

**QUALITY FRAMEWORK**

**QUALITY MANUAL SECTION 8**

**PROFESSIONAL STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES (PSRBS)**

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## **1 Introduction**

1. The University has a professional/academic relationship with a large number of Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) who accredit or recognise a wide range of University award-bearing and non-award-bearing courses. In some cases, statutory requirements are in place to enable the University to provide certain types of courses, for example in teacher education for courses leading to Qualified Teacher Status or in health for courses leading to registration as a nurse or physiotherapist. In addition, a growing number of overseas governmental, regulatory or statutory bodies now maintain oversight of University courses delivered at other locations in collaboration with partner organisations (e.g. the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation for Academic and Vocational Qualifications; the Malaysian Qualifications Agency). The endorsement of a relevant PSRB is, for many students, a key benefit in choosing to study for an award of Sheffield Hallam University, either onsite or at an overseas location. Academic staff membership and involvement with PSRBs contributes to the enrichment of the curriculum and the links between theory and professional practice enable students to develop their employability skills.

## **2 University Management and Oversight of PSRBs**

2. The University's management and oversight of PSRBs has both faculty and institutional dimensions. At local level within the faculties, responsibility and regular contact normally sits with a designated academic link / contact for a specific PSRB (and with relevant administrative staff within faculties). At local level, academic staff will manage the day to day requirements for the accreditation and review processes in relation to specific courses, as required by individual PSRBs. Departmental Boards are responsible for maintaining oversight of the accreditation status of courses within their own academic portfolios.
3. At institutional level, Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) maintains oversight of the accreditation status of the University's awards on behalf of University Teaching Quality Committee (UTQC) and the UTQC also keeps a central register of all current accrediting bodies and associated courses. AQS ensures that accurate information on the accreditation status of individual courses is published in the University prospectus. AQS faculty teams may also co-ordinate joint validation and accreditation exercises as part of the University's scheduled validation activity or may support separate review and/or accreditation exercises for individual PSRBs, as required by faculties and departments.
4. The Department of Teacher Education and the Department of Education, Childhood and Inclusion (within the Faculty of Development and Society) both offer courses in Initial Teacher Training (ITT). As providers of ITT, the departments are subject to separate monitoring and inspection by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). Academic Quality and Standards provides specific support to these departments in preparing for Ofsted inspections and to assist them in meeting external requirements for demonstrating the quality and standards of provision, as stipulated by Ofsted.
5. A consistent approach to the management of PSRBs and their individual requirements for accreditation, monitoring and review, is essential to ensure that:
  - Staff are clear about their individual responsibilities for PSRB management in relation to specific courses
  - The University is able to maintain oversight of the accreditation status of all of its awards and ensure accurate information is made available about the accreditation status of courses

- Both at faculty and institutional level, there is awareness of, and appropriate action taken to address, any issues raised by PSRBs in relation to quality and standards of provision, or the potential withdrawal of accreditation from a University award
6. Oversight of PSRB activity at institutional level is also necessary to ensure the University meets external expectations and requirements in relation to:
- Institutional oversight of the quality and standards of provision, including the accreditation of, and recognition by PSRBs, is a key principle of the University's Quality Framework
  - The publication of Key Information Sets (KIS) for relevant UG courses, which must include accurate information on course accreditation
  - Compliance with consumer legislation as it applies to HE sector, which is concerned with ensuring institutions provide accurate information to applicants and students about their courses, including the accreditation/recognition status of courses
  - Sector focus and requirements for the availability and accuracy of public information (including judgements on the accuracy of an institution's public information via current QAA review methodology and the Information Commissioner's Office requirement for a published list of accreditations)
  - The higher profile of the QAA's Cause for Concern process, which can be triggered by PSRBs

## **Management of PSRBs at Faculty Level**

### ***Course Level***

7. The faculty and/or departmental academic contact (i.e. the designated correspondent) for a specific PSRB is responsible for ensuring that the link is managed effectively and evidenced sufficiently to allow publication about the accreditation status of the course in the prospectus and Key Information Sets (KIS). The academic contact / designated correspondent for the PSRB is responsible for the following activities, at a **course level**:
- If applying for accreditation as part of the validation process, at course design and planning stage the proposer / academic contact should identify the level of the PSRB's involvement in the approval process and any specific requirements for the approval exercise, e.g. applying for any exemptions from the Academic Awards Framework and /or Standard Assessment Regulations, if required by the PSRB for the purposes of approval and accreditation. NB: PSRBs' requirements for joint validation/accreditations should be discussed with the relevant Senior Quality Officer for the faculty, at the earliest opportunity, to enable AQS to provide the necessary support and organisation for the approval exercise
  - If PSRB accreditation is to be sought post-validation (i.e. through a separate exercise from the University's internal validation process) the academic contact will be responsible for identifying the necessary requirements for accreditation. Again, any support for a post-validation accreditation exercise should be discussed with the relevant faculty Senior Quality Officer
  - Responsible for ensuring, once confirmation of PSRB accreditation/recognition is received, that all the relevant correspondence is forwarded to the AQS faculty team for updating of central University records
  - Providing AQS with the necessary marketing text to accurately describe the accreditation status of the course and, where applicable, confirm the appropriate text for the Key Information Set (KIS) from the standard selection used for KIS, as provided by HESA

- Annual monitoring and reporting to PSRBs. The academic contact for the PSRB completes the required information and provides evidence according to the specific requirements of the PSRB. Confirmation of the outcome of annual reviews/monitoring visits etc should be forwarded to the faculty AQS team for updating of University records
- Making the necessary arrangements for PSRB monitoring visits / meetings / reporting. Some PSRBs carry out annual or periodic monitoring visits or have specific annual reporting requirements. Where AQS support is required for annual review and/or reporting activity, arrangements should be discussed with the relevant faculty Senior Quality Officer
- Notifying all relevant stakeholders (at department, faculty and institutional level) in advance, where a PSRB raises concerns about University provision. A PSRB may request an exceptional visit to investigate concerns. This is rare but potentially can be serious and it is essential that the academic contact communicates promptly with the relevant senior staff at faculty and institutional level, as soon as any issues are raised (see section 12, below for further information)
- Notifying the PSRB of any proposed modifications to existing provision according to their agreed protocols and, vice versa, if changes to existing provision are required by the PSRB, the departmental board and AQS faculty team should be notified and the correct approval/modification process followed (e.g. if an exemption from Standard Assessment Regulations is required)
- Ensuring that course documentation is accurate, up to date and reflects the latest PSRB requirements and that the appropriate University processes are followed, where modifications or exemptions are required.

### ***Departmental and Faculty Level***

8. Departmental Boards should receive regular reports on the accreditation status of courses and the outcomes of PSRBs' monitoring and review activities, to facilitate oversight and to ensure support is provided for any actions necessary, as required by a specific PSRB. It is essential that a faculty overview is taken to allow the University to be confident about the accreditation status of its courses and the accuracy of its public information in this respect. Faculties are also responsible for ensuring that the University has correct and accurate central records about its accredited provision. Academic Quality and Standards is responsible to the University for maintaining a central record of all current PSRBs and the associated courses. A definitive list of PSRBs and accredited courses is presented to the University Teaching Quality Committee (UTQC), usually on an annual basis, for monitoring and sign off, on behalf of the University.

### **Management and Oversight of PSRBs at Institutional Level**

9. In addition to annually reviewing an overall register of PSRBs and associated courses, the UTQC receives regular digests of the latest PSRB reviews and reports at each of its meetings, as received via faculties, to ensure oversight of PSRB activity. The information presented to UTQC is compiled from information forwarded to AQS by the academic contacts/correspondent, at faculty level. This process complements the consideration of PSRB reports at faculty level, which is intended to highlight issues to be addressed at course, departmental and/or faculty level, particularly where urgent action is required. At University level, oversight of PSRB reports provides evidence to assess how the University as a whole is engaging with PSRBs.

## Academic Quality and Standards - Role and Responsibilities

10. Academic Quality and Standards has a pivotal role in the management and oversight of PSRBs and the accreditation of courses through the co-ordination, communication and reporting of information arising from PSRB-related activity.

11. AQS will support the management and oversight of PSRBs by:

### *at Faculty level*

- maintaining accurate and up to date records of PSRB activity, including evidence to demonstrate the current accreditation status of individual courses and details of key contacts for individual PSRBs (SHU staff and PSRB staff contact details) and details of individual PSRBs' monitoring requirements
- ensuring there is regular reporting on PSRB activity to departmental boards and to the UTQC
- maintaining a forward schedule of anticipated PSRB activity for the faculty, updated on an annual basis
- working with academic contacts and course teams to support typical PSRB activity (e.g. for accreditation sought via a joint validation and accreditation exercise or via accreditation by PSRB visits or correspondence exercises; support for annual monitoring visits and/or correspondence, reporting and returns
- checking the text of prospectus entries and Key Information Sets (KIS) for accuracy in relation to evidence received to confirm accreditation - this activity is supported by the gathering and retaining of valid evidence and confirmations of accreditation. Where evidence of accreditation is not available or is not current, accreditation information will not be included in public information, prospectus entries or returned to HESA for purposes of Key Information Statements (KIS). This is necessary to avoid the risk of publicising incorrect information about the accreditation status of a course to potential applicants and students
- collection of relevant information/evidence provided by academic staff to maintain the University's definitive list of PSRBs and accredited courses and for regular reporting on PSRB activity to UTQC.

### *at Institutional Level*

- maintenance of a definitive list of PSRBs and associated courses on behalf of the University. The definitive list will be supported by appropriate evidence of accreditation status (formal documents, confirmation letters from PSRBs etc).

## Communicating Concerns Raised by PSRBs

12. If any serious issues arise as a result of an accreditation, monitoring or inspection exercises by a specific PSRB, or if serious concerns are raised in correspondence with a PSRB, the main academic contact/correspondent for the PSRB should immediately notify the relevant head of department, faculty Assistant Dean Academic Development, the Head of Academic Quality and Standards and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Chair of Academic Quality, Standards and Enhancement Committee). Subject to discussion by senior staff, actions required to address issues of concern raised by a PSRB will be prioritised by the department and by the University, as appropriate.

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