SERC

Higher Education Programmes SOP

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Summary of Contents

The procedures the College follows in relation to providing high quality Higher Education (HE) programmes.

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Contents

1.0   Change History

Changes to this SOP are documented in Appendix 1 of this document. When reading electronic copies of this document, you can click here to view the change history.

2.0 Background

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the procedures the College follows in relation to providing high quality Higher Education (HE) programmes.

These procedures are informed by the Expectations, Practices, Advice and Guidance within the Quality Code for Higher Education.

3.0 Scope

The following procedural sections apply to all **HE students and staff** involved in HE programmes:

Section 4   Production of College, Course and Unit Handbooks and Specifications

Section 5   Assessment and Internal Verification for Pearson Programmes

Section 6   HE Examination and Progress Boards

Section 7   Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practice (UU)

Section 8   Accreditation of Prior Learning in HE

Section 9   Academic Misconduct in HE

Section 10 HE Academic Appeals Procedure

Section 11 Periodic Review Process

Section 12 Student Engagement Process

4.0 Production of College, Course and Unit Handbooks and Specifications

4.1 Introduction & Principles

These procedures are informed by the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education including the advice and guidance for Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access, Learning and Teaching, Course Design and Development, Assessment, Enabling Student Achievement and the guidance of the Competitions and Markets Authority.

SERC is committed to providing high quality information to:

- Communicate the value of Higher Education in an accessible, comprehensible and timely way to all users.

- Enable prospective students to make informed decisions about where, what and how they will study.

- Provide current students with relevant, timely and accurate information throughout the learning experience to enhance and confirm academic standards.

4.2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all staff that create, update and produce college, course and unit handbooks and programme specifications. Channels of communication' covers the widest interpretation including electronic media and editorial media.

4.3 Procedure

The layout for programme handbooks, programme specifications, and unit handbooks will be specified as in Appendices 2-3. A template for the handbooks can be found on the HE@SERC-Coordinators Toolkit available on the Staff Intranet.

For programmes awarded by the Ulster University the Course Director must forward all information to be published for prospective and current students to the HE Coordinator one month prior to internal College deadlines. The HE Coordinator will forward the information to Ulster University for verification. Information must not be published until agreement has been received from Ulster University. This is usually a signed agreement from the Faculty Partnership Manager.

To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information and meet student need, information in alternative formats will be made available on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided. We will resp ond to reasonable requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner.

4.3.1 Current Students

The Head of Higher Education (QED) will produce and annually update the College Higher Education Handbook using Appendix 4.

HE programmes will produce a Programme Handbook and Specification and Module/ Unit Handbook. The Course Co-ordinator/Director should create/review the programme guidance documents annually. The Programme and Module/ Unit Handbooks should be reviewed prior to issue, normally September each year. The Awarding Organisation guidance should be used, templates and examples are available from QED on the HE@SERC- Coordinators Toolkit.

Following approval of new or revised regulations, codes or practices, policies or guidelines the Quality Unit must ensure that Course Teams are appropriately informed of the changes.

Programme guidance documents should follow the templates at <u>Appendices 2-4.</u>

4.4   Review and Monitoring

4.4.1   Current Student Information
The College Higher Education Handbook(s) will be signed off by the Director of Strategic Planning Quality and Support prior to publication.

The Induction Handbook/materials will be signed off by the Head of Learner Welfare.

Sampling and regular reviews will be carried out regularly by the Compliance Unit.

Issues arising from the sampling processes that require changes to information should be actioned by the Programme Team not more than 10 working days following notification of the requirements. The School Management will ensure that the action is undertaken.

The quality audits will be reported to the HE Review Board on the effectiveness of processes and reliability of material produced.

As part of the annual monitoring and review processes, students and where possible, stakeholders should be asked to review the effectiveness and reliability of published information. The Quality Unit will act on issues raised.

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5.0   Assessment and Internal Verification for Pearson Programmes

5.1   Introduction & Principles

SERC is committed to an assessment process that is:

- Fair and free from bias.
- Based on a range of assessment methods to reflect the learning needs of students.
- Adheres to awarding organisation requirements.
- Includes an organised system of internal verification of assessment instruments, cross-marking and moderation to share best practice and verify academic standards.
- Provides clear and constructive written feedback for learner improvement underpinned by a quality assurance process based on team responsibility through vigorous internal verification and moderation process.

This section relates to the preparation, grading and internal verification of Pearson Higher Education programmes. It is recognition of the importance of a robust assessment and internal verification procedure.   These procedures are informed by BTEC awarding organisation regulations and UK Quality Code advice and guidance on Assessment, Learning and Teaching, and the Recognition of Prior Learning. It is informed by Section 6: HE Examination and Progress Boards.

Internal Verification is the quality assurance system used to monitor assessment practice. This involves:

- The scrutiny of assignment briefs prior to issue to learners.
- Cross-moderating to internally verify the quality of lecturer decisions (including student feedback) for all units and providing appropriate feedback to lecturers, with an action plan where necessary.
- Monitoring consistency across teams/ lecturers on one or several sites through a standardisation programme.

5.2   Scope

These procedures apply to all staff involved in the preparation, grading and internal verification of all BTEC Higher National programmes.

5.3   Forms

The following forms should be used to complete this process:

Form 01a- Assignment Brief
Form 01b- Assignment Feedback Sheets
Form 02- Internal Verification of Assignment Brief
Form 03- Internal Verification of Programme Assessment Schedule
Form 04a- Campus Internal Verification of Assessment Decisions
Form 04b- Cross Campus Standardisation of Assessment Decisions
Form 05- Internal Verification Programme Planning
Form 06- Lead Internal Verification Tracking
Form 07- Course Co-ordinator Internal Verification Tracking
Form 08- Observation Record
Form 09- Witness Statement
Form 10- Assessment Planning
Form 11- Student Induction Checklist
Form 12- Learner Evidence Checklist

Form 13- Assessment Tracking

Form 14- Programme Lead IV Resubmission Approval

All forms can be found in the HE@SERC coordinator toolkit available on the staff intranet.

5.4 Monitoring & Evaluation

Implementation of the procedure will be monitored by the QED Unit and evaluation of its effectiveness will be naturally occurring through the course review procedures, and the quality cycle.

5.5 Archive & Storage

All assignment and internal verification records must be completed on-line and kept on the School team site. Records must be retained by the Lead IV for 3 years following certification. The Lead IV should immediately inform IT (Networking) should any records go missing.

Students work should be retained until certification and results should be archived and held for 7 years. Student portfolios should be stored securely.

5.6 Staff Roles within Internal Verification Process

5.6.1 Role of Quality Nominee

The Deputy Chief Officer (QED) will act as Quality Nominee (QN) for BTEC programmes. The Head of Higher Education will support the QN in the following:

Key tasks:

- Act as a link for Awarding Organisation requirements.
- Liaise with accredited Lead Internal Verifiers. Link with Head of School to replace Lead IV as required.
- Ensure assessment and internal verification is effective.
- Ensure Awarding Organisation policy requirements and approval conditions are being implemented consistently and effectively.
- Manage the College Progress and Examination Board process as stated in Section 6: HE Examination and Progress Boards.

5.6.2 Role of Lead Internal Verifier

Key tasks:

- Satisfy the Awarding Organisation requirements for Lead Internal Verifier.
- Ensure that there is an assessment and verification plan for the programmes in areas of responsibilities.
- Ensure that the assessment schedule issued to students.
- Sample a minimum of 20% of assignment briefs of a programme, within the academic year.
- Plan, allocate and manage internal verifiers for the programmes in areas of responsibilities.
- At suitable points ensure that the Plan is being implemented and IV records maintained.
- Arrange standardisation meetings across teams and campuses.
- Manage, sample and assure internal verification processes and procedures by internal Verifiers.

- Undertake some IV/and or assessment for individual units within at least one of the programmes.
- Support Programme Coordinators in preparation for and execution of College Progress and Examinations Boards.
- Manage Programme Coordinators to ensure that final results are communicated in a timely way to students.
- Assist the Head of Higher Education (QED) with the Appeals Process.

5.6.3 Role of the Internal Verifier

The Internal Verifier is at the heart of quality assurance both within the national framework and within the quality and management system of SERC. The Internal Verifier has overall responsibility in ensuring that the Internal Verification Process (detailed below) is carried out for the appointed programme of study. The Internal Verifier will be appointed by the Lead Internal Verifier for specific units and/or areas of a programme.

<u>Key tasks:</u>

<u>Preparation of Assignment Briefs and Role in Assessment Planning</u>

- Attend course team meetings and lead a team approach to assessment of the programme to ensure cohesiveness.
- Ensure **that only approved documentation** and layout is used for both assignments and the internal verification process. The approved documentation can be found in the appendices. It is understood that in some subjects a variation may be necessary to the cover sheet. This **must be** agreed through the Lead IV with the QN as part of the annual IV planning process.
- Ensure that the quality of assignment briefs are fit for purpose and reflect the unit learning outcomes, content, assessment and grading criteria and assessment guidance. Once the IV has signed off the assignment brief (using Form 02- IV of Assignment Brief) it means that it meets the awarding organisation requirements.
- Where an assignment brief does not meet awarding organisation requirements the IV must indicate the remedial action required on Form 02, discuss the issue with the staff writing the assignment and arrange for the changes. **The IV is responsible** for ensuring that the remedial action is completed, the assignment and IV documentation updated prior to issue. Assignment briefs **must not** be issued without this stage of the IV process being completed.

<u>Internal Verification of Assessment Decisions</u>

- Use subject knowledge to agree the grading criteria awarded within the sample.
- Where the grading criteria awarded is not agreed this **must be** noted on the IV documentation. The IV should then undertake a professional discussion with the assessor to agree the remedial action required.
- Where the IV and assessor cannot reach agreement the Lead IV can be consulted for assistance.
- Ensure that the appropriate corrective action is taken where necessary and the results noted on the IV documentation.
- Monitor and ensure student feedback meets College requirements. Feedback should be based on marking for improvement. This includes annotation on the script and on the feedback sheet. The annotation on the script should identify how the grading has or has not been met and any future improvements that could be made.
- Provide advice and support to lecturers on a regular basis.
- Ensure your own assessment decisions are sampled.
- Ensure that the internal verification process is carried out on time.

- Ensure all accurate records regarding internal verification monitoring activities are stored online in the appropriate school team site
- Liaise with Lead Internal Verifier.
- Support quality assurance by taking a key role in quality reviews.
- Advise the course team on any training needs.
- Provide feedback of the assessment system to the programme team, senior management and awarding organisation.
- Take part in the formal stage of any appeal.

5.6.4 Role of Unit/Module Leader

The following list of tasks is indicative of the areas normally covered by a module /subject lecturer – any variations will be agreed with line manager when agreeing timetables.

Key tasks:

Preparation of Assignments and Internal Verification

- Active participation in all team meetings, the preparation of assignments, assessment schedule and future course development.
- The assessor will have a detailed knowledge of the units to be assessed with regard to learning outcomes, content, grading criteria and assessment guidance. They will ensure that these are followed in assessment practices.
- Scheme of work, all assessments/assignment briefs passed to programme leader as required.
- Correct College documentation must be used in the preparation of assignment briefs.
- Learning outcomes and grading criteria must be clearly displayed on the assignment brief.
- In Pearson programmes the wording of the learning outcomes and any grading criteria **cannot be altered in any way** from that within the unit specification.
- Assignment briefs must not be issued to students unless the IV process has been fully completed and the brief has been signed off the IV and any issues resolved.
- Assessors must attend and participate in internal verification events within the school.
- A sample of assessed works must be provided for internal verification events. It is the assessor's responsibility to manage the assessment process to ensure that a sample of graded, annotated work is available at these events. Failure to provide such a sample must be agreed in advance with the HOS.

Assessment of Student Work

- Provide a formative and summative feedback opportunity to the learner.
- Undertake prompt marking of assessed work with return to students within a maximum of 3 weeks.
- Feedback should be based on marking for improvement. This includes annotation on the script and on the feedback sheet. The annotation on the script should identify how and where the grading criteria has or has not been met and any future improvements that could be made.
- Maintain accurate records of formative and summative assessment decisions using the required College systems and documentation.

Teaching and Delivering Learning

- Prompt attendance at all timetabled classes, maintenance of module register and appropriate action taken in the case of poor attendance in line with course team procedures.
- Module/ Unit specification, handbook and schedule /plan of work to be issued to students during 1st week of study.
- Ensure that all relevant teaching has been covered prior to planned assessment activities.
- Provide clear guidance to students re grading criteria and unit/module objectives to be assessed and, adherence to planned submission dates in line with course, College and Awarding Organisation guidelines.
- Forward completed student unit portfolios with final grades to programmes leader within 1 week of unit completion.
- Ensure that all Awarding Organisation, College and course team policies are followed in terms of cross marking and IV procedures.
- Follow submission procedures as outlined in the College student handbooks.
- Provide learners with support and signpost individual learners with specific learning needs to the course tutor.
- Completion of online student performance record system as required.
- Reflect upon and evaluate own performance and contribute to course review and evaluation procedures.

5.7 Role of Course Co-ordinator/ Programme Leader

Key tasks:

Within the internal verification process the course co-ordinator/programme leader will:

- Ensure that all schemes of work and assignment briefs are available to students on Moodle.
- Complete and maintain the Co-ordinator tracking of internal verification (Form 07- Course Coordinator IV Tracking).
- Complete the plan for the allocation and completion of IV for their area of responsibility and forward to the Lead IV for agreement.
- Liaise with the Lead IV as required.
- Communicate the decisions of the College Progress and Examination Boards in a timely way as required in Section 6: HE Examination and Progress Boards.

5.8 The Internal Verification Procedure

All staff involved with the Internal Verification procedure must ensure that they understand their role as indicated above before commencing the IV procedure.

Internal Verification is the quality assurance system used to monitor assessment practice. This involves:

- The scrutiny of assignment briefs prior to issue to learners.
- Cross-marking to internally verify the quality of lecturer decisions (including student feedback) for all units and providing appropriate feedback to lecturers, with an action plan where necessary.
- Monitoring consistency across teams/ lecturers on one or several sites through a standardisation programme.
- Judging learner evidence against the assessment criteria.

Forms available on the HE@SERC Coordinators Toolkit should be used to complete this process.

The Internal Verification Procedure should provide a sampled check of all aspects of the assessment process and should take account of:

- All Assessors
- All assignments from every unit
- All forms of assessed work
- All grades of performance
- Work from every assignment
- As wide a variety of learners as possible
- The Lead IV should use a 'risk based' approach as required. This means that the Lead IV will take into account the previous outcomes from internal verification and standard verification, experience of assessor and whether the unit is new or has been delivered before.

5.9   Cross College Standardisation Events

The Lead IV must organise three cross-college events annually:

- Standardisation event in June or August using Pearson OSCA material if applicable and/or a sample of learner work and the relevant assessment criteria to agree the standard. This is achieved through a professional discussion with all of the assessors and should bring cross-campus teams together. Following this exercise formal assessment and internal verification can occur.
- Internal Verification during inter-semester January.
- Internal Verification during May/June..

5.10   Internal Verification Process

Stage 1: Preparation of Programme Assessment Plan
The Assignment Schedule for the Programme is a live document which should be reviewed regularly by the Lead Internal Verifier and agreed by the Programme team on the relevant Form. The Assessment Plan should ensure that assignments are timely and provide opportunity for a reasonable student workload. A variety of modes of assessment should be used as appropriate.

Stage 2: Internal Verification of Assignment Briefs
All assignment briefs must be internally verified, **prior** to issue to the learner. This task is carried out by the IV. The Lead IV will sample a minimum of 20% of assignment briefs to verify the brief is fit for purpose:

- Ensuring the tasks and evidence will allow the learner to address the targeted criteria.
- Ensuring the brief is written in a clear and accessible language.
- Ensuring learners' roles and tasks are vocationally relevant and appropriate to the level of the qualification.
- Ensuring equal opportunities are incorporated.

Internal verification of assignment briefs should be reported and recorded on the relevant Form. If action is required, the lecturer should complete this and return it to the Internal Verifier for sign off. **Only when** the brief is verified as fit for purpose, may it be issued to the learners.

Stage 3: Agreement of Internal Verification Plan

The Lead IV must prepare annually a risk-based internal verification plan for each programme for which they are responsible. The IV plan should reflect the needs of the programme including risk based issues, the principles of internal verification and may use a mix of campus and cross-campus internal verification as required.

Stage 4: Internal Verification of Assessment decisions

A sample of assessment decisions for each unit of study must be internally verified. Team/Cross Campus internal verification should be recorded on the relevant Form and should follow the Sample size guidance below. Where a programme is offered across SERC there should be evidence that internal verification has occurred between the campus delivery teams.

This is to ensure:
- Assessment decisions accurately match learner work (evidence) to the unit learning outcomes, content, grading criteria and assignment guidance.
- Assessment and grading is consistent across the programme on all sites.
- Evidence confirmed by the lecturer is valid, authentic, reliable, current and sufficient.
- Awarding Organisation standards are being met.
- Feedback is timely, linked to criteria, and provides clear guidance for improvement. Annotation on the script meets the standards as outlined in Internal Verification of assessed student work.

Internal verification activities between programme team members should be completed prior to feedback to the learner and recorded on the relevant Form. Feedback should be provided to the module lecturer and forms forwarded to the IV for monitoring. If assessment decisions are not agreed the IV should ensure appropriate corrective action is taken. The IV is responsible for ensuring that all remedial action is completed. The sample must represent all sites where a programme is offered.

Stage 5: Lead Internal Verification

A sample of verified decisions by Internal Verifiers across units, programmes and Campuses, must be reviewed by the Lead IV. The Lead IV should use a risk approach and must be satisfied that each step of the IV process has been followed and the AO's standards met.

Sample size

All assessors work must be internally verified annually. All units and as wide a spread of learners should be sampled. The Lead IV should work with the Co-ordinator to ensure spread.

Team at Campus level

As a team each unit should be internally verified. A minimum of 3 pieces of work for each assessment to cover all grades of performance and a range of learners. This step is used at the Lead IV discretion and will be highlighted within the IV plan.

Internal Verification by Team at Cross Campus Level

Where the programme is delivered cross campus there should be two IV standardisation meetings per year to ensure parity of assessment decisions. For every unit a minimum of three pieces of assessed work from each campus to cover all assessors, grades of performance and a range of learners.

Preparation of sample for the Awarding Organisation Verifier

The Lead IV should follow the guidelines of the awarding organisation.

6.0   HE Examination and Progress Boards

6.1   Introduction & Principles

This section outlines the procedure the College follows for Higher Education (HE) Progress and Examination Boards. The procedure takes account and reflects the UK Quality Code, Assessment, Admissions, External Expertise, Recruitment and Widening Access, Learning and Teaching, and Concerns, Complaints and Appeals.

6.2   Scope

This procedure applies to all academic staff delivering HE programmes.

6.3   Procedure

6.3.1   Overview

Students' status is normally considered three times per year: January/February at a Progress Board, June at an Examination Board and August at a supplementary resit Examination Board.

The Examination Boards act as an important element of quality improvement and assurance for SERC HE students. The Board is the final arbiter of the award of marks/grades to ensure standards and quality of a programmes are consistent with the relevant national qualification frameworks. The External Expertise Theme (Advice and Guidance) of the Quality Code gives guidance on ensuring academic quality standards are met.

The Progress Boards focus on the students' **progression within the year** and the Examination Board on **progression between years and levels**.

6.3.2   The Progress and Examination Boards have the following functions:

- To determine the module/unit results obtained by candidates.
- To forward to external bodies lists of successful candidates classified in accordance with relevant course regulations, where such results lead directly to an award.
- To determine the academic progress of students on the basis of their performance in examinations and other forms of assessment.
- To ensure that the examination and assessment of candidates are conducted in accordance with regulations and procedures as required by the awarding organisation.

6.3.3   The following are eligible to attend a Board:

- All staff who teach on the programme
- The External Examiner
- The Course Co-ordinator/Director
- The Head of Higher Education (QED) who will act as the Chair
- Representatives from the Awarding Organisation
- The Head of School and or Deputy Head of School running the programme
- Representative from Examinations Unit
- Board Secretary (QED)

As a minimum, the following <u>must</u> attend:

- The Delivery Team when results are being submitted for approval
- The Course Co-ordinator/Director
- The Head of Higher Education (QED)
- Board Secretary (QED)
- The Head of School (HOS) and or Deputy Head of School (DHOS) running the programme or a nominated representative

6.3.4 The Course Co-ordinator/Director Duties

The Course Coordinator/ Director should complete the following duties prior to the Board:

- Prepare the results sheets as meets the requirements of the College. Where the programme is a Foundation Degree or Full Degree the result sheets submitted can be those of the University or Awarding Organisation.

- Collate information recording extenuating circumstances and leave of absence. Details should be available for the Board if requested. Students must have used the correct documentation as required by the University or as found on the Assessment Regulations and Key Forms section of the SERC website.

- Organise attendance of team members, DHOS and/or Head of School at the Board.

- Arrange for attendance of External Examiner or presentation of comments if required by the Awarding Organisation.

- Meet with the Course Team **prior** to the Board to agree decisions in relation to candidate progress in accordance with awarding organisation and or College requirements. This should include arrangements for resits. At this meeting a summary of students with referrals, resits, extenuating circumstances and leave of absence **must be completed using the provided Pre-Board proforma** (templates available on the HE@SERC-Coordinator Toolkit available on the staff intranet). A note should also be made of issues raised by the External Examiner.

The Course Co-ordinator/Director should undertake the following duties during and resulting from the Board:

- Supply to the Board copies of results sheets/grids and pre-board proforma. Accurate student results grids and completed pre-board proforma must be uploaded to the secure Programme Exam Board Team site (a link will be provided by QED in advance of the Board) in **ADVANCE** of the PB/EB **meeting <u>showing decisions made by the team</u>**. These will be ratified or altered at the PB/EB but the team MUST make recommendations in advance. Failure to complete in advance will mean that the PB/EB cannot proceed. This is to meet the need for accuracy and ensure quality code standards have been followed. Failure to do so may delay the award of grades.

- Supply to the Board the External Examiners report(s) and agreed candidate Extenuating Circumstances and/ or Leave of Absence.

- Undertake, complete and record any actions and recommendations made by the Board.

- Liaise with Examinations and Marketing as required to progress the interest of the candidate following the Board.

- Communicate the outcome of the Board with the candidate as per section **6.3.7**.

6.3.5 The Chairperson of the Boards Duties

The Chairperson of the board should undertake the following duties:

- Convene, record and conduct the Board.
- Consider student progress through confirming module marks or agree amendments (subject to External Examiners approval).
- Consider extenuating circumstances and agree resulting decisions.
- Record Leave of Absences.
- Review the progress of each candidate and agreeing the decisions recommended by the course teams in line with the awarding organisation and College recommendations.
- Prepare and distribute minutes of the Board.

6.3.6 Board Agenda

The Board will cover the following areas:

- Note attendance of External Examiners.
- Confirm confidentiality of proceedings.
- Declaration of conflict of interest.
- Receive evidence of Extenuating circumstances.
- Receive evidence of Leave of Absence.
- Receipt and consideration of candidates' results/progress.
- Determine overall results and academic progress of candidates.
- Agree publications of progress and award decisions to candidates.
- Agree the communication of decision to unsuccessful candidates.
- Agree the last date on which appeals may be received and the date on which appeals shall be heard.
- Agree arrangements for resit examinations/re submission of coursework.
- Receive comments from Internal and External Examiners.
- Consider College issues.

6.3.7 Communication with candidates

Communication with candidates following the Board will be by email or letter, and students can access their results online at SERC4U. Results will be issued by the Course Director/Programme Coordinator within three working days following the Board. The letter/email must include a transcript of results, date for appeals, date for resits and support arrangements in the case of students who must resubmit. Letter templates can be found in the HE@SERC- Coordinators Toolkit (Communication Templates) available on the Staff Intranet.

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7.0 Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise (UU Programmes)

This section summarises SERC's duties towards students, staff and external stakeholders in relation to Ulster University programmes where a Fitness to Practise declaration is a requirement of the award.

7.1 <u>Principles</u>

Any programme of study which is awarded by the Ulster University may lead to a professional registration will be governed by a requirement that students demonstrate their 'Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise'. At the heart of the *Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise procedure* is the recognition of the College's duty of care to all students and stakeholders.

All training makes high academic and personal demands on students. Students are required to demonstrate not only academic ability but also personal suitability, fitness to practise and a commitment to their chosen profession at the point of admission as well as throughout their programme.

The responsibilities in relation to suitability and fitness to practise are not confined to the process and content of the academic programme but have a broader scope and application. They encompass all behaviour including that outside the academic or practice learning setting which may reflect negatively on the profession, College or University awarding organisation.

Suitability and fitness for professional work include qualities such as patience, honesty, integrity, resilience and the ability to help people face difficult situations. Evidence of clear thinking, sound judgement, sensitivity and tolerance is required, together with the ability to establish and maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries. This demands sound interpersonal and communication skills as well as both physical and mental ability to carry out the role appropriately.

On occasions, students may be the subject of concerns about their suitability and fitness to practise in one or more of these fields. It must be clear to all parties (students, academic staff and placement/ practice learning supervisors) what kinds of concerns or information will trigger formal action on behalf of the College, how the formal action will be implemented and what are the possible outcomes.

There is a clear professional obligation laid down by regulating bodies to have robust processes that encourage the disclosure of matters that may affect suitability and fitness to practise.

Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise procedures are distinct from South Eastern Regional College's general disciplinary procedures, There may be situations, however, where more than one set of College procedures are utilised to consider the College's position and professional implications of a student's behaviour or fitness to practise.

7.2 <u>Scope</u>

Students registered on a programme of study that requires them to undertake practical training in a professional role in relation to patients, pupils, clients or service-users, or where the end

qualification provides a direct license to practise or is a requirement for a license to practise, are subject to this procedure of fitness to practise.

The purpose of this procedure is to give effect to the College's duty to ensure that such students are fit to practise, in order to protect present or future patients, pupils, clients or service users and to comply with the requirements of professional/regulatory bodies and to maintain public confidence.

If students registered on a programme of study are subject to this procedure, this shall be stated in the Course Regulations for that programme of study.

If any student subject to this Regulation is the subject of alleged or proven academic misconduct or disciplinary offence, this shall be disclosed without prejudice to the Head of School, so that any implications regarding fitness to practise may be considered.

The basis for any determination or action concerning the fitness to practise of a student shall be the relevant professional requirements and code of behaviour. The standard of proof required shall be the balance of probabilities.

7.3 **Fitness to Practise**

This section refers to the procedures to be implemented when a student is judged unfit for entry to a profession for which there are academic, behavioural and health requirements that must be met in order to ensure suitability to practise that profession. Examples of relevant profession are Nursing, Health Visiting, Health and Social Care, Early Years Education, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Radiography, Optometry, Podiatry, Chiropractic, Dietetics, Clinical Physiology, Sports Studies, Speech and Language Therapy, Education, Counselling, Social Work, Youth and Community Work, Biomedical Sciences, Pharmacy and Architecture. This list is not exhaustive and it may be added to by the College at any time.

The Fitness to Practise procedure exists to protect:
- the public interest, by safeguarding client/patient well-being;
- the students' interests by ensuring that students do not proceed into a career for which they may well not be suited or for which a regulatory body may not register them.

Students may be considered unfit to practise on the grounds of:
- physical or mental health reasons;
- criminal or other serious misconduct;
- unprofessional conduct or action;
- failure to disclose information at the admissions stage of a course;
- unsuitability for the academic and/or practice demands of the professional education.

Concern that a student may, for behavioural or health reasons, be deemed unfit to be admitted to or to practise in a profession towards which his or her course of study leads, should be disclosed in writing to the appropriate Head of School. Concerns may arise from one incident or from a pattern of behaviour over time.

Anyone, including College teaching staff and academic support staff involved in student clinical/ professional practice who become aware of evidence of health, behavioural or academic unsuitability which may preclude a student from completing the course of study or from undertaking the required professional practice should report the facts in writing to the Head of School at the earliest opportunity.

If the person making such disclosure, as above, identifies his or herself, this will make it possible for the College to undertake prompt action. In exceptional circumstances the Head of School may permit the discloser's identity to remain confidential, provided this is consistent with natural justice. Anonymous disclosure can be made. However, it must be recognised that if the discloser remains anonymous this can limit the College's ability to take action, as it is likely to be more difficult to investigate and gather evidence.

Boards of Examiners, Student Progress Committees, and the College Disciplinary Committee within departments may also refer students to the Head of School under this Fitness to Practise procedure.

In some situations, where there is an allegation of plagiarism, it may be appropriate to consider the case under both academic and fitness to practise procedures. In these circumstances the academic process will be conducted prior to the fitness to practise process.

Students whose courses are covered by the Fitness to Practise procedure must disclose any criminal convictions to the College before entering the course or immediately such a conviction occurs during the course. This will enable the student to be provided with guidance about entry requirements for registration within the profession concerned. If a student fails to disclose this information and it subsequently comes to light, the student will be referred to the Head of School who may instigate the Fitness to Practise procedure.

Issues relating to professional practice may arise as a consequence of behaviour associated with diagnosed or suspected mental health problems or from addiction. In such circumstances the Fitness to Practise procedure will only be invoked if medical and counseling interventions have not successfully addressed the behaviour or if the student has refused all such interventions. The medical and counseling interventions should be evidenced.

7.4 Precautionary Suspension

The Principal or their designate, may suspend a student pending a fuller investigation of the circumstances reported. This power may be used when a student displays inappropriate behaviour while on practice learning or when about to go on practice learning.

When such action is necessary, the Course Director, will prepare a report on the circumstances of the case, normally within 3 working days of the action and will make this report available to a Fitness to Practise panel.

During a period of precautionary suspension, the student will be entitled to access the College's student support services and will be offered any pastoral support required.

7.5 Investigation

The Head of School will, within 5 working days of receiving the disclosure, appoint a Departmental Fitness to Practise Panel (hereinafter the Panel). The Panel shall consist of:
- the Head of School or his/her nominee (the Head of School will normally Chair the Panel);
- the Higher Education Co-Ordinator;
- a member of academic staff from the same professional discipline as the student; and
- a member of academic staff who is not from the professional area concerned and who does not know the student.

The panel will meet within 21 days of the disclosure being received.

The student will be given 10 working days' notice of the meeting of the Panel. The notice will include:

- a brief statement of the allegations against him or her;
- details of any precautionary suspension or limitations on or conditions placed upon his or her studies or practice learning experience during the investigation;
- information on his/her right to be accompanied at the Panel meeting by a representative who is a member of the College student or staff body.

The Head of School, or his/her representative, may ask academic or clinical/ professional staff connected with the case to provide written comments on the student's academic standing, conduct or health, explaining why there is concern as to the student's fitness to practise. The Head of School will also be provided with information about the student's professional and academic progress and any other relevant information.

The Panel will establish the facts of the case and in so doing may interview relevant individuals, including the student. The student may be accompanied at the interview by a member of staff of the College, by another student, by a representative of the Students' Union or by a member of the professional organisation. Legal representation is not permitted.

A member of the College administration staff will, with due regard to confidentiality, keep records of the proceedings and be responsible for circulating relevant documents.

The Panel shall satisfy itself that the student understands the purpose and import of the proceedings of the Panel in respect of his/her case, understands his/her rights within the process, and has adequate support.

Wherever possible the Panel will resolve the issue in consultation with the student.

The Panel has the following powers when considering the student's behaviour and conduct:

- no action may be required;
- the student may be encouraged to obtain medical support following which they may be asked to provide medical confirmation of fitness to practise. This action may result in an agreed period of leave of absence;
- recommend to the College Senior Management team that the student discontinue studies on the course with or without possibility of transfer to another course;
- if the student is at an appropriate stage in his/her programme, he/she may be offered an alternative award which does not lead to a professional qualification;
- the student may be referred to the College's Disciplinary procedures;
- other action as deemed appropriate to the situation.

Should the Panel take the decision to refer a student to the College Disciplinary procedures, it will state in writing the reasons for its recommendation and supply any evidence it may have.

When the Panel takes the decision to remove a student from a professional course it will:

- inform the student in writing, within 10 days of the Panel meeting, of the decision of the Panel, giving reasons for the decision;
- appraise the Director of Curriculum and Information Services;
- provide feedback to the complainant(s);
- enter the findings of the Panel on the student's file.

7.6 Appeals Procedure

The student may appeal against the decision of the Departmental Fitness to Practise Panel on any of the following grounds:

- that new evidence has become available;
- that there has been procedural irregularity;
- that the decision of the panel was inappropriate or too severe.

An appeal should normally be made through the Director of Curriculum and Information Services within 10 days of receiving the decision of the Panel. The Director of Curriculum and Information Services will set up an Appeal Board (hereinafter the Board). The Board will consist of:

- Director of Curriculum and Information Services (Chair);
- the Head of School of another area;
- the appeal will be considered within 28 days of the date the appeal was lodged;
- the Board will consider the statements and information provided by the Panel. The Board may set aside or vary or confirm the decision of the Panel. There shall be no appeal against the decision of the Appeal Board.

The student will be informed in writing of the decision of the Board within 10 working days of the Board meeting.

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8.0   Accreditation of Prior Learning in HE

Please refer to Higher Educations Accreditation of Prior Learning SOP – see link:
Higher Education Accreditation of Prior Learning SOP.pdf

It is important to note that Liverpool John Moore University provision will follow their policy on Recognition of Prior (Experiential) Learning.   This can be found at: Guidance Policy and Process | Liverpool John Moores University (ljmu.ac.uk)

9.0   Academic Misconduct in HE

9.1   <u>Overview and Scope</u>

This section relates to HE students at SERC. This procedure is informed by the Quality Code for Higher Education, Assessment, Recruitment and Widening Access, Learning and Teaching, Complaints and Appeals.

SERC aims to develop the skills of HE students to follow good academic practices. The aim of this process is to improve the standard and consistency of referencing and ensure the use on all programmes of the Harvard referencing system.

The general principles apply to all HE students, but penalties and methods of calculating penalties are dependent on awarding bodies and these are indicated in section 9.69.6.

It is important to note that Liverpool John Moore University provision will follow their policy on Academic Misconduct   This can be found in Section 9.7.

9.2   <u>What is Academic Misconduct?</u>

The International Center for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as a commitment to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage.

Academic misconduct denotes any attempt to subvert or evade the values of academic integrity.   This includes acts of dishonesty, deception and fraud through the attempts to gain an unfair academic advantage. The different forms of academic misconduct are identified below:

- Plagiarism of any nature
- Misuse/ covert use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Cheating (including copying, personation and falsification)
- Collusion

Sections 9.2.1 – 9.2.4 identifies examples of the different forms of academic misconduct. The lists provided are not definitive, so should be used as a guide, to help identify where academic misconduct may have taken place.

It is important to note that Liverpool John Moore University provision will follow their guidance on Academic Misconduct.   Further information can be found in Section 9.7.

9.2.1 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the representation of the work, artefacts or designs, written or otherwise, of any other person, from any source whatsoever, as the student's own.   This means that the person considering this work is given the impression they are viewing the student's own original work when it is not the case. Plagiarism can occur in various forms:

The following list identifies examples of plagiarism, this list is not exhaustive:

- The verbatim copying of another's work w ithout clear identification and acknowledgement including the downloading of materials from the internet without proper referencing of materials
- The paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without clear identification and acknowledgement.

- The unidentified and unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another's work.

- The deliberate and detailed presentation of another's concept as one's own.

- The representation of the students own previous work without being properly referenced.   This is known as auto-plagiarism.

Students who engage in plagiarism will have committed academic malpractice and will be dealt with following the penalties for academic misconduct in section 9.6 in line with the relevant Awarding Organisation policies.

9.2.2 Misuse/ Covert use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) use refers to the use of AI tools to obtain information and content which might be used in work produced for assessments which lead towards qualifications. While the range of AI tools, and their capabilities, is likely to expand greatly in the near future, misuse of AI tools in relation to qualification assessments at any time constitutes malpractice. Teachers and students should also be aware that AI tools are still being developed and there are often limitations to their use, such as producing inaccurate or inappropriate content.

AI chatbots are AI tools which generate text in response to user prompts and questions. Users can ask follow-up questions or ask the chatbot to revise the responses already provided. AI chatbots respond to prompts based upon patterns in the data sets (large language model) upon which they have been trained. They generate responses which are statistically likely to be relevant and appropriate. AI chatbots can complete tasks such as the following:

• Answering questions

• Analysing, improving, and summarising text

• Authoring essays, articles, fiction, and non-fiction

• Writing computer code

• Translating text from one language to another

• Generating new ideas, prompts, or suggestions for a given topic or theme

• Generating text with specific attributes, such as tone, sentiment, or formality

The following list identifies examples of misuse/ covert use of AI include, this list is not exhaustive:

• The copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content so that the work is no longer the student's own

• The copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content

• The use of AI to complete parts of the assessment so that the work does not reflect the student's own work, analysis, evaluation or calculations

• The failure to acknowledge the use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information

• The incomplete or poor acknowledgement of AI tools

• The submission of work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies.

Students who engage in the misuse/ covert use of Artificial Intelligence, where AI generative tools are deployed for assessment purposes without authorisation and/or appropriate

acknowledgement, will have committed academic malpractice, and will be dealt with following the penalties for academic misconduct in section 9.6 in line with the relevant Awarding Organisation policies.

9.2.3 Cheating (including copying, personation and falsification)

Cheating involves the unauthorised use of information, materials, devices, sources or practices in completing academic activities.

The following list identifies examples of cheating, this list is not exhaustive:

- Communicating during an examination with any person other than an authorised member of staff.
- Introducing any written, printed or other material into an examination (including electronically stored information) other than that specified in the rubric of the examination paper.
- Gaining access to unauthorised material in any way during or before an assessment.
- The use of mobile phones or any other communication device during an assessment or examination.
- The submission of false claims of previously gained qualifications, research or experience in order to gain credit for prior learning.
- The misrepresentation of information/ data in order to gain advantage.
- The falsification or fabrication including the unauthorised creation of false information/data, or the alteration of information/data within a piece of assessment while presenting this information as genuine.
- The submission of material purchased or commissioned from a third party, such as an essay-writing service, as one's own.   This is also known as contract cheating.
- Personation- Assuming the identity of a student with the intent to deceive during a piece of assessment by competing the work on behalf of the student.

Students who engage in cheating will have committed academic malpractice and will be dealt with following the penalties for academic misconduct in section 9.6 in line with the relevant Awarding Organisation policies.

9.2.4 Collusion

Collusion is where students work together to complete an assessment that should be taken independently.

The following list identifies examples of collusion, this list is not exhaustive:

- The conscious collaboration, without official approval, between two or more students in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical or substantially similar form and/or is represented by each to be the product of his or her individual efforts.
- The unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own.

Students who engage in collusion will have committed academic malpractice and will be dealt with following the penalties for academic misconduct in section 9.6 in line with the relevant Awarding Organisation policies.

9.3 Levels of Seriousness of Academic Misconduct

The below outlines the different offences, and the level of severity to be used as a guide when determining the penalties for Academic Misconduct as identified in Section 9.6.

9.3.1 Cases of Academic Misconduct

The following list is a guide to what is considered a case of academic misconduct. This list is not exhaustive. Work with limited plagiarism and/ or covert AI generated content may be considered academic misconduct.

- The copying from books and/or internet sources without acknowledgement, which has a significant contribution to the overall work.
- The limited plagiarism from professional work (not course books).
- The paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without clear identification and acknowledgement.
- The limited copying of other candidates' work (hard copy or electronic), or excessive help within one piece of work.
- The limited downloading of information from the internet or the use of model answers downloaded from the internet.
- The representation of the students own previous work without being properly referenced. This is known as auto-plagiarism.
- The limited copying or paraphrasing of AI-generated content.
- The incomplete or poor acknowledgement of AI tools.

9.3.2 Cases of Gross Academic Misconduct

The following list is a guide to what is considered a case of gross academic misconduct. This list is not exhaustive. Cases of cheating, collusion, and work with substantial plagiarised and/ or covert AI generated content may be considered as gross academic misconduct. Repeated cases of academic misconduct will generally be escalated to gross academic misconduct.

- The extensive copying of textbooks and/or internet sources in one piece of work or limited copying in two or more pieces of work which makes a significant contribution to the work/s.
- The extensive plagiarism of professional works.
- The buying, selling or stealing of work.
- The repeated evidence of extensive use of information from the internet without acknowledgement or using model internet answers.
- The use of past candidates' work from previous years.
- The repeated cases of Academic Misconduct.
- The deliberate and detailed presentation of another's concept as one's own.
- The copying or paraphrasing sections or whole responses of AI-generated content so that the work is no longer the students own.
- The use of AI to complete parts of the assessment so that the work does not reflect the student's own work, analysis, evaluation or calculations.
- The failure to acknowledge use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information.

- The submission of work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies.
- Cases of cheating (Including copying, personation and falsification).
- Cases of collusion.

9.4 Guidance for Detecting Plagiarism and/ or misuse/ covert use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Although the detection of plagiarism or misuse/ covert use of Artificial Intelligence tools is not an exact science, there are several indicators that can raise initial suspicions when reviewing and marking student work.

Suspicions of plagiarism may be raised if the submission contains:

- Information on topics that is only vaguely linked to the assessment brief.
- Formatting that does not follow specified requirements e.g., inappropriate headings or irrelevant sections or datasets.
- Changes in formatting, e.g., font colour and style, sections with colour behind text, line spacing.
- Different referencing conventions used within a submission.
- Variations in the learner's writing style throughout the document.
- Untypical use of vocabulary for the learner.
- Spelling and grammar errors e.g., Americanised spelling and phrases.
- Inconsistent use of punctuation e.g., the irregular use of the semicolon or inconsistencies in the use of speech marks and inverted commas.
- Outdated or incorrect details.

To assist this all assignments are to be submitted using Turnitin where possible. The decision of when to use Turnitin rests with the course programme team. Decisions made may be reviewed as part of the internal College quality mechanisms. The Course team will use Turnitin and any other electronic checking device as appropriate (See section 9.5 for further guidance). All of the evidence must be considered and a professional judgement made by the Course Team.

The following guidance should be used in relation to submissions:

- Students should not include questions.
- Reference sections should be in quotation marks "…"
- Pearson students should submit work before the deadline so they can check and resolve issues (formative submissions can allow for this).
- Students should not submit work that contains text boxes; this work will be returned to the student, so the text boxes can be removed and resubmitted in the correct format.

Staff are advised to review any assignment where Turnitin shows:

- a similarity index of 25% and above, or
- where AI Writing is detected at 20% or above

Turnitin is only one part of the process and professional judgement will be used by staff as part of the process. This includes looking at the context of the work and how much of the work is student interpretation.

The Course Team will review any suspected incidents of Academic Misconduct. A decision to invoke a penalty can only be taken by the Course Team or Head of School depending on level of seriousness as outlined in Section 9.3.

The Course Co-Ordinator should retain the academic history of the student by completing the "Academic Malpractice" section of the Exam/ Progress Pre-Board Proforma and the College Plagiarism and Malpractice register accessed within the current year HE Folder on the QED Management Site.

9.5 Use of Turnitin to Assist in Establishing Academic Misconduct

To assist with the implementation of academic standards, Turnitin will be used as an evidence guide to highlight unacceptable practices.

9.5.1 Settings for Similarity Report

When setting the exclusions on Turnitin for submission of assignments, staff should exclude:

- 10 successive words
- Bibliography
- Anything in quotation marks which must be "…"

9.5.2 Requirements for AI Detection

- File size must be less than 100 MB
- File must have at least 300 words of prose text in a long-form writing format
- File must not exceed 30,000 words
- File must be written in English
- Accepted file types: .docx, .pdf, .txt, .rtf

9.6   Penalties of Academic Misconduct

The tables in section 9.6.1-9.6.4 summarise the penalties of Academic Misconduct depending upon the Awarding Body.   All elements of the penalties in each column should be implemented, dependent upon the and seriousness of the offence (Academic Misconduct on Gross Academic Misconduct).

The Student Disciplinary procedure is laid out in the Student and Trainee Performance, Behaviour and Disciplinary Management SOP which should be read in conjunction with the penalties below.

9.6.1 Penalties for Pearson Higher National programmes

1st Offence- Academic Misconduct	2nd Offence- Academic Misconduct	3rd Offence- Academic Misconduct/ 1st Offence- Gross Academic Misconduct	4th Offence- Academic Misconduct/ 2nd Offence- Gross Academic Misconduct	Plagiarism Detected after Graduation
Should be picked up at formative assessment stage and should be addressed by educating on referencing and seriousness of plagiarism and/ or misuse/ covert of AI.

Formative interview with Unit Co-ordinator and/or Programme Coordinator. | Work should be marked without plagiarised aspect or work produced through the misuse/ covert use of AI, contributing to the mark.

Work can be resubmitted if a 'pass' grade not achieved.

Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 1 (formal warning issued).

Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board. | Failure of the assessment.

Resubmission of full assessment with grade capped at a "pass".

Case referred to Head of Higher Education (HE).

Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 2 (formal warning issued).

Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board. | Failure of module.

Case referred to Head of Higher Education (HE).

Interview with Head of HE and course team representative.

Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 3 (final warning issued) or stage 4 (exclusion).

Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board. | The award may be revoked. |

9.6.2 Penalties for Ulster University Level 4 Certificate and Foundation Degree Programmes

1st Offence- Academic Misconduct	2nd Offence- Academic Misconduct	3rd Offence- Academic Misconduct/ 1st Offence- Gross Academic Misconduct	4th Offence- Academic Misconduct/ 2nd Offence- Gross Academic Misconduct	Plagiarism Detected after Graduation
Reduction in marks based on exclusion of plagiarised work or work produced through the misuse/ covert use of AI. Formative interview with module co-ordinator and/or Programme Coordinator.	Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism or through the misuse/ covert use of AI. Interview with Head of School and/or Course/Subject Director and/or lecturer. Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 1 (formal warning issued). Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board.	Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism or through the misuse/ covert use of AI. and maximum mark of 40% for coursework element[1]. Case referred to Head of Higher Education (HE). Interview with Head of HE and course team representative. Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 2 (formal warning issued). Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board.	Mark of zero for module. Case referred to Head of Higher Education (HE). Interview with Head of HE and course team representative. Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 3 (final warning issued) or stage 4 (exclusion). Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board.	The award may be revoked.

[1] 'Assignment containing plagiarism and/or misuse/ covert use of AI' means the assignment which contains the plagiarised material, and not all the assessments for the module. 'Maximum mark for coursework element' refers to the total aggregate percentage mark for all the pieces of coursework in the module.

9.6.3 Penalties for Queens University Belfast Foundation Degree Programmes

1st Offence- Academic Misconduct	2nd Offence- Academic Misconduct/ 1st Offence- Gross Academic Misconduct	3rd Offence- Academic Misconduct/ 2nd Offence- Gross Academic Misconduct	Plagiarism Detected after Graduation
Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism or through the misuse/ covert use of AI. Interview with Head of School and/or Course/Subject Director and/or lecturer. Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 1 (formal warning issued). Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board.	Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism or through the misuse/ covert use of AI. and maximum mark of 40% for coursework element[1]. Case referred to Head of Higher Education (HE). Interview with Head of HE and course team representative. Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 2 (formal warning issued). Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board.	Mark of zero for module. Case referred to Head of Higher Education (HE). Interview with Head of HE and course team representative. Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 3 (final warning issued) or stage 4 (exclusion). Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board.	The award may be revoked.

[1] 'Assignment containing plagiarism and/or misuse/ covert use of AI' means the assignment which contains the plagiarised material, and not all the assessments for the module. 'Maximum mark for coursework element' refers to the total aggregate percentage mark for all the pieces of coursework in the module.

9.6.4 Penalties for The Open University, CertHE, Foundation Degree or Degree Programmes (Numeric Mark Awarded)

1st Offence- Academic Misconduct	2nd Offence- Academic Misconduct	3rd Offence- Academic Misconduct/ 1st Offence- Gross Academic Misconduct	4th Offence- Academic Misconduct/ 2nd Offence- Gross Academic Misconduct	Plagiarism Detected after Graduation
Reduction in marks based on exclusion of plagiarised work or work produced through the misuse/ covert use of AI. Formative interview with module co-ordinator and/or Programme Coordinator.	Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism or through the misuse/ covert use of AI. Interview with Head of School and/or Course/Subject Director and/or lecturer. Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 1 (formal warning issued). Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board.	Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism or through the misuse/ covert use of AI. and maximum mark of 40% for coursework element[1]. Case referred to Head of Higher Education (HE). Interview with Head of HE and course team representative. Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 2 (formal warning issued). Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board.	Mark of zero for module. Case referred to Head of Higher Education (HE). Interview with Head of HE and course team representative. Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 3 (final warning issued) or stage 4 (exclusion). Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board.	The award may be revoked.

[1] 'Assignment containing plagiarism and/or misuse/ covert use of AI' means the assignment which contains the plagiarised material, and not all the assessments for the module. 'Maximum mark for coursework element' refers to the total aggregate percentage mark for all the pieces of coursework in the module.

9.6.5 Other Awarding Organisation- Penalties

The following policy and practices will be followed when dealing with Academic Misconduct for each Awarding Organisation.

Awarding Organisation	Policy and Practice Location:
Chartered Management Institute(CMI)	CMI Quality Assurance Handbook and CMI Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and CMI Quality Assurance Handbook available from: Policies - CMI (managers.org.uk)
Open College Network Northern Ireland (OCN NI)	Malpractice and Maladministration Policy available from the Centre Login* area of the OCN NI website, Available from: Quality Assurance	OCN NI. *Please note a Centre login is required to access the documents
Accounting Technicians Ireland (ATI)	ATI Student Code of Conduct and ATI Assessment Malpractice & Maladministration Policy available from: Policies	Accounting Technicians Ireland
Institute of Export (IoE)	Academic Misconduct Policy** available from: Log in to canvas (instructure.com)

	**Please note a Centre login is required to access the documents
Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)	Malpractice/ Maladministration Policy available from: [IMI Policies	Institute of The Motor Industry (theimi.org.uk)](#)
Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD)	Malpractice and Maladministration Policy available from: [Qualification policies	CIPD](#)
Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB)	CPCAB Malpractice and Maladministration Policy available from: [https://www.cpcab.co.uk/public_docs/malpractice_maladministration](#)
NCFE/ CACHE	JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures, Available from: [Mandatory policies and fees	NCFE](#)
City and Guilds	Assessment Malpractice available from: [Centre document library	City & Guilds (cityandguilds.com)](#)

Where Awarding Organisation Academic Misconduct policies and practices are provided, the Course Team will follow these. However in the absence of such guidance, the following College Penalties will be applied.

1st Offence- Academic Misconduct	2nd Offence- Academic Misconduct	3rd Offence- Academic Misconduct/ 1st Offence- Gross Academic Misconduct	4th Offence- Academic Misconduct/ 2nd Offence- Gross Academic Misconduct	Plagiarism Detected after Graduation
Reduction in marks based on exclusion of plagiarised work or work produced through the misuse/ covert use of AI. Formative interview with module co-ordinator and/or Programme Coordinator.	Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism or through the misuse/ covert use of AI. Interview with Head of School and/or Course/Subject Director and/or lecturer. Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 1 (formal warning issued). Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board.	Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism or through the misuse/ covert use of AI. Case referred to Head of Higher Education (HE). Interview with Head of HE and course team representative. Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 2 (formal warning issued). Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board.	Mark of zero for module. Case referred to Head of Higher Education (HE). Interview with Head of HE and course team representative. Application of student disciplinary procedure – stage 3 (final warning issued) or stage 4 (exclusion). Details recorded on the Academic Misconduct register and Exam Board.	The award may be revoked.

9.7 Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) Degree Programmes

The Course Team will follow procedures established by LJMU following the Academic Misconduct Policy linked below. All cases of suspected Academic Misconduct must be referred to the Course Director/Assistant Academic Registrar. If there is sufficient evidence to support the finding of a prima facie case of Academic Misconduct, the Course Director will initiate further investigation which may include an Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP).

The LJMU Academic Misconduct Policy is available from: [Academic Misconduct | Liverpool John Moores University (ljmu.ac.uk)](#)

9.8 Monitoring and Review

The Course Director will inform the Awarding Organisation as required and include as part of

the annual programme review processes and internal quality cycle.

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10.0 HE Academic Appeals Process

10.1 <u>Introduction</u>

This procedure has been informed by the advice and guidance within Concerns, Complaints and Appeals in the UK Quality Code, awarding organisation regulations and the office of the NI Public Services Ombudsman. It aims to improve the student experience by making appropriate and consistent judgements. The student will be guaranteed confidentiality and will not be disadvantaged for using the process. The College acknowledges that the process aids in developing the student experience.

10.2 <u>What this procedure covers</u>

This Appeals Procedure does not cover Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) programmes as this is not delegated to the College. Students working towards an award made by LJMU should use the University's own appeal process which is available at: <u>Guidance Policy and Process | Liverpool John Moores University (ljmu.ac.uk)</u>

All other awarding organisations fall under these regulations which cover all Higher Education students or those on a leave of absence.

An Academic Appeal is a request within the grounds itemised below to review decisions made by the Higher Education Assessment and Examination Board on progression, assessment and awards. An Academic Appeal can only be made after an Examination Board has sat and you have been advised of your marks/grades.

An Academic Appeal differs from a complaint and therefore appeals and complaints are considered under different processes. A complaint is defined as a formal expression of dissatisfaction made by either a student or group of students about the provision of their programme of study, related academic service or facility, or any other service provision provided by the College. Details of the Complaints and Compliments Policy can be found at the link <u>Complaints and Compliments Policy</u> at <u>www.serc.ac.uk.</u> Should an issue fall under more than one process the College will work flexibly to maintain the rights of the student.

The Academic Appeals Procedure embodies the principles of natural justice, fairness, confidentiality, equity, objectivity and equality of opportunity. Students will be informed about the process in the student handbook, on the Higher Education SOP and policy page on the intranet and as part of induction and tutorial processes.

10.3 <u>Grounds for Academic Appeal</u>

The purpose of this procedure is to establish the facts and come to a reasonable and just resolution, which is timely, relevant, and proportionate. The grounds on which an Academic Appeal will be considered are:

1. That the Higher Education Examination and Progress Board was unaware of new information about an extenuating circumstance which might have affected their decision concerning an individual student.

    <u>Evidence:</u> Written medical evidence or evidence of compassionate circumstances, which were relevant to your performance, must be provided as part of the appeal.

Note: Evidence of ill health must be authenticated by a medical certificate from a doctor or appropriate documentation from a registered counsellor - self-certification is not acceptable.

2. That there was a procedural or other irregularity. That the procedures were not used properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.

   Evidence: An example of a procedural irregularity could be a change to submission dates not notified to students in advance or the internal verification processes were not implemented. A full explanation and documentation to support the appeal must be included.

An Academic Appeal will only be considered where there is deemed to be evidence to support one of the above grounds for appeal.

Disagreement with the academic judgement of a Board of Examiners cannot constitute grounds for an appeal.

The Appeals Panel will not consider an appeal if it is deemed to be vexatious or frivolous, if the forms have not been completed, or if supporting evidence has not been supplied.

10.4 Procedure for Academic Appeals

10.4.1 Stage 1 – Informal

Academic Appeals should be addressed to the Senior Customer Services Officer (SCSO) of the College using the Academic Appeals proforma (Appendix 9/10) within 10 working days (Ulster University programmes– 7 working days)* of the student being notified in writing of the decision they wish to appeal. Submissions can be emailed to academicappeals@serc.ac.uk or handed in to any main campus reception area.

Working days are those days on which the College is open. Weekends, statutory days, Bank Holidays and other College closures are classed as 'non-working' days.

It is the responsibility of the appellant to state clearly the grounds for their appeal and to produce evidence in support of either extenuating circumstances or procedural irregularities. The appeal will be rejected if:

(i)   There are no grounds for an appeal
(ii)   The student has failed to substantially complete the form
(iii)   The appeal is received outside the submission timeframe.

The SCSO will forward the appeal to the Head of School who will determine if the appeal is valid i.e., meets one of the conditions of Grounds for Appeal.

The Head of School or nominated Deputy Head of School will meet (in person, by phone or email) with the student to try to resolve or provide support. This meeting should occur within 5 working days following receipt of the appeal. A student can bring someone to support them but there is no right to have legal representation. As a consequence of this meeting one of the following outcomes should be agreed;

(i)   The student is content not to continue with their appeal
(ii)   The student should proceed to the formal appeal stage

Students will in all cases be informed of the outcome of the informal stage in writing by the Head of School or nominated Deputy Head of School. Any student wishing to proceed to Stage 2 should inform the Senior Customer Services Officer in writing or by email to academicappeals@serc.ac.uk within 5 days of receiving the outcome letter of Stage 1.

10.4.2 Stage 2 – Formal

Where a student wishes to continue with their appeal the SCSO will notify the Head of Higher Education (QED) who will convene an Appeal Panel to hear the formal stage of the appeal. The Panel will be convened within a maximum of 10 working days of receipt of a request by the student to continue the process. The College will try to convene a panel as swiftly as possible to expedite necessary actions, to ensure that the student is not disadvantaged.

To ensure independence and fairness, the Chair of the Appeals Panel and members must not have been party to any preceding decision that may have initiated the appeal. The Panel should be made up of at least two members of staff who have not been involved previously, one of whom must be a Director, Chief Officer/Deputy Chief Officer Quality Excellence and Development, or Head of School. (see Terms of Reference).

Students have a right to be accompanied. Any person accompanying a student is present to support a student and as such should not contribute to the meeting unless at the behest of the student and only when invited to do so by the Chair. There is no right for a student to have legal representation at an Academic Appeals Panel. Each party will be given an equal opportunity to present their case.

If the student does not attend the Academic Appeals Panel, the Panel may continue to consider the appeal in the student's absence. The Panel may, if it wishes, adjourn the meeting if reasonable grounds for non-attendance have been provided (e.g. sickness absence). The outcome of the appeal may be:

  i.   To uphold the appeal based on the evidence presented
  ii.   To partially uphold the appeal based on the evidence presented
  iii. To dismiss the appeal

The Chair of the Appeals Panel will notify the student of the outcome in writing within 5 days of hearing the appeal. Copies of the outcome will be returned to the Senior Customer Services Officer via email to academicappeals@serc.ac.uk.

If the appeal is upheld or partially upheld the issue is referred back to the Board of Examinations to amend the record of the student accordingly in line with Awarding Organisation regulations.

Academic Appeals forms and guidance can be found in the Academic Appeals Process section of the SERC website.

10.5 Appeals to Awarding Organisation or the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

If all internal procedures have been exhausted and the student remains dissatisfied they have the right to refer the appeal to the Awarding Organisation and then to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman. Further information about these processes can be found at www.nipso.org.uk

10.6 **Terms of Reference Academic Appeals Panel**

Membership	Director of Curriculum and Information Services Director of Strategic Planning, Quality and Support Chief Officer/Deputy Chief Officer Quality Excellence and Development Head of Higher Education Heads of School Deputy Heads of School Student Representative
Chair	A Director, Chief Officer/Deputy Chief Officer Quality, Excellence and Development, Head of HE or Head of School may Chair
Conflict of Interest	No member may sit on the Appeals Panel if they have been associated with the original decision
Quorum	A minimum of two members
Frequency	As required
Purpose	To implement the Academic Appeals Procedure and to ensure fairness and reliability of all judgements of formal decisions relating to the outcomes of College assessments and to, where appropriate, make recommendations of remedial action. The Academic Appeals Panel will be responsible to the College Management Team and report to the Higher Education Review Board.
Terms of Reference	1) To implement the College Academic Appeals procedure to provide an opportunity for any individual student to appeal against an academic decision within the stated grounds. 2) To make decisions using the Academic Appeals procedure. 3) To provide information on trends and outcomes to the College Management Team and the Higher Education Review Board as appropriate.

Appeals will be reviewed as part of the annual monitoring processes and quality improvement cycle.

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11.0 Periodic Review Process

11.1 <u>What this procedure covers</u>

SERC has developed a process of Periodic Review to allow the College to maintain:

- ▪ The coherence and relevance of its portfolio of taught programmes
- ▪ Academic standards and student achievement
- ▪ The quality of the student learning experience
- ▪ Opportunities for enhancement.

The process supplements the annual self-evaluation and quality improvement cycle by providing a holistic overview of existing provision (every three years) and an approval process for new programmes. It assists SERC to meet the expectations for standards and quality as defined within the Quality Code:

Expectations for Standards:

i.   *The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.*

ii. *The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.*

Expectations for Quality:

i.   *Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.*

ii. *From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.*

QAA UK Quality Code 2018

11.2 <u>Scope</u>

The scope of the process is for Level 4 and Level 5 programmes not awarded or validated by a university. The process of Periodic Review therefore focuses on:

A. Academic Standards:
- To confirm that the academic standards in the subjects under review are set and maintained at the appropriate level.
- To confirm that programmes remain current, relevant and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline, and practice in its application.

B. Student Learning Opportunities:
- To confirm that appropriate opportunities and support for learning are being made available to students.

C. Learning and Teaching Provision:
- To identify innovation and good practice and opportunities for further enhancement

11.3 Process

1. A schedule of periodic review will be issued annually by Quality Excellence and Development (QED).

2. Programme teams will complete documentation in Annex one prior to the Periodic Review meeting. The review documentation should be submitted to QED one week prior to the meeting. The review documentation will be used as a basis for professional discussion at the review meeting.

3. The programme team attending the review should include programme co-ordinator, Deputy Head of School and representatives from the programme team. A student representative should be invited to attend.

4. The panel will consist of a member of QED and/or a Head of School, and a student representative where possible.

5. The panel will be guided by the aide memoire at Annex two.

6. The recommendations of the review will be reported to the Higher Education Review Board (HERB) and CMT who will action outcomes.

7. Any resulting outcomes will be monitored by QED and reported to HERB.

8. The Periodic Review process will be audited by the Compliance unit every three years.

Annex one

New programme and periodic review of programme teams

Title of Programme to be offered, location and mode of delivery:
Name of Managing DHOS: **Name of proposed Course Co-ordinator:**
Academic Standards including meeting FHEQ levels 4 and 5 and ensuring currency, use of subject benchmarks
Rationale for programme including engagement with industry, proposed learning, teaching and assessment methods:
Programme content – units by year:

List of Staff stating highest qualification, appropriate vocational or industrial experience

Staff Name	Unit	Highest qualification/vocational or industrial experience

Physical resources required:

Details of review by LRC of text requirements:

Please detail any additional resources to be purchased:

Entry requirements and admission process to be used:

Comment on input by students on programme design:

Draft Programme specification attached: Yes/No

Signed: DHOS	Date:
Agreed by HOS	Date:
Signature Head of Panel	Date:

Periodic review of established programme

Title of Programme to be offered, location and mode of delivery:

Name of Managing DHOS:
Name of proposed Course Co-ordinator:
Academic Standards including meeting FHEQ levels 4 and 5 and ensuring currency. Use of Subject Benchmarks
Rationale for programme including engagement with industry, proposed learning, teaching and assessment methods:
Programme content – units by year:

List of Staff stating highest qualification, appropriate vocational or industrial experience

Staff Name	Unit	Highest qualification/vocational or industrial experience

Rationale for units delivered and outline of future developments:
Entry requirements and admission process to be used:
Comment on input by students on programme design:
Programme specification attached: Yes/No

Signed: DHOS	**Date:**
Agreed by HOS	**Date:**
Signed: Head of Review Panel	**Date:**

Annex two - Panel aide memoire

Curriculum Content

- To what extent do the programmes within the review remain current or are relevant and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline?

  Consideration should be given to:

  o Process of review of curriculum, input from students, employers and professional bodies. Are more needed? Evidence for effectiveness of changes e.g. re recruitment, student achievement / employment?

  o Changes to subject benchmarks, relevant professional or statutory body requirements; how these are changing / are being responded to and alignment with the FHEQ

  o Current research and practice in the application of knowledge in the relevant discipline(s), technological advances, and developments in teaching and learning particularly project based learning

  o Future developments, future markets, market research, possible new programme planning proposals (although we are not undertaking approvals at this stage)

Assessment

- How effective are the assessment methods?

Student Learning Experience

- What are the views of students on their programmes, and how have they been responded to?

- How effective are the student feedback mechanisms?

- What is the impact of personal tutorials on student achievement?

- What use has been or will be made of WBL / Placements?

- Involvement of employers (employability)

- How is the provision responding to SERC policies, strategies and developments in Teaching Learning and enhancing student experience?

- What involvement have the students and team had with the Student Engagement SOP?

Staffing

- Are the staffing arrangements still sufficient/ sufficient for the changes anticipated in programme design/ delivery?

Learning resources

- Are these sufficient/ fit for purpose? Include specialist facilities, equipment, library stock, computing; student portal; consider planned changes to delivery/ learning / assessment and their impact on future resources.

- What is the team approach to Research Informed Teaching

- Staff Development

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12.0 Student Engagement Process

12.1 <u>Background</u>

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to define the steps taken by SERC to involve students in the process of shaping their learning experience in their journey towards becoming autonomous, independent learners.

SERC is committed to working with all students, either as individuals and/or as groups, to help them develop the skills and confidence to be actively involved in the organisation of their own learning and student experience, regardless of their mode of study, age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexuality or transgender status. SERC seeks opportunities to develop trust with students through creating a clear structure to exchange views built on mutual respect.

12.2 <u>Scope</u>

The definition of student engagement is informed by the expectation within The Quality Code, Student Engagement:

i. *The participation of students in influencing and improving their educational experience. This is related to the participation of students in quality assurance and enhancement processes, which includes, but is not restricted to, representation of the student view though formal representation mechanisms.*

ii. *Students engaging in their own learning as active partners in the learning process. This involves improving the motivation and investment of students to engage in learning and to learn independently.*

QAA Student Engagement 2018

The scope includes all students and staff to encourage progression in independence in learning, preparation for further learning and employment, and develop widening access to higher education. Students are encouraged to influence the education journey including:

- Application and admission
- Induction and progression, programme and curriculum design, delivery and organisation
- Learning and teaching
- Assessment and feedback
- Learning resources
- Student support and guidance
- Other areas identified by the student body

12.3 <u>Key Steps to Develop Student Engagement</u>

SERC provides the following structures for students to contribute as partners to quality assurance and influence educational enhancement.
  A. College Student Representation Systems:
  1. Class Representatives.

All classes will elect a class representative. Class Representatives will be supported in their role by the Students' Union. Class Representatives will be invited by the Students' Union to three cross-college meetings per year to raise issues of concern and discuss common areas of development. Issues raised and actions will be tracked through SU systems and discussed as part of the HERB agenda. Progress against actions will be published on the Class Rep Teams Page and as a standing item at Class Rep Meetings.

2. Students' Union Higher Education Officers.

The Students Union will seek nominations for Higher Education Officer positions across all SERC Campuses as part of the annual election cycle. Elected Officers will have a role descriptor included in the SU Constitution. Elected candidates will hold office for one academic year. HE Officers will be invited to attend Class Rep meetings and engage in raising HE issues throughout the year including, representing student interests to NUS-USI. HE Officers will be invited to attend HERB and other formal committees at SERC to represent HE student interests.

B. **Programme Staff Student Consultations –** programme teams will consult with students in areas including awarding organisation and external examiner reports, survey results and areas of concern/development. Teams will seek the input of students when completing the annual self-evaluation reports and quality improvement plans.

C. **Programme Development –** in addition to involvement with annual self-evaluation and review a student representative will be invited to participate in the schedule of periodic review.

D. **Surveys and Feedback** – an annual cross-college survey and online HE module survey will be held. Additional surveys and student focus groups may be held to consider particular areas of concern.

E. **Formal Committees and Working Groups** - Students work with SERC through formal committees to help shape direction of their learning and contribute toward quality and governance**.** A student governor is appointed annually and sits on the Governing Body and the Education Committee. The College HE representative will be invited to attend the Higher Education Review Board, HE Co-ordinator meetings for relevant items and the Equality Working Group. Class representatives will be invited to attend Programme Team meetings for relevant items.

F. **Achievement will be recognised and personal feedback provided** through the annual graduation ceremony with additional individual HR achievement awards and the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR).

G. **Students will engage in developing their own learning** through the use of work-based and project-based learning and tailored tutor interventions to support student need.

Step	Who	Timing	Activities
1. College Student Representation Systems	Students' Union	Sept., Nov., Feb., April	Elect Class Reps., Elect Higher Education Officers. Cross-College meetings
2. Programme Staff Student Consultations	Programme Teams	Nov., Feb.,	Staff-Student Consultations
3. Programme Development	QED	Oct., March	Periodic Review
4. Surveys and Feedback	QED, Programme Teams	January, March, April	Annual Survey, Module Reviews
5. Formal Committees and Working Groups	Students' Union	May	Student Governor Elections
	QED	Oct., Jan., May	HERB Meeting

	HR	Twice per year	Equality Working Group
	Programme Teams	Twice per year	Programme Team Meeting
6. Achievement will be recognised and personal feedback provided	Marketing	Sept.	HE Graduation
	Programme Teams	January, June	HEAR
7. Students will engage in developing their own learning	QED	Sept., Nov., Jan., Mar., Jun.	Student Case Conferences
	Programme Teams	Sept, Jan., May	Enterprise Induction, CAST/ CAPS, BEST Awards, PBL

12.4 Monitoring and Review

The Higher Education Review Board will monitor the effectiveness of the Student Engagement SOP to ensure that all Higher Education students are supported and informed to provide feedback that is instrumental in the quality processes and contributes to the development of educational enhancement.

The outcomes of the key steps will inform the Whole College Self-Evaluation and Review and the resulting Whole College Quality Improvement Plan which will be monitored by the Education Committee of the Governing Body.

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13.0 Communication Plan

These procedures will be communicated to all staff and students via the intranet and reference given in the HE Student Handbook and programme documentation.

Relevant academic staff will be updated through regular staff training at team and College events.

14.0 Review

These procedures will be reviewed (and updated if necessary) annually or sooner to reflect changes in legislation or circumstance.

The College will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of this SOP.

The College will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote this SOP effectively and is committed to reviewing this SOP on a regular basis, in consultation with the recognised trade unions, statutory organisations such as the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and in line with models of good practice.

Appendix 1: Document Change History

Version	Date	Change Detail
1.0	Oct 2020	Reviewed
1.1	Nov 2021	Update to Roles/ Update to Pearson Paperwork/ Update to LJMU information
1.2	Dec 2021	Section 4 Amendment to Revised Quality Code reference/ Appendix 6 Pre Progress/Exam Board Proforma
1.3	May 2022	Section 8 Accreditation of Prior Learning in HE updated to link to new SOP. Subsequent Appendix removed.
1.4	June 2023	Section 10.4.1-UU Appeals timescale added Section 11- Annex 1- Removal of HERB Chair signature from Periodic Review Forms.
1.5	Aug 2023	• Transferred to new Accessibility Template • Update to reflect AO requirements • Removal of legacy templates • Links provided to new HE@SERC- Coordinators Toolkit • Updates to Section 7: Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practise (UU Programmes)- Alignment to UU Policy • Update of Section 9: Academic Misconduct section to include Artificial Intelligence and Awarding Body updates • Updates to LJMU Policies • Updates to Student Engagement key steps
1.6	Aug 2024	• Reviewed and changes reflected to Turnitin from July 2024 updates

Appendix 2: Programme/Course Handbook Template

Care should be taken to ensure that the handbooks have a 'professional' feel. The standards set will convey expectations to students. Where content is cut and pasted from awarding organisation specifications care should be taken to ensure that one font is used. The suggested font is Arial 12pt. A template for the handbook can be found on the HE@SERC- Coordinators Toolkit available on the Staff Intranet.

Programme/Course Handbook Template
Suggested Contents   • Programme/ Course Title   • Welcome   • Staff Contacts (Programme and Support)   • Programme Information   • Programme Specifications   • External Examiner Information   • Assessment Information   • Academic Calendar   • Work Placement Information (if applicable)   • Opportunities for Study Abroad (if applicable)   • Dissertation and Projects (if applicable)   • Any other Programme Information which the team would like to include which complements the HE College Handbook

Appendix 3: Unit/Module Handbook Template

Care should be taken to ensure that the handbooks have a 'professional' feel. The standards set will convey expectations to students. Where content is cut and pasted from awarding organisation specifications care should be taken to ensure that one font is used. The suggested font is Arial 12pt. A template for the handbook can be found on the HE@SERC- Coordinators Toolkit available on the Staff Intranet.

Module Handbook Template
Cover Page   • Exact title of final award (as is on transcript and certificate) and name of awarding organisation   • Name and Number of Module/Unit   • Module/ Unit Lecturers and contact email   • Date of issue of handbook
Module Overview   • Aim and Unit abstract should be taken from the awarding organisation specifications but should be shaped to student requirements.
Learning Outcomes and Content   • These must be taken directly from the awarding organisation specification and the content **must not be altered**
Learning and Teaching Strategies   • Summarise the main strategies that will be used to develop student learning. They should reflect the strategies outlined within the programme specifications.
Session Plan   • A week by week guide outlining the topics and activities that will be undertaken to meet the learning outcomes and content specified by the awarding organisation
Assessment   • A summary of the assessments that will be required to complete the unit. The summary will give an indication of approach and purpose.   • Copies of assessments if appropriate.
Reading List   • List of sources applicable to the learning outcomes and content. This should including journals and e-resources. The list should be reviewed annually preferably in consultation with the LRCs.

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