

# 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 monitored

## **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 through 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)**