Code of Practice for Quality Assurance for Taught Programmes of Study

QA Policy Statement

The University requires that there should be a Code of Practice for Quality Assurance that expresses the principles, responsibilities and structures through which it assures academic standards and the continuous improvement of the student academic experience.

This Code came into effect on 1 September 2001, having been approved by Learning and Teaching Board on 13 June 2001 and by Senate on 20 June 2001.

There will be a systematic process of review of this Code of Practice on an annual basis.

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1 Preamble

Senate is responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place that will:

• stimulate, through regular critical self-evaluation, improvement of the quality of the education provided;
• inform and provide assurance to current and potential students, and relevant external agencies and interests, as to the high quality of the education provided.

This Code covers all programmes leading to the award by the University of certificates, diplomas and degrees, at undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate level, including those delivered by other institutions. It does not cover programmes leading to research degrees, (see "Code of Practice for Quality Assurance for Research Programmes of Study"), and programmes delivered under accreditation. University Schools and Faculties, and institutions with validated programmes, may, however, introduce requirements additional to these minimum University requirements for quality assurance, for example in relation to professional body accreditation.

The Code is reviewed at regular intervals by the Education Board and is revised from time to time by the Education Board in order to ensure that it continues to represent best practice and is effective.

2 Terms used

2.1 A module is a self-contained, separately assessed component of a programme.

2.2 A programme of study - hereafter "a programme" - consists of an approved set of modules which leads when successfully completed to an award of the University.

2.3 Schools include (a), Academic Centres and Units with responsibility for delivering programmes and (b) institutions or organisations delivering programmes under validation or other partnership arrangement. Heads of School include Directors of these Academic Centres, Units and Institutions/Organisations.

3 Principles

This Code is based on the principles that quality assurance procedures will be simple and effective; will be integrated into the routine management of learning and teaching; and will harmonise as far as possible internal University and external agency requirements.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 This section of the Code summarises where responsibility lies for the various elements of the arrangements for assuring the quality of education provided by the University via taught programmes. Detailed requirements are set out in a series of Annexes to the Code.

4.2 Schools are responsible for:

• ensuring that modules and programmes submitted for approval conform with the requirements of this Code; (see Annex B: Approval and Withdrawal of Modules and Annex C: Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Programmes);
• delivering modules and programmes as approved;
• providing a learning environment which will encourage students to flourish and achieve their potential;
• ensuring, in co-operation with Faculties, that all students are provided in good time with all appropriate information relating to their programme and its modules (see Annex D: Information to Students);
• annual monitoring of modules, programmes and student progress, determining action to be taken as a consequence and reporting on these matters to Faculty Boards (see Annex E: Annual Monitoring);
• responding to annual reports of External Examiners (see Annex E: Annual Monitoring and Annex K: External Examiners);
• providing academic advice and support for their students (see Annex G: Personal Academic Support System);
• obtaining and considering the views of students on the education which the School provides (see Annex M: Student Evaluation);
• reflecting critically on the education which they provide, in particular as part of internal periodic review (see Annex F: Periodic Review) and of external review by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA);
• responding to the reports of internal periodic review panels (see Annex F: Periodic Review);
• acting upon the decisions of Faculty Boards and the Education Board;
• appointing a Director of Education and establishing an Education Committee with responsibilities as set out in Annex H: School Directors of Education and Education Committees;
• establishing as necessary Directors of Studies and Boards of Studies with responsibility for day to day quality management of specific programmes or of cognate groups of programmes (see Annex H: School Directors of Education and Education Committees);
• reviewing and developing the School Learning and Teaching Plan and monitoring and evaluating its implementation;
• approving minor changes to modules;
• maintaining a programme of peer review in keeping with University guidelines;
• Ensuring student engagement in quality assurance activities (see Annex N: Student Engagement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement).

4.3 Faculty Boards are responsible for:
• approving proposed modules, having ensured that no module is approved unless it conforms to the requirements of this Code (see Annex B: Approval and Withdrawal of Modules);
• recommending approval of proposed programmes, having ensured that no such approval is recommended unless the proposed programme conforms to the requirements of this Code (see Annex C: Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Programmes);
• approving withdrawal of modules and recommending withdrawal of programmes;
• reviewing annually School Learning and Teaching Plans and forwarding such plans for approval by the Education Board;

• ensuring that schools' annual monitoring conforms to the requirements of this Code and reviewing the outcome of such monitoring (see Annex E: Annual Monitoring);

• ensuring, in co-operation with schools, that all students are provided in good time with all appropriate information relating to their programme and its modules (see Annex D: Information to Students);

• organising and conducting periodic reviews on behalf of the University (see Annex F: Periodic Review);

• appointing an Associate Dean (Education) and establishing a Committee whose responsibilities with regard to undergraduate programmes include detailed consideration on behalf of the Faculty Board of those matters listed above (see Annex I: Associate Deans (Education) and Education Committees);

• appointing an Associate Dean (Graduate Studies) and establishing a Committee whose responsibilities with regard to taught postgraduate programmes include detailed consideration on behalf of the Faculty Board of those matters listed above (see Annex U: Associate Deans (Graduate Studies) and Graduate Studies Committees);

• monitoring the operation of Peer Review at school level;

• reporting annually to the Education Board on the exercise of powers delegated to it by that Board;

• reporting annually to the Education Board on the exercise of powers delegated to it by that Board with regard to undergraduate programmes;

• reporting annually to the Graduate School Board on the exercise of powers delegated to it by that Board with regard to taught postgraduate programmes.

4.4 The Education Board is responsible for:

• approving undergraduate programmes, having ensured that no programme is approved unless it conforms to the requirements of this Code (see Annex C: Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Programmes);

• determining, in the light of reports from review panels, whether programmes may continue, may continue on satisfaction of specified conditions or shall be discontinued (see Annex F: Periodic Review);

• approving withdrawal of undergraduate programmes;

• keeping under review this Code and its effectiveness;

• reporting annually to the Senate on the exercise of powers delegated to it by the Senate;

• considering the summary of recommendations from External Examiners to the University on undergraduate programmes as prepared by the Quality Assurance Office;

• overseeing arrangements for QAA Higher Education Review and ensuring the completion of any actions arising from these engagements;

1 For the purposes of this Code integrated masters programmes are regarded as undergraduate programmes.

2 For the purposes of this Code graduate certificate and graduate diploma programmes are regarded as postgraduate programmes.
• approving the University’s Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and ensuring the completion of any steps necessary for meeting strategic objectives contained therein;
• reflecting upon the contents of this Code and ensuring its systematic review in keeping with internal and external drivers and agencies.

4.5 The Graduate School Board is responsible for:
• approving taught postgraduate programmes, having ensured that no such programme is approved unless it conforms to the requirements of this Code (see Annex C: Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Programmes);
• determining, in the light of reports from review panels, whether programmes may continue, may continue on satisfaction of specified conditions or shall be discontinued (see Annex F: Periodic Review);
• approving withdrawal of taught postgraduate programmes;
• keeping under review this Code and its effectiveness;
• reporting annually to the Senate on the exercise of powers delegated to it by the Senate;
• considering the summary of recommendations from External Examiners to the University on taught postgraduate programmes as prepared by the Quality Assurance Office.

4.6 Boards of Examiners are responsible for:
• reviewing the marking of assessed work and confirming the marks awarded to students;
• making recommendations for the award of qualifications;
• making recommendations with regard to progression, re-sit examinations and termination of registration (see Annex J: Meetings of Boards of Examiners).

4.7 External Examiners are responsible for:
• monitoring, advising and reporting on standards in relation to assessment of students and the award of qualifications;
• ensuring that assessment of students is undertaken fairly and rigorously (see Annex K: External Examiners).

5 Collaborative Provision

Collaborative programmes of study leading to awards of the University are established and maintained in accordance with the University’s Collaborative Provision Policies and Procedures. All such programmes are subject to Kent’s regulations, Codes of Practice for Quality Assurance and Credit Framework conventions, except in so far as these may be varied in a signed Memorandum of Agreement.

Institutions offering programmes of study leading to University awards are required to have in place a quality assurance system that is consistent with the requirements of the University’s Codes of Practice for Quality Assurance.

The University will normally nominate a School and Faculty of the University to oversee the effective quality management of each collaborative programme of study. The nominated School and Faculty will exercise such responsibilities for collaborative programmes as are assigned to School and Faculties by the Code of Practice for Quality Assurance for programmes leading to University awards.
The detail of the arrangements for validated institutions is set out in Annex L: *Quality Assurance Procedures for Programmes of Study at Validated Institutions Leading to University Awards*. The detail of the arrangements for Partner Colleges is set out in Annex O: *Quality Assurance Procedures for Programmes of Study at Partner Colleges Leading to University Awards*.

6 **Quality Management Structures for Taught Programmes**

Please see the table on the next page.