University of Kent

Quality Assurance and Compliance News

Issue 8 - March 2022

Welcome to the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office Newsletter

Announcements

Intermission Process - 15 weeks
The week 15 deadline that used to be in place for taught students intermission requests has now been removed. The deadline was originally in place for reasons that are no longer relevant, hence its removal. Guidance and forms have been updated on the QA website.

Important information regarding module and course specification templates for 2021/22
QACO apologises for the oversight that the 2020/21 versions of the course and module specification templates were published online. The website has been updated to show 2021/22 templates. We are sorry for this oversight and any confusion that it may have caused.

With regards to the course specifications, the Chair of CASC agreed that both 2020/21 and 2021/22 templates will be accepted by CASC until the end of this academic year. However, where possible, please use the 2021/22 template that is currently published on the website.

IT Advice for Divisions regarding External Examiners examining in 2021/22

Kent IT accounts and MFA

In May 2021 the University of Kent applied MFA to External Examiner IT accounts to protect Kent's systems. Since the pandemic began in March 2020 it has been custom and practice for Divisions to invite External Examiners to sample work or to attend virtual Boards of Examiners meetings* using their own HEI email addresses, which were treated as guest IT accounts. However, due to ongoing cyber security concerns it is likely that MFA will be applied to all guest IT accounts in the very near future. We therefore recommend that from now on that External Examiners should only access Kent systems, which includes Teams, Moodle, External Examiner Report Submissions System (EERSS) and Staff Connect), using a Kent IT account which has MFA set up on it. MFA must be set up within 30 days of the account being created, which means that newly appointed External Examiners will be asked to:

- Change their temporary password
- Set up MFA

upon receipt of their appointment letter, which includes details of their login (username) and temporary password.

QACO plans to email all External Examiners of Taught Courses next month with the 2021/22 Guidance for Examiners and we will include a section on what External Examiners should do if they are in year 2, 3 or 4 of their appointment and have not yet set up MFA as previously instructed.
Helpdesk can provide assistance as required. Support is available by telephone by calling (01227) 4888 and select Option 2 for Staff and External Examiners, followed by Option 1 for MFA and password queries.
* **Note** – Our delivery partners (Validated Institutions and Partner Colleges) make their own arrangements in line with their Institution's IT security protocols.

Sharing Exam papers and Students' work with External Examiners

Please see the guidance below on sharing exam papers or other documents with External Examiners via Teams. This is the IS recommended method and Divisions are asked to refrain from using SharePoint 2016 sites as these are only accessible if External Examiners set up VPN using Global Protect. Unfortunately, a number of External Examiners have run into issues in setting up Global Protect which has caused delays in them performing their duties.

Method

Create a Microsoft Team to store and share the exam papers. Contact helpdesk@kent.ac.uk if you are not sure how to set up a Team. The Team should be called *XYZ_exams* where XYZ is your Division's shortcode.

Using the *Files* tab, create your folder structure and upload your exam papers.

To share the folders with external examiners you have two options:

1. You can add external examiners to the Team, meaning they can access all the files in the Team. To do this, click … > Manage team > Add member. Enter the external examiners Kent IT account name. This will mean they can access the papers using the same account they use to submit their report.
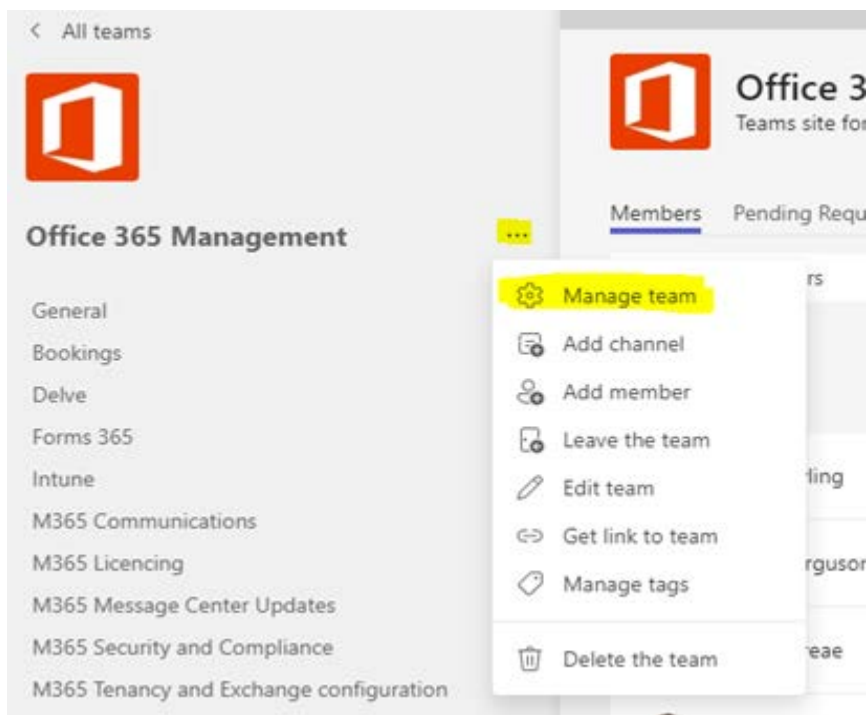
2. You can share particular folders or files with the external examiner. To do this, click the Open in SharePoint option at the top of the Files tab
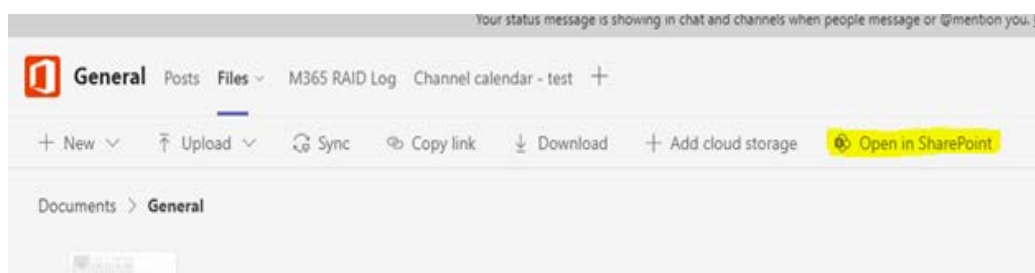
You will then be in the SharePoint site that sits behind the Microsoft Team, and in here you can manage access to a more granular level.

3. Click on the … next to the file or folder you wish to share. Then click Share and **enter the external examiners Kent IT account name**. This will mean they can access the papers using the same account they use to submit their report.

How the external examiner will access the reports

The external examiner will receive an email to their Kent IT account with a link to the Team, folder or files you shared with them. To check their University of Kent email they should go to **outlook.office365.com**. To access, they will need to use MFA, but will not have to go through the VPN. Link to MFA guide: https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/multi-factor-authentication-mfa

QA Training Sessions

Quality Assurance training sessions can now be booked via MS Bookings. All sessions will be run virtually on Microsoft Teams. Book on to a session listed below by clicking on the title of the training session you wish to attend.

Upcoming Training sessions include:

CMAS: Writing Course and Module Specifications: 04/04/2022, 2-3pm
Relevant for Academic staff, module or course convenors. This training will cover procedures for getting course and module specifications approved, approval deadlines for CMAS and policy advice.

CMAS: Reviewing Course and Module Specifications: 06/04/2022, 2-3pm
Relevant for Academic staff, QA Managers or QA Coordinators. This training will provide guidance on reviewing and processing course and module specifications, including what elements to look for when reviewing specifications and commenting on CMAS.

CMAS: Admin Approval Processes: 08/04/2022, 2-3pm
Relevant for QA Managers or QA Coordinators. This training will cover the module journey, minor and major amendments to modules and courses, approval requirements for CASC, CMAS approval deadlines and CMA guidance.

Early Informal Resolution (Appeals): 14/04/2022, 2-3pm or 21/04/2022, 10-11am
Relevant for QA Managers and QA Coordinators. This training will cover the Early Informal Resolution process, providing guidance for Divisional Staff on how to implement the process.

Annex 13 (AARP Chairs, Stage 2): 22/04/2022 at 2-3pm or 26/04/2022 at 11am -12pm
Relevant for Academic Appeal Review Panel Chairs. This training will provide AARP Chairs with an overview of the Stage 1 Appeals journey and will cover a variety of aspects of the Stage 2 Appeals process, including Panel Membership, AARP outcomes, AARP timeframes. This session will also look at AARP Case Studies.

Boards of Examiners Administration Training (for Board Secretaries & KV): 10/05/2022 or 11/05/2022 at 10.30am -12pm
Relevant for BoE Secretaries, QA Managers and BoE Chairs. Training session delivered by members of

the QA, KV and Divisional teams and will cover; Exam Board responsibilities, individual roles, Exam Board structures, running Mitigation Committees and will provide tips on preparing for Exam Boards. This session will also include a live demo of inputting BoE information on to KentVision.

Please note that training sessions will also be delivered on **Board of Examiner Guidance and Conventions** (Conventions for Classifications of Awards for 2021/22) and **External Examiner Guidance**. These are due to run in May - dates to be announced soon.

If you have any questions about any of the training please email: qacotraining@kent.ac.uk.

QA Blog

Seven Years of CMA - Kent's Journey to Compliance

by Daiva Nacyte (Quality Assurance and Compliance Adviser)

March 2022 marks the seven-year anniversary since Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) laws were introduced to UK Higher Education (HE) providers. Some colleagues may recall a rather bumpy journey to ensuring compliance, which included simplifying course and module specifications and checking multiple sources of information (Truth and Reconciliation Project, 2018-2019). This also included the removal of changes for in-session students, along with various other obstacles that we faced in the collective effort to find our feet on the somewhat muddy ground of Competition Law.

For those with little or no knowledge of UK Competition Law - the Competition and Markets Authority is an independent non-ministerial department responsible for ensuring that consumers get a good deal when buying goods and services. The department also ensures that businesses operate within the law. In a HE setting, the purpose of CMA is to ensure clear information provision, fair terms and conditions and accessible complaints process.

As an HE provider, the University of Kent has a duty of care to provide prospective and current students with timely and transparent information. It's no secret that students who choose to study at a university will be subjected to a substantial bill, and for many, high fees can limit access and opportunity to study. Unexpected changes to their chosen course could hinder their chances of success and/or result in restricted opportunities for further study or employment.

Although reference to CMA is often met with feelings of consternation, it is important to recognise that CMA is not designed to deter colleagues from making changes to improve the content of our courses. On the

contrary –CMA recognises that changes may be made to course content, design and delivery. It underlines the importance of weighing the risk of any proposed *change vs benefit* to current (or prospective) students, and in the event of any change, provides guidance as to available actions that can be considered 'fair' should any student or applicant seek redress or pursue legal action following implementation.

Over recent years, we have established practices to help strengthen and support compliance at Kent. These include risk assessments that allow us to weigh up the risks of any proposed changes, and step-by-step guidance for staff. A new CMA Training module is also in development and will be available to professional and academic staff – watch this space!

QACO staff periodically review procedures to improve institutional compliance. We regularly review compliance practices across the sector and ensure that any changes to external requirements are incorporated into our policies and procedures so that we remain CMA compliant. As a result, we have made enhancements to how we work, such as including CMA news and updates in every Quality Assurance newsletter, creating a designated mailbox (kentcma@kent.ac.uk) for CMA related queries, and standardising the risk assessment process.

We are currently working on exciting new developments to further support academic and professional service colleagues with appropriate training and resources:

- Creation of a CMA Training e-module (to be released by July 2022).
- Updating CMA pages (to go live by June 2022).
- Designing Staff Intranet resources which offer step-by-step guidance and sharing of good practice (to be made available later this year).

These developments ensure that we share our knowledge and experience with colleagues and instil confidence in making informed decisions related to CMA.

We are committed to continuing our journey to compliance whilst learning and adapting where required. CMA is not just a box-ticking exercise. By adhering to three key principles (information provision, terms and conditions, and complaint handling) we add value to our courses, enhance the student experience and strengthen the quality of our education offer.

If you would like to contribute to the QA Blog or get involved in this ongoing policy work, please get in touch with a member of the QA team via QACO@kent.ac.uk.

Updates to Codes of Practice / Credit Framework

The following changes have recently been applied to the Code of Practice - Research Courses of Study

- Annex H (Supervision): sections 10.4 and 10.5 have been updated regarding the Appointment Process for External Supervisors and Payment of External Supervisor's for PhD and Master's by Research students.

Code of Practice - Research Courses of Study: Codes Of Practice - Taught and Research Programmes (kent.ac.uk)

CMA Updates

Changes to modules post Online Module Registration (OMR):

These instructions apply to any changes to both optional and compulsory modules where CMA material information is altered, including withdrawal or suspension of a module. This means that the instructions also apply to modules that are suspended due to low registration numbers. **The process is outlined in section 13.6 of Annex B of the Codes of Practice.**

1)   The Division must email QACO via kentcma@kent.ac.uk outlining the details of the change(s) requested:
a.   Module code and title
b.   Details of all courses to which the module contributes
c.   Summary of the change(s)
d.   Rationale for the change(s)
e.   Number of students (currently) registered on the module

f. Mitigation for any affected students, where appropriate

2) QACO will assess the level of risk for the proposed changes and, if the Division is satisfied with the risk assessment, QACO will contact CSAO/RefData to make the changes.

3) QACO will maintain all records associated with late change requests and will report these to EASC.

If you have any concerns or queries related to CMA please do not hesitate to get in touch via kentcma@kent.ac.uk**.**

Useful weblinks

Academic Regulations – Research Courses:
https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/regulations/index.html?tab=research-courses-of-study

Academic Regulations – Taught Courses:
https://www.kent.ac.uk/te aching/qa/regulations/index.html

Collaborative Partnerships:
https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/index.html

Credit Framework:
https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/index.html

Research Code of Practice:
https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/index.html?tab=research-courses-of-study

Taught Code of Practice:
https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/index.html

If you would like to be added to the mailing list for this newsletter, please email qacotraining@kent.ac.uk.