BUCKINGHAMSHIRE NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891

PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES (PSRBS)

Engaging with PSRBs and maintaining quality assurance

Contents

This document has been designed to be accessible for readers. However, should you require the document in an alternative format please contact the Academic Registry.

Introduction

1   The University considers engagement with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) to be an important aspect of academic standards and instrumental in the development of programmes that are 'professionally current', meet the needs of business and the professions, and boost graduates' opportunities for gaining employment in the relevant sector.

2   Accreditation or approval by a PSRB often represents a 'kite mark' which demonstrates attainment of a particular standard and is highly prized by higher education institutions. Accordingly, the University encourages Schools to seek and maintain professional accreditation or recognition for all programmes of study which qualify for such recognition.

3   In some cases, accreditation of a particular programme is a statutory or regulatory requirement for an award in that subject area (i.e. that the programme cannot run unless it is accredited); in others it is optional, although increasingly students will expect to see a programme is accredited or otherwise professionally recognised.

4   The range of PSRBs is extensive and the particular processes and arrangements for accreditation and related activities will vary between both subject areas and between the professional bodies themselves.

Purpose

5   This document is intended to specify the general principles relating to the ways in which the University engages with PSRBs and maintains oversight of activity across the institution – ensuring as far as is possible a consistent approach.

6   It also details the procedures in place to support PSRB engagement in its range of quality assurance activities; however, due to the varying arrangements for individual PSRBs it cannot be prescriptive. As a general principle, the University would expect its processes to be flexible in relation to professional body requirements.

Definitions

7   **Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB)** is a general term used to refer to an external body that sets and monitors the standards and / or rules governing entrance to a profession and / or membership of that organisation.

8   There is no standard glossary of types of accreditation, approval or other form of recognition of a programme by a PSRB, although the following are typical and are recognised by the University:

   a   **Registration or other professional status** for graduates of the programme, enabling them to practice their subject professionally;
   b   **Exemption** for graduates from all or parts of further professional examination requirements;
   c   **Membership** for graduates of the same or related professional body or society;

d **Formal recognition** of the programme, but which does not offer further professional status, exemption from examination, or membership.

9 Criteria for gaining PSRB accreditation or recognition of whatever type will again vary between bodies; detailed criteria will generally be available directly from the particular PSRB itself.

Procedures

10 Engagement with PSRBs generally falls under the following categories which are linked to the University's regulatory framework:

a Programme approval
b Programme amendment
c Student conduct / Upholding professional standards
d Monitoring and review
e Collaborative provision

11 This section offers guidance on how Schools are expected to engage with processes where a PSRB is involved.

Programme approval

12 The programme approval process should take account of PSRB requirements. This may require:

- Earlier deadlines for paperwork to be submitted, sometimes up to eight weeks ahead of the approval event;
- Additional documentation to be provided, including mapping to demonstrate how the programme meets PSRB requirements, additional contextual information, and other regulatory documents e.g. the *Fitness to Practise* procedure (see below);
- Attendance by PSRB representatives at a specially convened approval panel event. Typically such events will be longer than a standard approval meeting - up to two days in some cases – and will include a tour of facilities and additional meetings with some or all of the following:

  o academic and placement staff;
  o student representatives;
  o lay representatives (e.g. carers), and
  o senior members of staff.

- Separate approval by PSRB representatives *in addition to* a judgement reached by the University panel itself.

13 The programme may also need to account for particular framework requirements which contravene the University's normal qualifications framework, including e.g. credit requirements not normally permissible, and changes to the length of a particular programme (e.g. the structure of the academic year itself).

14   It may be necessary to incorporate additional requirements for assessment on the programme. Changes may include:

- inclusion of specific assessment types (e.g. use of exams outside normal University expectations);
- restrictions / prohibition of the use of compensation;
- the requirement for all elements of a module to be passed (rather than standard achievement of a weighted average of 40%);
- restrictions on the number of times work can be submitted for reassessment; and
- changes to the standard pass mark of 40%.

15   All PSRB requirements for the assessment of students which are additional or different to the University's standard assessment regulations must be specified in the Programme Specification and / or Module Descriptor(s) as appropriate.

16   In rare, specific instances there may be a requirement for additional regulations to meet PSRB requirements, which need to be developed and agreed alongside the programme. A record of all additional regulations will be maintained by the Academic Registry and published as either an appendix to the University's existing assessment regulations or as a separate document (at the discretion of the Academic Registry).

17   In all cases, programme teams will be expected to provide relevant PSRB documentation (i.e. those documents which specify the changes required) to Academic Registry for further discussion as part of the curriculum development process, i.e. prior to programme documentation being presented for approval.

Programme amendment

18   Similarly, there may be a need to include PSRB approval when proposing and making amendments to an accredited programme.

19   It will be expected that the University's internal quality assurance mechanisms will be completed prior to submitting changes to an external body. This will ensure that documentation is of a sufficient standard to satisfy external scrutiny.

20   All changes to an accredited programme agreed internally will be provisional, pending PSRB approval of the change; no change will be made to a programme by Academic Registry until written approval by the PSRB of the change has been received.

Student conduct / Upholding professional standards

21   A number of PSRB-accredited programmes, especially those that lead to professional registration, require that the University has processes in place to ensure that students are fit to practise both during the programme and on registration. This is commonly termed 'fitness to practise'.

22   The *Fitness to Practise* (FtP) procedure sets out the University's policy and procedures in relation to such programmes and in particular where a student's fitness to practise is called in to question.

23   A register of programmes that are susceptible to FtP is maintained by the Academic Registry and appended to the FtP procedure itself. Programmes where FtP will apply are identified during the approval process and will be highlighted in the Programme Specification.

24 Where this will apply to the programme presented for accreditation, PSRBs will normally expect to be provided with a copy of the FtP procedure as part of the approval process. See above.

Monitoring and review

25 Schools should ensure that monitoring and review processes, including both annual monitoring and periodic review, take account of PSRB requirements, including requirements to submit reports to the PSRB and / or submit data returns. It is expected that relevant PSRB reports will be considered as part of the evidence base that informs discussion at relevant monitoring and review meetings, e.g. School Annual Monitoring Meetings (SAMMs).

Collaborative Provision

26 Programmes offered in partnership with another higher education provider will not necessarily be offered as accredited; this will vary depending on the PSRB itself and the type of accreditation offered.

27 Accordingly, a separate accreditation approval event may be required for a partner provider wishing to offer an existing accredited programme (i.e. a franchise). This is particularly required where there is a need to confirm that the levels of staffing and physical resources at the partner meet the PSRB's requirements.

28 Partners should <u>not</u> assume that accreditation will automatically be extended to any franchise agreement and should ensure that applicants are aware of this limitation.

Responsibilities

29 Subject / programme teams, Schools and the wider University have different levels of responsibility in relation to engagement with and quality assurance of PSRB activity.

Subject / programme team

30 The subject / programme team is responsible for direct liaison with the PSRB. This includes:

- day to day liaison, including familiarity with the PSRB's requirements for quality assurance, resourcing and other activities;
- setting up visits, in liaison with Academic Registry, as required for accreditation and monitoring purposes;
- responding to reports and preparing action plans as appropriate;
- monitoring of the programme post-accreditation as per the particular requirements of the PSRB;
- contacting the PSRB with regards to advice on or to notify them of intended changes to the accredited programme and the resulting implications.

School

31 The Head of School is responsible for maintaining an overview of the School's range of PSRB activities. Heads of Schools are encouraged to appoint a lead co-ordinator to oversee all activity with PSRBs with which the School engages.

32 Through the lead co-ordinator (or via the Head / Associate Head of School where no lead co-ordinator is identified), the School will:

- Check all documentation prior to submission to the PSRB ensuring that it meets the standards and regulatory requirements of the University;
- Liaise with Academic Registry regarding PSRB activity;
- Forward copies of PSRB reports to Academic Registry for presentation to Education Committee;
- Notify Academic Registry of any new accreditation arrangements or changes to existing accreditation arrangements as they may arise;
- On an annual basis liaise with the Academic Registry to update the PSRB Register of accreditation.

Education Committee / Academic Registry

33 On behalf of the Senate of the University, and to protect and safeguard the University's reputation, the Education Committee is responsible and accountable for overseeing all PSRB activity within the University.

34 Day to day management of PSRB activity will be undertaken by the Academic Registry who will report regularly to the Education Committee.

35 Academic Registry will:

- Maintain a Register of accreditation recording all PSRB activity as notified by Schools;
- Routinely check information for accuracy as it relates to marketing of PSRB activity;
- Maintain the accuracy of accreditation information as reported to HESA via Unistats and related statutory returns;
- Provide advice and guidance on quality assurance activities as may apply to PSRB activity, including where the University's procedures may need to vary to account for PSRB requirements;
- Attend and / or support PSRB accreditation events, advising on University regulations and procedures as necessary;
- Receive PSRB reports and action plans (and other relevant correspondence) as prepared by Schools for presentation to the Education Committee for approval;
- Provide annual updates on PSRB activity (including presentation of the most recent Register of Accreditations) to the Education Committee via the University's *Annual Monitoring* process;
- Confirm any students for formal Registration with the PSRB on successful completion of the programme as appropriate.

Register of accreditation

36 Academic Registry maintains an institutional record of all programmes of study accredited or otherwise recognised by PSRBs (the 'Register of Accreditations').

37 The Register of Accreditations identifies:

- the details of the body / bodies by which a programme is accredited or recognised;

- the type of accreditation;
- the Bucks contact responsible for liaising with the body;
- the approval period itself;
- the date of the most recent review;
- other relevant material as required for note.

38   The Register will be presented annually to Education Committee for review, alongside a report summarising programmes where accreditation is scheduled to lapse in the forthcoming year, details of upcoming reviews, and a record of activities and review outcomes undertaken during the previous academic year.