Annex S: University Procedures for engaging with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statements

N.B. Where the text states ‘School’ this should be understood to refer to ‘School’ or ‘Department’ at the sub-divisional level, as appropriate.

A. PSRBs

1. Annual Review

1.1. At its first meeting during the Autumn Term the University Education and Student Experience Board and Graduate and Researcher College Board will receive a register of PSRB accreditations including dates of previous and next engagements and the nature of the engagement (e.g. accreditation event, paper-based recognition exercise, mid-cycle follow up visit etc). The register will be maintained by the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office, based on information provided by Schools (see also 6 below).

1.2. Schools are required to signal significant issues raised by PSRBs through the annual monitoring process as described in Annex E of the University Codes of Practice for the Quality Assurance of Taught\(^1\) and Research\(^2\) Courses.

2. Periodic Review

PSRB reports and School responses are reviewed as part of the cycle of periodic review (see Annex F of the Codes of Practice).

3. Prior to PSRB engagement

3.1 When considering engaging with a PSRB, the School should discuss the proposed engagement with the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office.

3.2 The objectives of this early discussion are:

- To aid the School in its preparations for the PSRB engagement.
- To provide assurance to the University that the School is aware of the requirements of the PSRB and is in a position to satisfy them.
- To ensure that the University and School is aware of any potential problems related to the PSRB engagement and is able to identify appropriate solutions.

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1 [https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/documents/copt2020-annexe-annual-monitoring-v2.pdf](https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/documents/copt2020-annexe-annual-monitoring-v2.pdf)
3.3 The discussion should focus on the following:

1. PSRB criteria;
2. Timetable for the engagement (submission of documentation to the PSRB, visit dates, PSRB feedback and report date etc.);
3. Outcome of any previous engagements (e.g. previous report, recommendations etc.);
4. Identification of areas of good practice.

3.4 The Quality Assurance and Compliance Office will provide assistance in completing the form.

4. Depending on the outcome of the initial discussion with the School about the PSRB engagement, further meetings between the School and the QACO may be necessary to assist the School in its preparations (e.g. preparation of the documentation, support on the day of the PSRB visit etc.).

5. Post PSRB engagement

5.1 On receipt of a PSRB accreditation report, the School will forward a copy of the report to the relevant Divisional Education and Student Experience Committee (ESEC)/Graduate Studies and Student Experience Committee (GSSEC) (as appropriate to the courses in question) for its consideration. Where the PSRB report includes conditions and/or recommendations to the School in order to gain or retain accreditation, the School should also forward its draft response to the ESEC/GSSEC for consideration. This should include a note of any particular areas of good practice for wider dissemination within the University.

5.2 The ESEC/GSSEC will consider both the accreditation report and response and confirm that the draft response is satisfactory before it is submitted to the PSRB. The ESEC/GSSEC will submit the report and response, plus any comments that the ESEC/GSSEC wishes to raise, to the Education and Student Experience Board and/or Graduate and Researcher College Board via the Divisional Report.

5.3 The Division will report on the fulfilment of any recommendations/conditions to the Education and Student Experience Board and/or Graduate and Researcher College Board via the Divisional Report.

6. A register of PSRB accreditations held by the University of Kent (including dates of the accreditation) will be published on the website of the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office (QACO). PSRB reports and Divisional responses to reports will be held by QACO so that there is a central repository of all the University’s PSRB engagements.
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7. Where a PSRB accreditation agreement, report or other document is required to be signed by the University to confirm acceptance, this should normally be by the Divisional Director of Education and Student Experience/Graduate Studies and Student Experience, as appropriate. Any School response should be signed by the relevant Divisional Director on behalf of the ESEC/GSSEC before submission to the PSRB and the ESEB/GRCB.

8. The School should inform the Student Records and Examination Office (SREO) of the accreditation so that the SREO may attach the accreditation to the appropriate course(s) of study.

9. The School shall be responsible for ensuring that students are informed of the PSRB recognition status of the course or award on which they are registered.

Note: Schools/Divisions should bear in mind that PSRB accreditation, approval or recognition of courses or awards may on some occasions be limited to specific named modules, particular modes or locations of delivery. If, following accreditation of a particular course of study, the School or Division wishes to alter the module provision or extend its provision of the course to different modes of study, locations or through collaborative arrangements, it should contact the relevant PSRB for advice on whether its accreditation will cover this change or extended provision.

10. Where a PSRB decides not to continue an existing accreditation, Division must report this change to ESEB so it may be reported to OfS under the requirements for reportable events. The Division account should include an explanation as to why the accreditation was discontinued.

B. QAA Subject Benchmark Statements

11. Subject Benchmark Statements are published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and are part of the Quality Code.

12. Subject Benchmark Statements set out expectations about the standards and characteristics of degrees in a range of disciplines. They describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity, and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities and skills needed to develop understanding or competence in the subject.

13. There may be Subject Benchmark Statements for degrees at undergraduate level, postgraduate level or both.
14. Course Development and Approval

14.1 The University recognises the importance of the Subject Benchmark Statements in defining its courses of study.

14.2 New or revised courses of study must be designed with reference to the applicable Subject Benchmark Statement(s), where such exist. In particular, the course learning outcomes must be mapped to the Benchmark Statement to demonstrate how the Statement has been addressed. (Refer to the course specification template for mapping guidance.)

14.3 Where the course of study is at postgraduate level, but there is no postgraduate level Subject Benchmark Statement, there is no requirement to use the equivalent undergraduate level Statement, however, it may help the development of the course specification to do so. If an undergraduate level Statement is used in the production of a postgraduate course specification, an appropriate statement is to be included in the specification. (Refer to the course specification template for guidance.)

15. New and Revised QAA Benchmark Statements

15.1 The QAA periodically publishes new or revised Subject Benchmark Statements. The relevant School(s) will be advised of the publication of the new or revised Statement by the Quality Assurance and Compliance Office.

15.2 Upon being advised of the publication of a new or revised Benchmark Statement, the relevant Divisional Director of Education and Student Experience/Graduate Studies and Student Experience will circulate the Statement to the relevant academic staff with a requirement that all current courses of study affected by the Benchmark Statement are reviewed for possible updating or revising. Where courses are subsequently revised they will then be submitted for re-approval as appropriate, as per the requirements of Annex C³: Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Courses of the Code of Practice.

³ https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/documents/copt2020-annexc-approval-withdrawal-courses-v2.pdf