



## Teaching Quality Handbook

### Part 4

# Programmes and Modules

(June 2017)

**Part 4 outlines the documentation, structure and management requirements for programmes and modules and provides examples of templates for their completion.**

#### Version Control

Version	Created by	Date approved by Academic Board	Summary of changes
June 2017	Asst Registrar QAE	17/07/2017	Changes to reflect organisational restructuring

## Part 4: Programmes and Modules

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 All RAU academic programmes comprise a related group of modules, each with its own outcomes and assessment methods, which together lead to the full academic award.
- 1.2 Information on each academic programme is provided within a Programme Specification that includes a description of the award, the modular structure and intended learning outcomes as detailed in section 2 below.
- 1.3 Details of programme management roles and responsibilities, together with requirements for annual programme review are provided in section 3 below.
- 1.4 Procedures for programme modification are outlined in section 3.8 below and for module changes in section 4.6 below.
- 1.5 Guidance on the RAU modular structure, section 4.2, outlines a framework for all modules to ensure consistency of approach and equality of both outcomes and student workload at each academic level.
- 1.6 Outline module information is provided on a Module Reference Sheet as described in section 4.3 below, which sets out the basic details of content, outcomes and outline assessment requirements for general student information.
- 1.7 More detailed module content, lecture programme and assessment requirements is then provided in a Module Handbook as described in section 4.5. below.

## 2. Programmes

- 2.1. A programme is defined as an integrated mix of modules, which together combine to produce an overall set of specified learning outcomes leading to a prescribed academic award. Programmes or pathways are determined by at least one unique programme outcome and a minimum 25% difference from other University provision in the taught modules, whether core or elective, excluding placement and dissertation or research-based project modules, in the years that count towards the final award (except where PSRB requirements demand otherwise).
- 2.2. Programme awards are made at one of four levels, corresponding to Certificate, Intermediate, Honours and Masters level awards as defined by the QAA [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA 2008).
- 2.3. All full-time undergraduate programmes require the completion of 120 credits of study in each 30-week academic year at each of three academic levels, corresponding to Level 4/Certificate; Level 5/Diploma and Level 6/Honours of the QAA framework. These credits are achieved through the successful completion of modules, amounting to 1200 hours of total study time per year.
- 2.4. All full-time postgraduate programmes require the completion of 120 credits achieved by the completion of taught modules, of which at least 90 credits must be at level 7/Masters level as defined in the QAA framework, followed by a further 60 level 7/Masters credits achieved by the completion of a dissertation.
- 2.5. Full details of the RAU credit framework for awards are given in Part 7 of the Teaching Quality Handbook.
- 2.6. All RAU programmes are defined in a Programme Specification. This provides a concise description of the intended learning outcomes from an integrated period of study in higher education, and the means by which these learning outcomes are achieved and demonstrated.
- 2.7. RAU Programme Specifications are produced with reference to the QAA Guidelines for Preparing Programme Specifications contained within the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Chapter A3 The Programme Level](#).
- 2.8. RAU Programme Specifications require information on the following:
  - (i) Name of the awarding institution.
  - (ii) Name of the teaching institution.
  - (iii) Full title of the final award(s) available.
  - (iv) The UCAS codes for the programme (where appropriate).
  - (v) Details of the appropriate QAA subject benchmark statement(s).
  - (vi) Details of accreditation by a professional / statutory body.

- (vii) Mode and language of study.
- (viii) Date the Specification was initially approved and updated.
- (ix) Educational aims of the programme.
- (x) Intended learning outcomes, including knowledge, understanding and intellectual, practical and transferable skills.
- (xi) Programme structure, including the full modular pathway.
- (xii) Details of the teaching, learning and assessment strategy, including links to relevant marking guides and assessment regulations.
- (xiii) Details of student support services available.
- (xiv) Admissions and entry criteria.
- (xv) Module Reference Sheets.
- (xvi) A curriculum map identifying how programme outcomes are developed through the modular structure.

A template for RAU Programme Specifications is available from the [Template Centre](#).

- 2.9. All RAU Programme Specifications are reviewed by the Validation and Review Panel at validation and revalidation, and approved by the AQSC following recommendation from the Validation and Review Panel. Any major amendment to the document, other than approved changes to modules, following validation or revalidation must be approved by the AQSC prior to implementation. For details of validation and review requirements, please see Part 3a of this Handbook for internal programmes and Part 3b for collaborative provision.
- 2.10. Interim programme changes require the following documents to be submitted to the AQSC for consideration:
- (i) A proposal for major change(s) to a module(s). A template for this proposal is available from the [Template Centre](#).
  - (ii) A detailed rationale for the change(s).
  - (iii) A revised Programme Specification (as appropriate), Module Reference Sheet(s) and Module Handbook(s), showing tracked changes.
  - (iv) Signed, supporting statements from the Centre Head to which the module belongs and the Programme Manager(s).
  - (v) Evidence of consultation with the External Examiner(s) for major changes to underpinning knowledge and/or learning outcomes across all modules, and to assessment(s) that contribute to the final award (whether core or elective).
  - (vi) Evidence of consultation with, and notification of, students registered on the programme if affected by the proposed change(s).
- 2.11. Up to one third of a programme's core modules, over the period of validation, can be changed through AQSC approval before an early revalidation is triggered. These include major changes within core modules and changes of core modules comprising a programme (see also section 3.9 below). However, in the academic year immediately

following (re)validation no more than 10% of a programme's core modules can be changed through AQSC approval.

### **3. Programme Management**

#### **Introduction**

- 3.1. The Centre Head responsible for a particular programme will appoint a Manager for each programme of study, who should normally be an experienced member of academic staff and may teach modules or part modules or may have specific expertise in the disciplines relevant to the programme.
- 3.2. Where a programme of study covers more than one academic year, Year Manager(s) will normally be appointed for each year of study in addition to the Programme Manager. Such appointments will be made by the Head of Centre in which the programme is offered, and will be subject to annual review.
- 3.3. A Programme Committee, comprising the Programme Manager, Year Managers where appropriate, the Centre Head, relevant teaching staff and elected student representatives from each cohort year, have responsibility for monitoring delivery of the programme of study during the academic year.
- 3.4. Visiting lecturers, guest speakers and consultants who are not considered RAU employees, and collaborative provision staff who are not listed within an MoA/signed agreement, and staff not employed on academic contracts, are prohibited from assuming the role of Programme Manager or Module Leader for any RAU approved provision.

#### **3.5. Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **3.5.1. Programme Managers**

The responsibilities of a Programme Manager are to:

- (i) Convene the meetings of the Programme Committee.
- (ii) Coordinate teaching input and agree timetable arrangements in each year of the programme.
- (iii) Be responsible for producing the Programme Specification and the programme documents as approved by Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC).
- (iv) Present an Annual Programme Manager's Report to AQSC signed by the respective Centre Head – see Part 3 of the Teaching Quality Handbook for more details.
- (v) Have delegated authority to respond to immediate problems or difficulties within the management of a programme.
- (vi) Liaise with all members of teaching staff, including visiting lecturers.

- (vii) Ensure Module Leaders keep Module Reference Sheets up-to-date.

### **3.5.2. Year Managers**

The responsibilities of a Year Manager are to:

- (i) Be responsible for resolving any issues relating to timetable arrangements.
- (ii) Coordinate assessment schedules throughout the year.
- (iii) Liaise with students/student representatives on issues of relevance to the programme, and to report such issues to the Programme Manager and, if appropriate, the Programme Committee.
- (iv) Present student results at the Examinations Board for the programme.

### **3.5.3. Programme Committees**

The Programme Committee will consist of the following persons:

- (i) Programme Manager (Chair).
- (ii) Year Managers (where appropriate).
- (iii) Centre Head (ex officio).
- (iv) Academic staff representatives – those who have a significant responsibility for, or input into, the modules, which together comprise the programme.
- (v) Up to 2 student representatives for each year of the programme, elected by the relevant year group.

3.5.3.1. Programme Committees are expected to meet a minimum of twice per academic year.

3.5.3.2 Terms of Reference for Programme Committees will be to:

- (i) Monitor the delivery of the programme, including recruitment, induction and retention of students, teaching and curriculum, assessment of progress and general programme administration.
- (ii) Monitor the appropriateness of assessment design, timing (to prevent bunching), weighting and required student effort in relation to the module levels and credit weightings and context of the programme.
- (iii) In addition to (i), authorise the Programme Manager or Centre Head to permit minor variations from the programme as may be reasonable, for example topics for study visits. Programme Committees may not alter assessment methods, pass levels or curriculum content.
- (iv) Assume responsibility for general staff/student liaison for the programme, for arranging meetings between the Committee and

students on the programme and for obtaining feedback from present and immediate past students on the programme in a format which enable cross-University comparisons to be readily made.

- (v) Submit minutes of its meetings to AQSC via the Academic Registrar as an annex to the Programme Manager's Annual Report. The AQSC may also require an additional report from the Programme Committee convenor on specific matters.

### **3.6. Annual Programme Review**

- 3.6.1 All Programme Managers are required to produce an annual report for submission to the AQSC. All reports must be submitted using the agreed template (see 3.6.4. below), to the Academic Registrar by 1<sup>st</sup> September each year, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed formally by the AQSC in advance.
- 3.6.2 It is expected that all annual programme reports should be discussed and considered at a Centre meeting prior to the submission date to enable cross-Centre issues to be identified and addressed and good practice shared. The Centre Head is responsible for ensuring all reports are submitted to AQSC by 1<sup>st</sup> September each year.
- 3.6.3 Annual programme reports are an important means of monitoring the effectiveness, validity and relevance of all programmes and will also be used for periodic review and revalidation purposes.
- 3.6.4 The template for the Annual Programme Manager's Report can be found at the [Template Centre](#). If you require further help or guidance, please contact the Academic Quality Support Officer.
- 3.6.5 Following approval by AQSC, Annual Programme Manager's Reports, including all appendices, must be published to individual programme Gateway pages.

### **3.7. Student Feedback**

- 3.7.1 Students' views on programmes of study and the University are sought through the annual online National Student Survey (NSS) (final year foundation degree and honours degree students), and in-house Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) (first and second year, and postgraduate students). The SSS allows programme managers to ask further questions at module level if required, or it may trigger the need to conduct a Module Evaluation questionnaire, or equivalent.

- 3.7.2 Views on specific modules may be sought through a Module Evaluation questionnaire.
- 3.7.3 Module feedback, gained via Module Evaluation, Programme Committees or general student comment, should be incorporated into annual programme reports and should inform (re)validation events.

### **3.8. External Examiners**

- 3.8.1 External Examiners play an important role in the assurance of quality and standards in academic institutions. More information about the appointment, role and function of External Examiners can be found in Part 5 of the Teaching Quality Handbook.

### **3.9. Changes to Programme Provision**

- 3.9.1 If the need arises to make changes to a programme during the validation period, a proposal must be communicated in the first instance to the Academic Registrar who will advise on the need for formal submission and approval by AQSC.
- 3.9.2 It is expected that any proposal put forward will be done so using the Major Module Change Coversheet available from the [Template Centre](#) and will have the support of the Centre Head, the Programme Manager(s), the External Examiner(s) and relevant academic staff and students (if appropriate), prior to submission to AQSC for approval. Consideration must have been given to library and other resources needed to support the revised programme. AQSC will consider the proposal from the perspective of the potential impact on the quality and standards of the provision in making its decision.
- 3.9.3 Up to one third of a programme's core modules, over the period of validation, can be changed through AQSC approval before an early revalidation is triggered. These include major changes within core modules and changes of core modules comprising a programme. However, in the academic year immediately following (re)validation no more than 10% of a programme's core modules can be changed through AQSC approval.
- 3.9.4 The process for obtaining approval for alterations to individual modules is outlined in section 4.6. below.

## 4. Modules

### 4.1. Introduction

A module is defined as a coherent, independent programme of study leading to the achievement of a specific set of learning outcomes and the award of credit. Outline details of each module content and assessment are contained within a Module Reference Sheet (see 4.3 below), with more detailed information contained within a Module Handbook (see 4.5 below).

### 4.2. RAU Module Structure

- 4.2.1. RAU modules are designed to meet the academic needs of learners at four levels of student ability, these being:
- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Level 4 | First year undergraduate or Certificate level.                 |
| Level 5 | Second year undergraduate, Diploma or Foundation Degree level. |
| Level 6 | Third year undergraduate/Honours level.                        |
| Level 7 | Masters level.   |

- 4.2.2. Modules are credit-based, with 1 credit at each level corresponding to the completion of 10 hours of notional student learning time.

- 4.2.3. Modules should be designed according to the following approximations:

- Teaching (i.e. timetabled contact activity) = 30-35% of the total study time.
- Assessment (usually by a combination of coursework and end-of-module examination) = 25-30% of the total study time.
- Private / guided study = 30-40% of the total study time.

10 hours total assessment time (covering preparation / revision and completion time) = 1000 words of coursework assignment or;  
1 hour written examination.

E.g. a 15 credit module = 150 hours notional student learning time:

- Teaching = 45 hours (30%), with normally no more than 2 hours per week of contact time per 15-credit module.
- Assessment = 45 hours (30%), representing either a 4500 word assignment or a 3 hour exam (30 hours) plus a 1500 word assignment (15 hours).
- Private / guided study = 60 hours (40%).

E.g. a 30 credit module = 300 hours notional student learning time:

- Teaching = 105 hours (35%).
- Assessment = 90 hours (30%), representing a 9000 word undergraduate dissertation.
- Private / guided study = 105 hours (35%).

Assessment weighting:

Assessment weighting follows a similar balance.

E.g. a 3 hour written exam occupying 30 hours of the total assessment hours (45 hours) should represent 66.7% of the total module assessment marks.

E.g. a 1500 word assignment, occupying 15 hours of the total assessment hours (45 hours) should represent 33.3% of the total module assessment marks.

In practice it is recognised that adjustments from these guidelines may be required dependent on the specific needs of the module. Reduced contact time will normally be expected at higher academic levels. Programme managers may also wish to consider a stepped weighting of assessments as the academic year progresses.

A maximum of 2 hours is stipulated for examination length at Levels 4 and 5.

Assessment is designed to enable students to demonstrate achievement of the specified module learning outcomes.

- 4.2.4. Module outcomes are set at the appropriate level, as informed by the QAA [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA 2008).
- 4.2.5. Each module will normally have between three and six outcomes, each mapped to the relevant assessment activity.

### **4.3. Module Reference Sheets**

- 4.3.1. Each module is outlined in a Module Reference Sheet approved either as part of the initial programme validation process or submitted independently to AQSC for approval.
- 4.3.2. Module Reference Sheets must specify the name of the person acting as Module Leader, the level and credit rating of the module, outline module content, outcomes and assessment activities. Key reference materials should also be included. A template for Module Reference Sheets is available from the [Template Centre](#).
- 4.3.3. All Module Reference Sheet information should be published on the RAU website.
- 4.3.4. It is expected that Module Reference Sheets are updated annually to ensure currency of content, contact activities and reference lists (see section 5.6 below).

#### 4.4. Module Management

Each module has a specified member of academic staff identified as Module Leader who is responsible for the following:

- (i) Production and annual updating of the Module Reference Sheet.
- (ii) Coordination of teaching, learning and assessment activities within the module.
- (iii) Liaison with library staff to ensure appropriate, up-to-date learning resources are available, and informing library staff of any changes to recommended reading lists, etc.
- (iv) Liaison with Registry in respect of correct module details, including credits, title, assessment balance, etc.
- (v) Production of a detailed Module Handbook (see 4.5 below).
- (vi) Compilation of examination papers for scrutiny.
- (vii) Liaison with relevant Programme Managers and other Module Leaders in respect of module content and in planning module activities throughout the year.
- (viii) Ensuring timely completion of all student assessment and marking, including internal moderation, in line with agreed University policy.
- (ix) Compilation, verification and submission of all assessment marks onto the RAU student management system (Quercus).
- (x) Retention of sample coursework submissions for external moderation and future audit as appropriate.
- (xi) Distribution and collection of student questionnaires as required.
- (xii) Liaison with relevant External Examiners in respect of external moderation and review of marks.
- (xiii) Maintaining an up-to-date module reference file/module box, to include the Module Reference Sheet and Handbook, all assessment briefing materials, full lecture programme, minutes of relevant meetings, a complete list of module marks, samples of moderated and non-moderated coursework submissions (see Part 6 of the TQH) spanning the full range of marks awarded, including, where applicable, examples of borderline grade assessments, first class and fail submissions (can be photocopies), internal moderation forms and past module leader review sheets (from previous academic year). A module box contents checklist is available from the [Template Centre](#).
- (xiv) Maintaining up-to-date module information on the RAU Gateway and website.
- (xv) Completion of a brief annual review of module activities and to pass such review to relevant Programme Managers to help inform annual programme reports. A Module Leader Review Sheet template is available from the [Template Centre](#).
- (xvi) Elective modules minimum student numbers. Elective modules with less than 10 students (6 postgraduate) will only be run at the discretion of the Centre Head. Students will be offered a viable alternative if the module is discontinued.

## 4.5. Module Handbooks

A Module Handbook is a detailed description of the module programme for the year and should include information on the following:

- (i) Schedule of teaching activities for the year.
- (ii) Detailed outcomes, including the development of key transferable skills.
- (iii) Details of how individual teaching and learning activities contribute to the achievement of specific learning outcomes.
- (iv) A comprehensive bibliography, including relevant web-based learning resources.
- (v) Details of module assessments, including, where appropriate, coursework briefing materials and examples of previous examination questions for student information.

A template for an RAU Module Handbook is available from the [Template Centre](#).

## 4.6. Module Changes and Approval

- 4.6.1. All proposals for major module changes must be communicated in the first instance to the Academic Registrar, who will advise on the need for formal submission and approval by AQSC.
- 4.6.2. Minor changes to module content and updating of reference lists can be made without reference to AQSC. In such instances, the updated module reference sheet and module change cover sheet should be sent to the Assistant Registrar QAE who will ensure that the amended Module Reference Sheet is posted onto the RAU website.
- 4.6.3. Major alterations to module content, modifications to teaching hours, adjustments to module outcomes or changes to module assessment activities, including assessment weighting, must be submitted to AQSC for approval. Module suspension, withdrawal and closure constitutes a major module change. This does not include those which are undergoing closure due to the withdrawal or closure of a programme (covered under our programme closure policy).
- 4.6.4. It is expected that any proposal put forward will be done so using the Major Module Change Coversheet available from the [Template Centre](#) and will have the support of the Centre Head, the Programme Manager(s), the External Examiner(s) and relevant academic staff and students (if appropriate), prior to submission to AQSC for approval. Consideration must have been given to library and other resources needed to support the revised programme. AQSC will consider the proposal from the perspective of the potential impact on the quality and standards of the provision in making its decision.
- 4.6.5. Up to one third of a programme's core modules, over the period of validation, can be changed through AQSC approval before an early revalidation is triggered. These include major changes within core

modules and changes of core modules comprising a programme. However, in the academic year immediately following (re)validation no more than 10% of a programme's core modules can be changed through AQSC approval.