periodic evaluation of quality assurance and enhancement activities, including identification of good practice
  - evaluation of approaches to learning, teaching and assessment, including identification of good practice through observations and student feedback
  - effective training and development to support the achievement of quality enhancement, including engagement with sector events, awarding body and organisation events, scholarly activity and the identification, dissemination and adoption of good practice.

## Responsibilities

The Principal and senior managers are responsible for monitoring the compliance with and implementation of the principles and procedures that underpin the management of academic standards. Course Managers will ensure that standards and quality are monitored on an on-going basis and through liaison with support and administration staff.

The Board of Governance along with Academic Board has responsibility for ensuring that appropriate monitoring of academic standards takes place, and to receive reports which set out the

findings of annual monitoring, external moderation and progress against key action and priorities identified by external examiners and by the School's standards monitoring activities.

## **Academic Regulations procedures**

2.1 Academic appeals

2.2 Complaints and grievances

2.3 Approval of new programmes

2.4 Academic misconduct

2.5 Registration and certification

2.6 Programme and annual monitoring

2.7 Annual Monitoring

*Additional procedures may be issued if an identified need for further guidance or clarity emerges.*