RAO Centre Handbook

1 Introduction

This handbook is designed to assist centres which are considering whether to seek accreditation under the Review of Academic Oversight (RAO) process. It provides background information, explains how the inspection process operates and gives guidance on the RAO standards and criteria.

2 Purpose of RAO

Accreditation offers formal external recognition of the institution and demonstrates in the public arena that the published RAO standards have been met.

RAO offers a framework of standards, structured in 10 key areas. Each area has a number of specific standards, under which are a set of criteria. Centres can use these to judge how well they meet the standards. Centres which meet all the RAO standards (see Appendix 4) , by demonstrating compliance or alignment with most criteria, will be eligible for GQAS accreditation.

GQAS inspectors will use the RAO standards and criteria to inspect Centres and to form a judgement about whether, or how far, the standards are met.

3 What kind of centres are eligible for accreditation under RAO?

Any provider of education programmes which has current students is eligible to apply for accreditation. It is, of course, advisable that any Centre considering application reviews the RAO standards and criteria and carefully considers whether they can realistically meet them.

4 Accreditation process and timescales

The award of accreditation is subject to an institution meeting the standards which are established and periodically reviewed by GQAS. The accreditation process involves a rigorous inspection focusing on the quality assurance processes of the institution in ten areas:

1. Management of health and safety and premises security

2. Management and governance
3. Student recruitment and selection
4. Quality of teaching and assessment
5. Internal quality assurance
6. Management of academic standards
7. Student welfare and support
8. Student achievement and progress
9. Public information
10. Support to students progressing overseas

The standards and criteria for each of these areas are in Appendix 4. Most of the criteria are **essential**; they must be met by the Centre in order to gain accreditation; some criteria are **desirable** and ought to be met by a well-managed institution.

An accredited institution must meet and continue to meet the minimum standards listed for each of the inspection areas. The inspection report must indicate that the overall standard of provision in each area is satisfactory before accreditation will be awarded. Once accredited, your institution must submit to a regular monitoring process involving annual data returns and interim inspections.

You must also pay all applicable fees, notifying GQAS of any changes and responding to any requests for information. All institutions must meet their statutory obligations to comply with all relevant laws and regulations.

5 Inspection process and minimum standards

Stage 1: Centre application

Any Centre seeking accreditation for RAO will be required initially to submit an **Application form** and a **Self Assessment Report (SAR)** detailing how the RAO standards and criteria are met. A completed **RAO Checklist** and **relevant items of evidence** should also be provided. (Brief details of the expectations for the SAR are provided in Appendix 1).

Stage 2: Initial review

The inspection process will commence with an **Initial review of documentation**. This is for the purpose of:

- Checking that key documents and evidence items are in place

- Checking, as far as possible, the suitability of teaching and learning facilities

- Checking that the Centre appears likely to meet the standards and criteria set out in the ten RAO Standards

An **Interim statement** following the review of documentation will be prepared and returned to the Centre.

Stage 3: Accreditation inspection

The Interim statement will indicate any areas of concern and any formal recommendations. The Centre will need to work on these when preparing for its full Accreditation Inspection, which must take place within 6 months of the Initial review.

The **Accreditation Inspection** visit will last 2 full days, during which time the Centre must provide evidence that it has met the full criteria for accredited status. Inspectors will look for evidence that all aspects identified as areas of concern or as recommendations in the Interim Inspection Report have been met. The inspection visit will normally be made by two inspectors.

Inspectors will make a decision about how far the Centre is meeting the RAO Standards.

Following the Accreditation Inspection, GQAS will make a decision as to whether the Centre has met the standards and can therefore be granted accredited status. A full report of the inspection will be provided for the Centre.

After the Accreditation Inspection

Centres that have achieved accredited status will be expected to maintain these quality standards after the inspection. GQAS will conduct a full 2 day inspection within 2 years and may conduct a short spot check 'drop in' inspection at any time.

Any Centre that fails to achieve accredited status will receive support from GQAS to raise its standards. Within a further 6 months, the Centre must succeed at a second full Accreditation Inspection or its interim accreditation status will lapse.

6   How to prepare for inspection; demonstrating that the Centre meets the criteria

In preparing for inspection, Centres need to collect appropriate evidence to support their achievement of the RAO Standards. The evidence collected should be organised in such a way that inspectors are readily able to see how it might support the case for the Standards to be met.
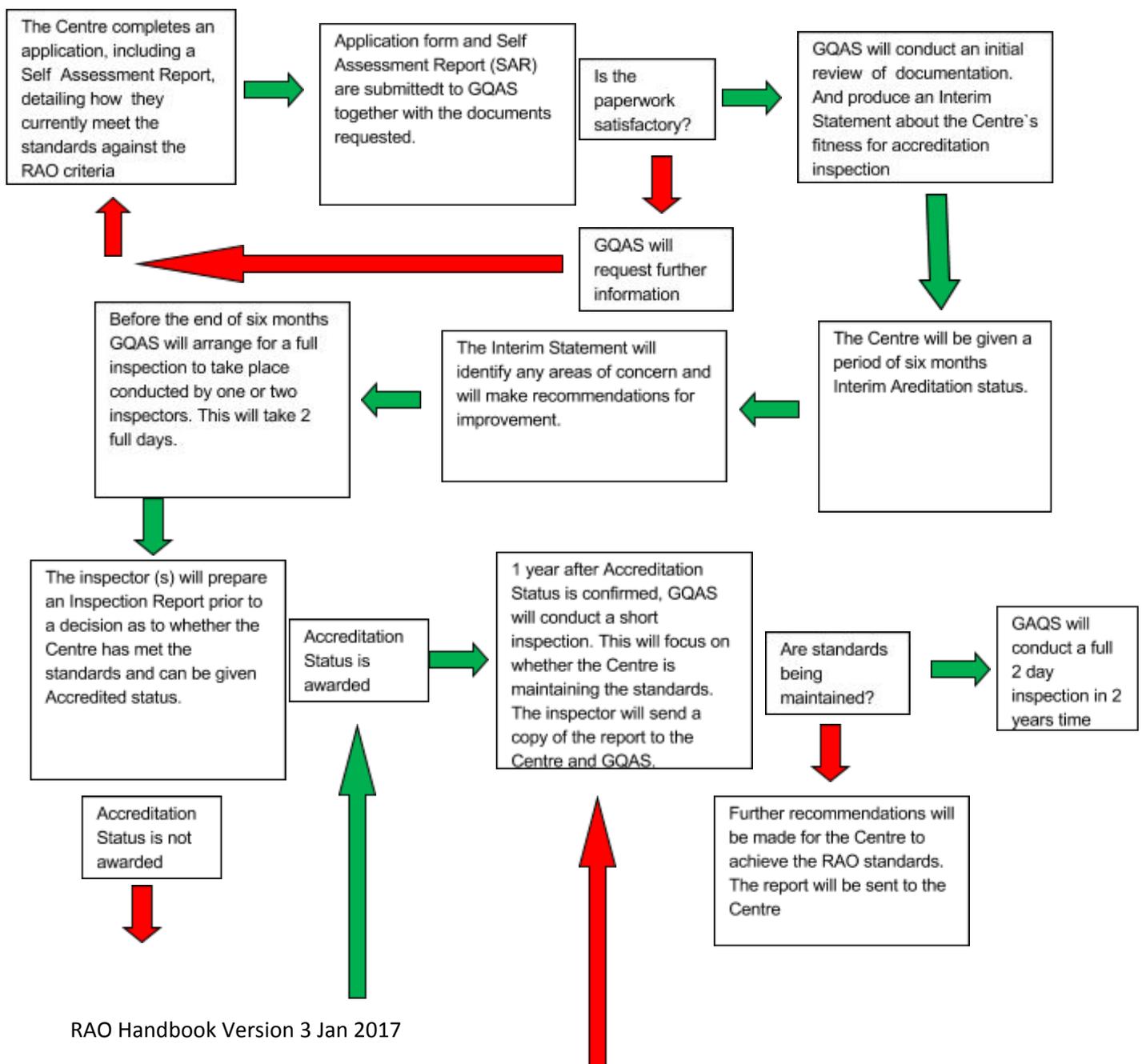
The most important document for each Centre will be its Self - Assessment Report (SAR) This document will provide evidence of the Centre's ability to review its processes, policies, teaching and learning in detail against the criteria set out in the Standards.
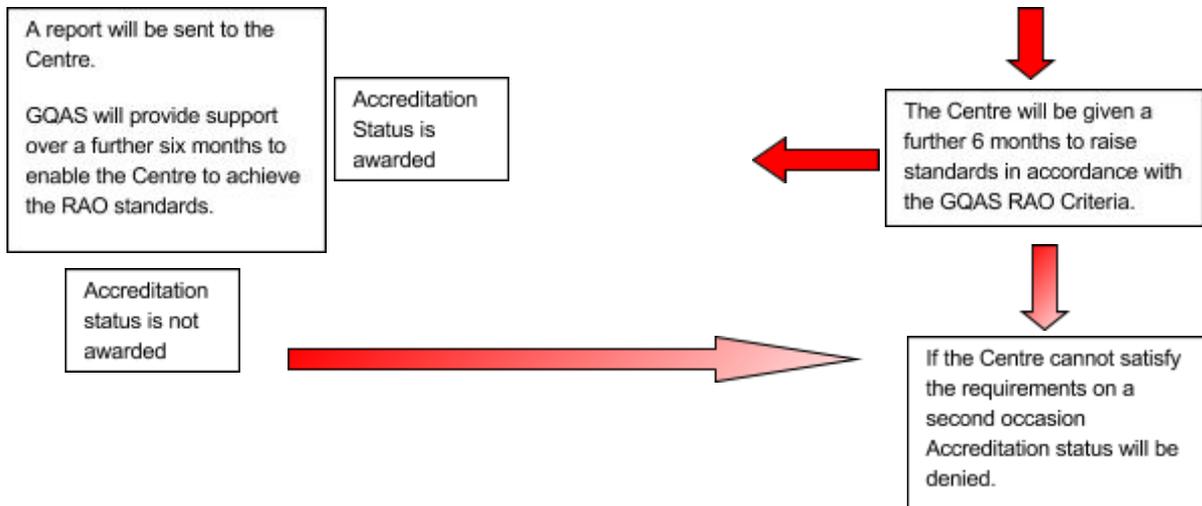
Evidence may consist of a wide variety of documents, forms and examples of assessed work and the Centre should cross reference such evidence with each criterion it is claimed to support.

See Appendix 3 for examples of possible evidence, remembering that the list provided is indicative and **not** comprehensive.

Following the inspection process Centres will need to evaluate the experience and consider their overall effectiveness and their capacity to improve.

The process for achieving RAO accreditation with GQAS

The Centre completes an application, including a Self Assessment Report, detailing how they currently meet the standards against the RAO criteria

Application form and Self Assessment Report (SAR) are submittedt to GQAS together with the documents requested.

Is the paperwork satisfactory?

GQAS will conduct an initial review of documentation. And produce an Interim Statement about the Centre`s fitness for accreditation inspection

GQAS will request further information

The Centre will be given a period of six months Interim Areditation status.

Before the end of six months GQAS will arrange for a full inspection to take place conducted by one or two inspectors. This will take 2 full days.

The Interim Statement will identify any areas of concern and will make recommendations for improvement.

The inspector (s) will prepare an Inspection Report prior to a decision as to whether the Centre has met the standards and can be given Accredited status.

Accreditation Status is awarded

1 year after Accreditation Status is confirmed, GQAS will conduct a short inspection. This will focus on whether the Centre is maintaining the standards. The inspector will send a copy of the report to the Centre and GQAS.

Are standards being maintained?

GAQS will conduct a full 2 day inspection in 2 years time

Accreditation Status is not awarded

Further recommendations will be made for the Centre to achieve the RAO standards. The report will be sent to the Centre

A report will be sent to the Centre.

GQAS will provide support over a further six months to enable the Centre to achieve the RAO standards.

Accreditation Status is awarded

The Centre will be given a further 6 months to raise standards in accordance with the GQAS RAO Criteria.

Accreditation status is not awarded

If the Centre cannot satisfy the requirements on a second occasion Accreditation status will be denied.

Appendix I: Self-assessment Report (SAR)

The Self-assessment Report (SAR) is an important document. It provides a basis on which inspectors form their initial impressions about a Centre`s provision, performance and claimed achievement. It will be used by them to compare what the Centre says about itself with what the inspectors later see as they move around the Centre, talk to staff and students, review documentation and observe teaching sessions.

GQAS has provided guidance for the SAR, but Centres may choose to present their SAR in any reasonable format. Centres are expected to provide a substantial report, including details of why it is felt that the criteria are met. Detail and clarity at this stage will help the inspection process to proceed more smoothly later.

A SAR should include the following:

- Introduction; background details about the Centre, how long it has been established, current provision, current student numbers, any development plans, etc

- Overview of the effectiveness of the Centre

- Commentary on how the Centre considers it meets the RAO Standards:

    o Management of health and safety and premises security
    o Management and governance
    o Student recruitment and selection
    o Quality of teaching and assessment
    o Internal quality assurance
    o Management of academic standards
    o Student welfare and support
    o Student achievement and progress
    o Public information
    o Support to students progressing overseas

- Commentary on any criteria which, in the Centre`s opinion, may not currently be met.

- Any further relevant information which the Centre wishes to make available to GQAS.

Specific expectations can be found in document RAO 2: *RAO Self - Assessment Report*

Appendix 2 Glossary

Glossary

Academic standards	The benchmarks by which the quality of the curriculum and examinations are measured
Accreditation	The process by which an institution obtains formal external recognition that it has met defined standards
Appeal	The process of challenging an assessment decision previously made
Assessment instruments	Methods by which students can demonstrate that they meet the learning outcomes of the programme; could take the form of assignment briefs, case study exercises, group assessment tasks, etc
Board of Governance	A group of people selected by the Centre, comprising senior management and external independent advisers, acting as the top level Board and responsible for taking strategic decisions
Data protection	The arrangements used to secure confidential information
Diagnostic assessment	A type of assessment carried out when there is a need to investigate a student's capabilities in order to understand how best to provide for them
Endorsements	The approval given for conditions, documents, or other aspects of Centre business
Equality and diversity	Promoting the understanding of every individual's right to be treated equally, to be provided with the same opportunities and not to be discriminated against.
	Promoting the understanding of sameness and difference between peoples in order to develop a culture of integration and acceptance
External reference points	Published guidance upon which the Centre can draw as it develops policies, systems and practices

Externality	The expectation that a Centre will call upon appropriate external advice and support in developing and maintaining its provision
Formative assessment	Measurement of achievement that enables teachers to focus on specific areas of learning during teaching sessions and provides developmental support to learners before their final assessments
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
Independent learning	The ability to organise and direct one's own learning
Induction	The process of introducing students to the Centre and providing important information to help them settle in to their studies
Internal verification	The method by which the Centre reviews and validates its assessments so as to provide a standard against which all assessments can be measured
Learning outcomes	Statements made as part of all programmes of work that identify what students should know or be able to do when they have completed each element of the course
Learning resources	Technical and physical equipment and products used to enhance the learning process; includes library and online resources
Moderation	The process of comparing assessed material in order to arrive at an accepted level of judgment
Module (or unit)	A small part of a programme or course that would usually deliver a single element of the whole
Pastoral support	Support provided to students to enhance their emotional and mental wellbeing and their general welfare
Peer review	The process of evaluating the work of a colleague
Performance review	The process of assessing and evaluating the work and effectiveness of staff, as well as identifying individual development needs
Policy	A document which sets out the Centre's principles and strategies in a specific area

Procedures	Detailed descriptions of operational processes (e.g. the Health & Safety Policy sets out the Centre`s broad principles; the Accident Reporting Procedure details the precise method to be used when reporting accidents)
Programme specifications	Documents which provide full details of programmes delivered by the Centre, together with assessment and teaching methods
Protocols	Procedures, behaviours or expectations by which the Centre conducts its operations
Public information	Information which is in the public domain, including web- and social media-based content
Review	The process by which Centres evaluate their own operations and the progress they are making
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning. The process by which students may apply for a place at the Centre without meeting the stated entry criteria. The Centre will evaluate previously gained experience and certificates that might suggest the suitability of the student to achieve through the Centre's programmes
Safeguarding	Protecting the health and wellbeing of young and vulnerable people in the care of the Centre
SAR	Self Assessment Report This is the document that is produced by the Centre to state how far it believes it meets the RAO Standards
Special considerations	Providing support for disadvantaged students to enable them to achieve their best outcome in an assessment or examination. Special considerations will be part of a formal document developed by the Centre within its assessment policy
Stakeholder	An individual or company with a personal interest in ensuring the success of the Centre
Standardisation	Ensuring that assessments conform to an agreed level
Strategic Plan	A long term development plan for the Centre, with defined objectives
Student engagement	The process of ensuring that students are fully engaged with the learning processes of the Centre

Study skills	The collective term for a range of strategies that support effective learning
Summative assessment	A written or practical task designed to measure what has been learned at the end of a programme of work
Terms of reference	Documentation detailing members of committees, their names, positions and expertise together with the purpose and structure of the work they are asked to do and the method of reporting to management
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment This is an intranet platform provided to students which is used to support and enhance learning

Appendix 3 Possible evidence examples

Examples of possible evidence might be:

1   Management of health and safety and premises security

- Business registration documents
- Leasehold documents
- Floor plan of premises
- Maintenance and cleaning schedules
- Health and Safety Policy and related procedures
- Fire evacuation arrangements
- Details of fire drills
- Accident records
- Risk assessments

2   Management and governance

- Terms of reference and copies of minutes of Board
- Organisation chart
- Terms of reference and copies of minutes for all committees
- Strategic Plan
- Details of links with local businesses and community groups
- Staff recruitment process documents
- Student data system details

3 Student recruitment and selection

- Ethics Policy
- Agent recruitment and monitoring procedures
- Copies of signed agent agreements
- Student recruitment documents
- Selection exercises and diagnostic tests
- Interview checklists and records
- Induction materials
- Documents relating to awarding organisation approval and registration
- Student files
- Promotional materials
- Fee payment and refund documentation
- RPL documents and examples (if appropriate) of completed claims

4   Quality of teaching and assessment

- Programme specifications
- Assessment schedule
- Procedures for submitting and marking work
- Examples of assignment briefs and marked work

- Lesson plans
- Teacher observations
- Schemes of Work
- Examples of student feedback on teaching and assessment
- Records of tutorials
- Study skills materials
- Examples of group assessments
- Work placement procedures and records

5 Internal quality assurance

- Quality manual
- Programme review documents
- Annual monitoring report
- Analysis of student feedback
- Teacher observation process
- Records of teacher observations
- Staff cvs
- Staff induction process
- Staff Handbook
- Training needs documentation
- Assessment Policy
- Records of meetings discussing assessment
- Standardisation records
- Internal verification records
- Staff performance review records

6 Management of academic standards

- Protocols for academic standards management
- Processes for reporting on academic standards
- Processes for dealing with awarding organisation reports
- Policy and procedural framework
- Policy and procedures supporting learning resource provision
- Academic complaints and appeals process

7 Student welfare and support

- Student representation process
- Student Handbook
- Programme and Module Handbooks
- Process for Information Advice and Guidance (IAG)
- Complaints and grievance arrangements
- Details of special arrangements for students with special learning needs
- Policies on safeguarding, on bullying and harassment and Equality and Diversity
- Pastoral support process

● Attendance monitoring arrangements and records

8 Student achievement and progress

● Student progress records
● Examples of students included in promotional material
● Details of progression routes
● Defined progression objectives
● Process for certification
● Process to support students who are unable to complete programmes

9 Public information

● Public Information Policy
● Signing off procedures and completed examples
● Website and social media arrangements
● Data Protection statement and protocols

10 Support to students progressing overseas

● Process for informing students about study options
● Process to support visa applications
● Briefing materials on overseas study options

Appendix 4 RAO Standards and Criteria

All criteria are Essential and must be met unless marked (D) in which case they are Desirable

I Management of health and safety and premises security

The Centre has appropriate arrangements for health and safety and for maintaining and securing its premises

1.1 Business registration

1.   Formal business documents are available, current and valid
2.   Any recent amendments or endorsements are appropriate
3.   There is clear definition of the nature and scope of the business

1.2 Lease arrangements or evidence of ownership

1.   A formal leasehold agreement is available, valid for at least the next 2 years
2.   Terms for renewal are clearly stated
3.   If the property is owned, deeds and associated documents are available
4.   Protocols relating to associated premises or campuses are clearly defined

1.3 Working Environment

1.   Air conditioning arrangements operate effectively, with defined arrangements for review or testing
2.   Lighting in classrooms and public areas is fit for purpose
3.   There are defined maintenance arrangements for ventilation and lighting
4.   Sanitary provision for both sexes is appropriate for the number of students and staff
5.   Sanitary and washing facilities are in accord with current legislative requirements
6.   There are defined maintenance and cleaning arrangements for sanitary facilities
7.   Appropriate signage welcomes visitors to the centre
8.   Internal direction signs for both students and visitors are clear and fit for purpose

1.4 Health and safety arrangements

1.   A comprehensive Health and Safety policy is in place
2.   There is clearly defined responsibility for managing health and safety
3.   Fire exits and areas of hazard are clearly signed and fire exits are well maintained
4.   Appropriate first aid provision is available and there are trained first aiders
5.   Fire evacuation drills are carried out on a defined and regular basis
6.   Fire marshals are appointed and are appropriately trained and supported
7.   Accident and incident records are maintained appropriately and analysis of accident data takes place

1.5 Risk assessment

1. There is a clear procedure for health and safety risk assessments
2. Risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis and reports are produced
3. Reports from the risk assessment process are used by management to inform policy, revise procedures and enhance the physical environment

1.6 Suitability of the premises

1. The premises are appropriate for current programmes
2. There is adequate circulating space for students, staff and visitors (D)
3. The premises provide a suitable learning environment
4. There is a formal process to review the suitability of the premises when additional programme provision is planned

1.7 Classroom facilities

1. Classrooms and teaching areas are spacious and appropriately equipped
2. Seating and desk provision is fit for purpose
3. There is adequate and appropriate IT provision including visual aids and technology

1.8 Public access

1. The centre`s main entrance is clearly marked and accessible to all, including to any visitors with physical disabilities
2. The Reception area is appropriately laid out and there is seating for visitors
3. Appropriate information about the centre is provided for visitors **(D)**
4. Visitors are given a short briefing/information about health and safety, including fire drills

2 Management and governance

The Centre defines its governance arrangements and ensures effective strategic, resource and data management

2.1 Ownership and governance structure

1. Ownership of the centre is clearly specified
2. There is a top level board or committee, such as a Board of Governance
3. External advice and expertise is used by the centre to enhance provision and drive forward strategy

2.2 Organisation structure

1. An organisation chart for the centre exists and is reviewed at regular intervals

2. The organisational structure is appropriate for the size and nature of the centre

2.3 Terms of reference for committees

1. Each committee and board has written terms of reference which specify the body`s aims, objectives, responsibilities, membership and review arrangements

2.4 Establishing priorities and targets

1. A strategic plan sets out priorities for the immediate future
2. Priorities and targets are agreed and revised in a systematic manner
3. The degree of success in achieving agreed priorities and targets is monitore

2.5 Internal and external communication

1. Internal communications are planned and effective
2. A range of methods is used to communicate to students
3. Outcomes of key committees and boards are communicated effectively
4. External communications are appropriate in style and the centre monitors them carefully
5. The centre has effective arrangements for liaison with awarding organisations and for managing the registration and certification process

2.6 Stakeholder engagement

1. The centre maintains close contact with external stakeholders **(D)**
2. There are links with local businesses and community groups **(D)**

2.7 Change of ownership or control

1. Change of ownership must be reflected in a revised strategic plan
2. If a change of ownership or control occurs, organisational changes are managed sensitively for the benefit of staff and students

2.8 Deployment of staff and resources

1. There are effective arrangements for staff recruitment and selection
2. The centre has appropriate and well-qualified teaching staff for its current provision
3. There are sufficient trained and experienced administrative and support staff
4. The centre supports its provision with appropriate resources

2.9 Student data

1. An effective system collects and stores student data
2. The confidentiality of student data is underpinned by appropriate and effective protocols
3. Analysis of student data is a critical function within the centre

4. Senior management use student data to inform senior level decision-making

3 Student recruitment and selection

The Centre recruits students with integrity

3.1 Ethical practices

1. The centre has a clearly stated ethical policy
2. Ethical behaviour underpins the student recruitment and selection process

3.2 Appointment of agents

1. The selection and appointment of agents is defined in a formal procedure
2. Agents are required to fulfil clearly stated expectations of probity and efficiency and to sign a formal agreement with the centre

3.3 Performance of agents

1. Monitoring of the performance of agents is carried out at regular intervals
2. Provision is made for 'spot checks' on agent performance **(D)**
3. A process is in place to deal with agents failing to demonstrate adequate performance

3.4 Application process

1. The centre accepts direct applications
2. The initial process of student selection is fair and fit for purpose
3. Any initial assessment exercises are appropriate and reasonable
4. Students are informed about RPL as part of the application process

3.5 Interview checklist and records

1. Selection interview arrangements are fit for purpose
2. There is a standard format for selection interviews
3. Detailed records of the selection process are maintained

3.6 Diagnostic assessment

1. Any diagnostic tests are appropriate and fit for purpose

2. Diagnostic assessment is used both for selection purposes, when appropriate, and also to identify possible future student support needs

3.7 Student induction

1. All new students undertake a formal induction process
2. The content of induction sessions is standardised and designed to provide a helpful, supportive and stress-free introduction to the centre
3. Messages given to students during induction are reinforced when they start their programmes of study
4. The success of the induction process is formally evaluated

3.8 Registration with awarding organisations

1. Students are informed during induction about the role of the awarding organisation in their programme of study
2. Students are informed during induction when awarding organisation registration will take place and advised about any financial implications

3.9 Student support

1. Students are supported throughout their programmes of study
2. Students are made aware of progression opportunities and requirements

3.10 Maintaining student files

1. There is an efficient and effective process for maintaining student personal and academic details (this may be electronic, hard copy or a combination of both)
2. Access to student files is limited to key named individuals

3.11 Entry criteria, fees and refunds

1. The centre sets appropriate entry criteria for its programmes
2. Any requirements beyond those expected by awarding organisations are fair and reasonable **(D)**
3. Fee details are clearly displayed on the website and promotional materials
4. The fee payment process is fit for purpose and is clearly explained to students
5. Any necessary fee refunds are efficiently administered in a fair and timely manner

3.12 Recognition of Prior Learning

1. The centre has a clear procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning
2. Students seeking to join a programme on the basis of RPL receive support and information during the process
3. Any student claiming RPL whose claim is judged inappropriate receives individual guidance and advice

4 Quality of teaching and assessment

Teaching, learning and assessment arrangements in the Centre are fit for purpose

4.1 Programme specifications

1. There are clear and current programme specifications for each programme of study
2. Programme specifications provide an overview of each programme, its rationale, market, structure, learning outcomes, assessment methods and final award

4.2 Assessment schedule

1. A defined assessment schedule is produced for each module of each programme
2. The assessment schedule is communicated to students and indicates both the timing of planned assessments and the assessment methods to be used
3. Clear assessment deadlines for submitting completed work are specified

4.3 Assessment

1. Assessments are fit for purpose
2. Assessments are clearly linked to learning outcomes
3. Assessment instruments specify a range of assessment methods

4.4 Lesson plans and schemes of work

1. Teaching staff are expected to submit clear and detailed lesson plans for their teaching sessions
2. Schemes of work provide an overview of the centre`s expectations for a programme
3. There is an expectation that teaching staff will use a variety of methods of teaching delivery and that they will encourage independent learning

4.5 Feedback on assessments

1. Feedback from assessors is written, regular, timely, supportive and constructive

4.6 Personal tutorials

1. The centre schedules timetabled sessions for personal tutorials
2. Students can access their tutor both at timetabled sessions and, if necessary, out of hours

4.7 Study skills

1. The centre takes appropriate steps to enhance and support study skills
2. The development of basic academic skills is supported

3. Students are assisted to become independent learners

4.8 Team-based activities

1. Students are assisted to work and learn as members of teams
2. Team assessment activities are used as an integral part of programmes **(D)**

4.9 Employer engagement

1. Employer contacts are developed to enhance the learning process **(D)**
2. Work placements form part of programme provision **(D)**
3. Work placements are effectively monitored, reviewed and amended appropriately by the centre

4.10 Classroom teaching

1. Teachers engage students in active learning
2. Individual students' learning needs are identified quickly and managed appropriately
3. Learning experiences challenge students and raise expectations
4. Resources are used effectively by teachers to enhance the learning experience
5. Students are supported to achieve their learning goals and objectives

5 Internal quality assurance

The Centre`s internal quality processes are fit for purpose

5.1 Quality management

1. There are defined arrangements in the centre to manage and enhance quality
2. A quality manual provides information for staff on quality assurance procedures
3. There are designated responsibilities for the management of quality in the centre

5.2 Assessment planning

1. Programme teams prepare assessment schedules for each module/unit
2. Assessment schedules clearly indicate assignment submission dates and marking deadlines
3. Students can access the information about assessment schedules

5.3 Programme and annual review

1. A formal process of programme review is operated in the centre
2. Programme teams contribute to programme review documents, which provide an overview of the programme over a defined period
3. Programme reviews, together with centre-wide commentary and data, contribute to an annual monitoring report

4. The annual monitoring report provides an annual review of the centre`s operations, together with commentary on future strategy
5. The annual monitoring report is shared with staff, stakeholders and students

5.4 Student feedback analysis

1. Analysis of student feedback is considered at programme level
2. Analysis of student feedback informs the programme and annual monitoring processes

5.5 Teacher observation and peer review

1. The centre operates an effective teacher observation process
2. Formal teacher observation is also supported by peer review arrangements **(D)**
3. Outcomes of teacher observations are used to shape the centre`s training plan

5.6 Staff recruitment, training and development

1. Arrangements for recruiting and selecting staff are fit for purpose
2. All new staff participate in a formal induction process
3. **The centre provides mentors where appropriate to support new staff members (D)**
4. Individual training needs (identified in performance reviews) and broader training requirements identified by the centre are combined in an annual training plan
5. Training activities provided for staff are evaluated to aid planning

5.7 Quality of assessment and feedback

1. The centres has a clearly defined Assessment Policy
2. Processes within the centre enable the quality of assessment to be judged systematically
3. Feedback arrangements are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are comprehensive, impartial and fair
4. Procedures for analysing assessment outcomes are identified
5. Staff are trained in the standardisation of assessed material
6. Standardisation of assessment is carried out on a regular basis
7. Samples of standardised assessments are available for reference
8. Opportunities to share assessed material with other centres are available

5.8 Internal verification and moderation

1. The centre operates a defined internal verification or moderation process
2. Internal verification of assessment is carried out on a systematic basis
3. Detailed records are maintained of internal verification activities
4. Staff involved as internal verifiers receive training and support

5.9 Staff performance review

1. The centre operates an effective performance review process for all staff

2. The Board of Governance, where present, is involved with the performance review of the Head of Centre and/or the Director of Studies **(D)**
3. Members of staff have opportunities to comment upon the performance of managers **(D)**
4. Performance reviews are scheduled in advance
5. Support is provided for newly appointed managers undertaking performance review
6. Detailed records of performance review discussions are maintained
7. Identified individual training and development needs contribute to the centre`s overall training plan

6 Management of academic standards

The Centre takes steps to safeguard academic standards

6.1 Academic governance

1. The overall responsibility for managing academic standards lies with a formerly constituted senior committee or board
2. A framework specifies how the management of academic standards is arranged
3. The framework includes a full strategic chart showing responsibilities at each tier
4. The framework is regularly reviewed to ensure effectiveness
5. External reference points are used in the development of standards

6.2 Reporting mechanisms

1. A timetable is determined for committees and managers to report on academic standards
2. The Head of Centre and/or Director of Studies report to awarding organisations and accreditation bodies on a regular basis
3. A framework for management of academic standards includes reporting criteria and forms to ensure consistency across tiers of responsibility

6.3 Awarding organisation reports and follow up

1. The centre has arrangements for processing awarding organisation reports
2. Key features of awarding organisation reports are shared with students **(D)**
3. Actions from awarding organisation reports are addressed on a systematic basis

6.4 Policies and procedures

1. A defined and comprehensive framework of policies and policy documents is in place
2. Policy statements are supported by clearly defined operational procedures
3. There is evidence that staff have been involved in the consultation process for the development and review of policies and procedures **(D)**
4. Steps are taken by the centre to raise staff awareness of policies and procedures

5. There are protocols for periodic review and revision of policies and procedures

6.5 Resources for learning

1. A policy states the centre`s expectations in terms of learning resources
2. There is a library facility with appropriate copies of texts to support learning
3. Students can access external learning resources online **(D)**
4. The centre supports student learning though provision of a virtual learning environment **(D)**

6.6 Academic complaints and appeals

1. There is a formal process for academic complaints and appeals
2. Students wishing to make a complaint or a formal appeal are supported in completing the process

7 Student welfare and support

Arrangements for student support are well-planned and appropriate

7.1 Student representation and engagement

1. There are effective arrangements for formal student representation
2. Student engagement with the teaching and learning process is actively promoted
3. The centre takes steps to determine the student voice and to respond in appropriate ways

7.2 Student handbook

1. All students receive a copy of a student handbook at induction
2. Programme and/or module handbooks are also made available **(D)**

7.3 Information Advice and Guidance

1. There is formal provision for IAG by the centre
2. Enrolling students can access IAG services when needed
3. In addition to induction, the centre provides information and support to students at all stages of their learning journey
4. Where there is an intranet/VLE this should carry materials posted by teaching staff to support students **(D)**
5. Students can also access external online resources to support their studies **(D)**
6. Referral is made to specialist sources of advice when needed

7.4 Student complaints and grievances

1. The centre has a clearly defined Complaints and Grievance Policy

2. Procedures for managing complaints and grievances are clearly set out and available to students in the Student Handbook
3. Students who feel the need to raise a concern are treated appropriately
4. There is evidence that cases raised are concluded satisfactorily

7.5 Special learning needs

1. The centre has clearly defined arrangements for supporting students who are physically disabled or have special learning needs
2. Where possible, amendments are made to the physical environment to accommodate physically disabled students **(D)**
3. There is provision to support students with dyslexia **(D)**

7.6 Bullying and harassment

1. There is a clear policy statement on bullying and harassment
2. The centre takes effective practical steps to prevent instances of bullying and harassment

7.7 Safeguarding and preventing extremism

1. The centre has a comprehensive Safeguarding Policy
2. Young and vulnerable students are appropriately safeguarded

7.8 Pastoral support

1. The centre has clearly defined arrangements for student pastoral support
2. Counselling support is available by referral in appropriate cases **(D)**

7.9 Student attendance

1. Expectations about regular and punctual student attendance are clearly stated
2. Attendance is monitored and any cases of poor attendance are followed up promptly
3. There are support arrangements in place for managing students who fail to attend
4. There is a stated procedure for expelling students when both support and repeated warnings have failed to improve performance
5. The centre maintains detailed records on attendance as part of its overall set of student data

7.10 Special considerations

1. Procedures are in place to agree assessment special considerations in individual cases
2. Assessment special considerations are fair, reasonable and proportionate

8 Student achievement and progress

The Centre facilitates students' progress throughout their studies

8.1 Progress

1. Students make visible progress throughout their programmes
2. Student progress is monitored through regular informal and formal assessment
3. Up to date records of progress are maintained
4. The centre has clear records demonstrating the added value that students have gained **(D)**
5. There are effective methods of sharing student progress and achievement **(D)**

8.2 Promotional material

1. The centre uses student data sensitively in any promotional materials produced
2. Any student data included in promotional material has either the permission of the student or is used anonymously
3. The centre ensures that written permission is obtained from students for the use of all photographs, including those on display in the centre
4. Any location images used by the centre for promotional purposes are accurate, realistic and appropriate

8.3 Progression routes

1. There are clear progression routes for all programmes
2. Information about levels within programmes is made available to students
3. Students are supported in making positive choices

8.4 Progression objectives

1. There are clear and effective objectives for supporting student achievement
2. Effective procedures set, review and amend student objectives on a regular determined basis
3. Students are involved in their own objective setting **(D)**
4. The centre maintains comprehensive records of objective setting, reviewing and amending

8.5 Certification

1. There are clear procedures about claiming certificates from awarding organisations
2. The process of obtaining certificates operates efficiently
3. The centre celebrates student success when issuing certificates to successful students

8.6 Pre-exit strategy

1. There are clear procedures for supporting students who cannot complete their programmes
2. Opportunities are given for students to change programmes if this is both applicable and manageable **(D)**

9 Public information

Public information is fit for purpose

9.1 Policy and procedures

1. The centre has a Public Information Policy which clearly specifies both public and centre expectations
2. There is a formal procedure for signing off items of public information before they are used/published

9.2 Data Protection

1. A statement regarding data protection is included in the Public Information Policy
2. There are robust mechanisms for maintaining sensitive material
3. There are clear procedures for disclosing data protected material
4. There are clear procedures for managing unauthorised use of data protected material

9.3 Approval of marketing materials

1. Specified personnel manage and approve all marketing material
2. Marketing materials include website and social media materials

9.4 Equality and diversity

1. The centre has an Equality and Diversity Policy
2. Practical steps are taken to promote the aims of the policy
3. Information and images used in and by the centre reflect equality and diversity

10 Support to students progressing overseas

The Centre briefs and supports those students who progress overseas for further study

10.1 Progression options overseas

1. The centre has formal arrangements to assist students in identifying options for overseas higher education

10.2 Support and information for students

1. Students are advised about study opportunities and visa requirements in popular overseas study destinations
2. Students are supported in the process of making overseas visa and study applications **(D)**
3. Students are briefed about the kind of information they will need on arrival in their overseas study location
4. Students are advised about the direct and indirect financial aspects of overseas study, including availability of any scholarships or bursaries **(D)**

10.3 Prospects on completion

1. Students are advised about employment restrictions in popular overseas study locations **(D)**
2. The centre has a process to support completing students who are seeking employment locally **(D)**