Teaching Quality Handbook

Part 1

Framework for University Policies and Structures
(June 2017)

This section outlines the framework of policies and structures of the University which form the basis for the assurance and continuous development of quality and standards for academic programmes

Version Control

Version	Created by	Date approved by Academic Board	Summary of changes
June 2017	Asst Registrar QAE	17/08/2017	Changes to reflect organisational restructuring

Part 1: Framework for University Policies and Structures

1. Introduction

1.1   This Teaching Quality Handbook brings together the University's policies and procedures for quality assurance and enhancement within all teaching, learning and assessment activities. It has been designed to provide an easily searched and comprehensive source of information for all staff, and provides, where appropriate, links to external national guidelines.

1.2   Any suggestions for improvement or addition to this Handbook, or queries about its content, should be addressed in the first instance to either the Assistant Registrar QAE or the Academic Registrar.

2. Policy statement

2.1   The University intends that the Certificates, Diplomas, Undergraduate Degrees and taught Master's degrees it awards, and the research and academic writing it carries out, will be recognised as being of an academic standard which is at least equal to that of any other recognised and comparable Higher Education Institution (HEI) in the United Kingdom.

2.2   The University intends that the Certificates, Diplomas, Undergraduate Degrees and taught Master's degrees it awards will align with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and will recognise and adhere to the expectations of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education in terms of academic quality and standards.

3. Policy objectives

3.1.0 In order to achieve the policy statement, the University will endeavour to:
   a. Make appropriate use of the FHEQ, Subject Benchmark Statements, External Examiners, network and industry contacts.
   b. Maintain an awareness of the work going on in relevant Higher Education bodies (e.g. HEFCE, QAA, HE Academy, Guild HE) and whenever possible take advantage of any workshops, consultation events, development opportunities, etc.
   c. Understand and integrate the various elements of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education to ensure that the University's programmes are developed, run, monitored and reviewed to maintain appropriate quality and standards that are comparable with provision offered elsewhere.
   d. Adopt and implement learning and teaching methods, and provide learning and teaching resources, of an appropriate standard to achieve the quality objectives set.

    e. Ensure adequate resources are available to support research of an appropriate standard.

    f. Continue to improve standards through monitor and review, staff development and quality enhancement procedures.

4. Working towards policy objectives

4.1. There are several ways by which the University sustains links between itself, external Higher Education agencies and other institutions to maintain awareness of developments in quality assurance systems, quality enhancement initiatives, programmes, curricula, assessment standards and procedures:

    i. Supporting the membership by staff of academic or education committees of learned societies or professional bodies.

    ii. Supporting staff attendance at appropriate conferences and events to facilitate networking and sharing good practice.

    iii. Appointment of University staff as External Examiners and/or as members of programme validation and review panels at other HEIs.

    iv. Appointment of University staff as visiting lecturers at other HEIs.

    v. Supporting staff acting as specialist subject reviewers for the QAA.

    vi. The internal External Examiner system for the University.

    vii. Appointment of at least one academic from other HEIs to each of the Advisory Boards.

    viii. Consideration and appropriate implementation of reports/guidance from the QAA and HEFCE as advised by the University's academic bodies.

    ix. Engaging in internal review activity and implementing subsequent recommendations.

    x. Engaging in and acting upon QAA recommendations where appropriate following periodic institutional audit activity.

5. Organisational structure

5.1 Overall authority for quality assurance of academic standards in the University rests with the Academic Board (see Part 2 of this Handbook). The Academic Board is served by:

- The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) and sub-committees.
- Education Committee
- The Research Committee.
- Centre Committees.

In addition, Academic Board may receive reports from the Advisory Boards where relevant.

5.2 Figure 1 below illustrates the current management structure of the University. Figure 2 illustrates the current decision-making structure. Figure 3 indicates the learning and information resource management structure.

5.3   The AQSC has devolved executive responsibility for the assurance of quality and standards of learning, teaching and assessment practices within the University, including the content and delivery of academic programmes.

5.4   The University Examinations Committee, reporting to AQSC, has responsibility for the assurance of equality and standards within the University's examination and assessment procedures.

5.5   The work of the AQSC is also supported by the Validation and Review Panel.

5.6   The membership and terms of reference for Academic Board, AQSC and its subcommittees can be found in Part 2 of this Handbook.

5.7   In discharging their respective roles the sub-committees of the Academic Board will have regard at all times to the importance of consistency and comparability in all aspects of programme design, delivery and assessment, whilst encouraging innovation and enhancement.

5.8   The academic work of the University is organised within seven Centres of Study:

Centre for Agriculture	Centre for Food	Centre for the Environment	Centre for Equine Science and Management	Centre for Business and Enterprise	Centre for Real Estate	Centre for Rural Land Management

5.9   The Centre Head is responsible for the academic programmes and staff situated within that Centre and for the management of Centre resources.
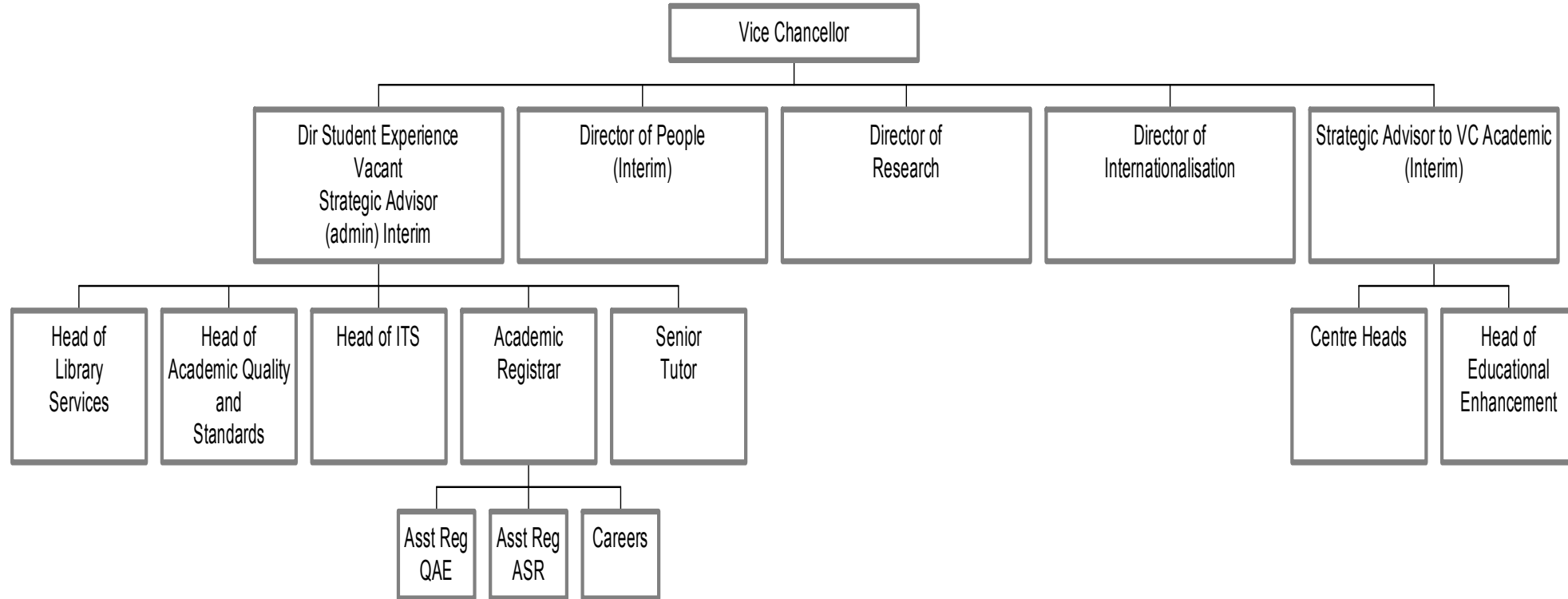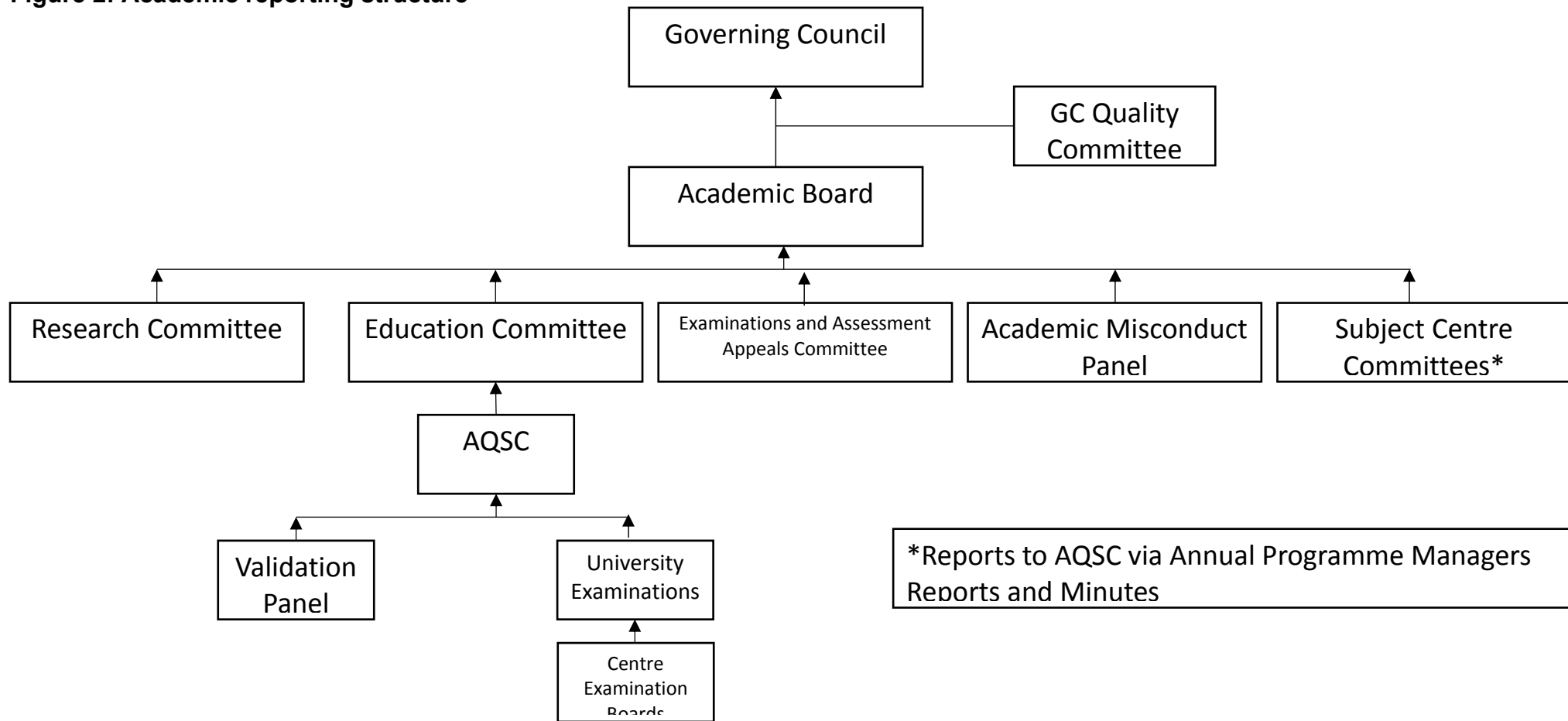
Figure 1: Management structure

Figure 2: Academic reporting structure

Figure 2: Academic reporting structure

- Governing Council
- GC Quality Committee
- Academic Board
- Research Committee
- Education Committee
- Examinations and Assessment Appeals Committee
- Academic Misconduct Panel
- Subject Centre Committees*
- AQSC
- Validation Panel
- University Examinations
- Centre Examination Boards

*Reports to AQSC via Annual Programme Managers Reports and Minutes

6. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Framework-Higher-Education-Qualifications-08.pdf

6.1   The FHEQ was developed by the QAA in order to help promote public understanding of the achievement represented by HE qualifications and therefore ensure public confidence in academic standards.

6.2   There are 5 levels within the FHEQ and qualification descriptors at each level, which the University uses to locate its own qualifications.

6.3   In its collaborative work within Higher Education (HE), in the Further Education (FE) sector and for the purposes of facilitating progression from FE into HE, the University recognises the use of a national framework.

Typical HE qualifications within each level	FHEQ level
Doctorates	8
Master's degrees, Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas	7
Bachelor's Degrees, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas	6
Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education and Higher National Diplomas	5
Higher National Certificates and Certificates of Higher Education	4

6.4   The University currently awards qualifications for taught programmes at all levels up to and including Master's degrees. Research degrees at Master's and PhD level are conferred by partner institutions, with University staff acting as joint supervisors.

6.5   For further information on the FHEQ and the level descriptors follow the link above, or go to the QAA website at http://www.qaa.ac.uk and follow the links to the academic infrastructure.