

University College Birmingham
QUALITY MANUAL
Issue 16

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document details the UCB commitment and approach to quality assurance and enhancement and its continuing development in line with the Corporate Strategy and its associated objectives. The stated quality strategies represent the latest evolution of a tried and tested quality approach that has been developed over many years and which underpins all UCB activity.

1.2 Process

The Quality Manual brings together the Quality Policy, its strategies and activities in one document that provides a comprehensive overview of systems that have maintained UCB as a provider of training and education with an international reputation for excellence. The strategies, systems and processes outlined have been developed through a regular review process that includes consultation with all UCB users, and feedback and comment from external agencies, inspectorates and specialists.

The Quality Strategy will continue to be monitored by the Academic Quality, Standards and Enhancement sub-committee of the Academic Board. The current period marks a particularly dynamic one for post compulsory education with new Government strategies and initiatives for further and higher education and new and transitional inspection and accountability arrangements prompting the realignment of many UCB systems.

2. Aims and Objectives

The quality of provision and the maintenance of high standards are central to UCB's Mission and Corporate Strategy. UCB, through its Governing Body, is committed to maintaining its position as the UK's premier provider of high quality education and training to the hospitality and service industries. In achieving this, and in meeting the needs of all users, UCB commits itself to a rigorous process of self-review and development in which every member of staff understands their role and recognises their individual responsibility for quality improvement and development.

The following objectives provide the basis for the Quality Policy:

- To deliver programmes that offer academic rigour and market competitiveness
- To ensure programmes meet relevant National standards and benchmarks
- To provide high quality programmes of study and add value to the student experience wherever possible.
- To make learning and studying at UCB an enjoyable and rewarding experience

3. The Quality Policy

University College Birmingham is committed to providing high quality education and training opportunities to the local, national and international communities. Through an approach of continuous improvement, it is intended that provision will realise the full potential of students, enabling them to achieve the highest of standards in their programmes of learning. UCB aims to equip students with the skills, knowledge and experience to meet both their personal needs and the ever-changing needs of the industrial, local and wider communities.

It is intended that the expectations of all groups of users will be met or exceeded through the application of best practice by skilled and committed staff.

UCB regards itself as accountable to all its students, clients, customers and to those bodies who fund, validate, accredit or in other ways participate in its work.

UCB is committed to:

- The involvement of all UCB staff in the support of the Quality Policy, utilizing their skills and expertise.
- The regular review and improvement of quality performance and service commitments.
- Continuously developing the effectiveness of quality assurance systems and tools to enable the ongoing enhancement of the student experience, to meet internal management information needs and external agency expectations.
- The development of staff skills and the quality awareness necessary to deliver a critical and self-evaluative quality reporting format for all programme and key student support areas.
- The maintenance of external accreditations through the development and maintenance of appropriate standards and service performance.
- Seeking recognition, wherever possible, of UCB expertise in service quality through accreditation to appropriate nationally benchmarked quality standards and initiatives.
- Seeking the involvement of all users in the review of performance, the maintenance of high standards and the design of service quality and delivery.
- Developing provision to meet the increasingly diverse and individual needs of clients, through partnerships, collaborative arrangements and remote delivery strategies of appropriate quality.

4. Context for the Quality Policy

UCB has continued to develop and improve its range of world-class facilities and provision, whilst successfully maintaining high standards of service for all users. UCB sensitivity towards the needs of the disabled and those with special needs has been acknowledged through the continuing recognition as an organisation that is, 'Positive about Disabled People'. UCB's national and international reputation for 'expert advice and assistance' was recognised by the award of a Queen's Anniversary Prize for Further and Higher Education. UCB maintains its accreditation of the Hospitality Assured 'Premier' award, the industry standard award for excellence in service delivery and business performance.

The year on year maintenance of high levels of service performance can be claimed and supported by data led evidence. The extensive use of student evaluation and satisfaction surveys provide valuable performance information, in addition to the range of committees, forums and the internal audit systems that encourage discussion and comment from students and users. UCB continues to record high levels of student and user satisfaction.

UCB continues to hold the Matrix award for the quality of its careers and employability services.

In 2007, UCB underwent a six month scrutiny by the QAA in response to an application for taught degree awarding powers (tDAP). The outcome was a very positive report subsequently endorsed by the Advisory Committee for Degree Awarding Powers and approved by the QAA Board. In response to the recommendation by QAA that the College be awarded tDAP, the Privy Council announced on the 9th November 2007 that the College had been granted the power to award its own degree programmes and to be awarded University College status. In 2012, UCB was confirmed as meeting the requirements for full University status.

In 2009, the PGCE Teacher Training programme was awarded 'outstanding provider' status by OFSTED after receiving outstanding grades at inspection.

In 2011, the QAA confirmed the highest rating of 'confidence' in UCB's maintenance of academic standards and the quality and enhancement of its learning opportunities.

In 2012, UCB was again confirmed as an 'outstanding provider' in a full OFSTED Inspection of our FE provision.

In 2015, The PGCE Teacher Training programme was awarded 'good provider' status by OFSTED after a full inspection.

In 2017, UCB achieved an overall grade of 2 'Good' in a full OFSTED Inspection of our FE provision with Grade 1 (outstanding) for Personal Behaviour, Development and Welfare.

UCB has collaborative agreements with colleges and schools and over 50 international educational establishments. Many students undergo periods of work placement in organisations at home and worldwide and close links with the industries we serve ensure the currency of the curriculum is maintained.

Curriculum provision has broadened; with new programmes being introduced each year and existing programmes being enhanced. New modes of access have resulted with new 'block delivery' programmes, weekend and summer school attendance, online and blended learning technologies. Continued investment in facilities has provided increased access to information technology, improved building fabric and facilities and new student accommodation (common rooms, café and social areas) and services (student portal and on-line learning materials).

Some examples of recent enhancements include: a new higher education campus including a post-graduate centre, two new Bakeries at the Summer Row site and refurbished training kitchens designed to industry standards, two new Specialist Hair and Media Make-up Salons, new student social learning spaces and IT suites, a food development and science suite, expansion of vocational provision to enable students to gain additional professional qualifications; the development of Apprenticeships on-line programmes and blended learning, the introduction of on-line results portal for student access and developments in e-learning including on-line submission and marking.

Action Plans for improvement are discussed at Subject Boards and Board s of Study (staff and student liaison meetings), Academic Quality, Standards and Enhancement Committee meetings. Consultation arrangements are constantly reviewed through internal systems, such as Academic Committee and sub-committee meetings, Team Meetings and Internal Audit Reports. In 2014, the McIntyre House campus was opened to students and new food science and technology suites opened in the Summer Row building. In 2019 the new £42 million Moss House building was opened

UCB stakeholders have suggested many changes and improvements, whether students, staff or employers – ideas for innovation are welcomed from whatever source.

In achieving and maintaining high standards, a sophisticated and comprehensive set of systems, committees and activities are involved in the application of the quality cycle of monitoring, reviewing, developing and enhancing service and provision.

5. Quality Strategy and Responsibilities

5.1 The Quality Strategy

To ensure the Quality Policy is delivered and high levels of performance and user satisfaction are maintained, a range of appropriate quality control and assurance strategies are utilised. These quality strategies will be regularly reviewed with the involvement of staff, students and stakeholders, and ratified by UCB Management and Governors through a clearly defined committee structure.

The UCB Quality Strategies will be to:

- Specify minimum monitoring and evaluation criteria for programmes of teaching and learning. The criteria will include activity, information, analysis, timescales and reporting.
- Set and monitor performance against appropriate benchmarks, both internal and external, to inform standards and enhance performance.
- Encourage the widest participation and engagement in the quality development process, including students, staff, awarding body representatives, employers, funding representatives and members of the local and wider communities.
- Encourage and develop third party assessment of service performance through appropriate audit and observation activities.
- Make the results of the monitoring available to any person or body, subject to the requirements of the General Data Protection Act, provided that the best interests of its staff and students are protected.
- Ensure close links between quality monitoring and service enhancement.
- Encourage the updating and skills development of School teams and those who support their work.

5.2 Quality Responsibilities

UCB has a series of well-developed quality assurance systems and arrangements that ensure the maintenance of academic standards for programmes of learning and high levels of service for students, staff and all other users of UCB and its facilities.

The UCB Corporation endorses policy and through its Student Services and Standards Committee oversees the effectiveness of quality assurance and service delivery arrangements.

The Executive Management Team is responsible for the direction and application of quality strategy and the setting and review of performance measures and targets.

The Academic Board receives reports on quality activity, performance and enhancement and through its subcommittees provides forums for consultative quality development.

A central team (Curriculum and Quality) has responsibility for supporting and monitoring the development of quality in UCB.

The primary focus for the quality of provision and student experience lies with the programme and supporting teams.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Quality Strategy will be regularly reviewed by the Academic Quality, Standards and Enhancement Sub-Committee of the Academic Board to ensure its currency and relevance. The Corporation will continue to monitor and receive reports on the quality and standards of provision and student experience.

7. The UCB Approach to Quality Management

The UCB approach to the design of quality systems is based on premise that the maintenance of standards and the continuing enhancement of service is dependent on the effective partnership between students and stakeholders in identifying performance and seeking opportunities for enhancement. In practical terms, this partnership consists of three groups,

- students
- external representatives (employers, external academics and community partners)
- staff

7.1 Students

UCB recognises the importance of engaging with its students and developing systems to effectively encourage and gather opinion on both the performance of UCB and the quality of the overall student experience. The students' role is essentially one of the primary user of UCB services and they have a central role in providing information of both a qualitative and quantitative nature. This information may be 'passive' in nature, where student opinion is gathered anonymously through questionnaires or other survey mechanisms and provides important performance monitoring data. Student engagement is also 'active', whereby students or their representatives attend quality forums to discuss and identify action for enhancement. So student contributions can be either judgmental on existing systems and performance, or developmental, where they are contributing to the enhancement and improvement of service performance going forward.

The main purposes of gathering student feedback are as follows:

- To provide benchmarks for measuring programme and UCB performance
- To enhance students' programme and UCB experience
- To enable the development of teaching content, delivery, assessment and support
- To provide information on student satisfaction levels and trends over time

Student feedback and opinion is used at various levels within UCB. At module, programme and support area level it is evaluated and used to confirm effective practice and identify areas for enhancement. At committee and management level it is used as primarily a performance measurement tool and aggregated student satisfaction information is reported at Corporation Committee level and forms a key benchmark indicator of performance. Most quality enhancement as a result of student feedback takes place at operational level where the specific information provided is most pertinent and is used to improve quality.

7.1.1 Student and User Questionnaires

A system of student questionnaires has been developed over many years to gather feedback and satisfaction information from all aspects of UCB life; from teaching and learning at programme level, to specific resources or activities, such as student placement visits. The DICE Team (Developing Innovation and Curriculum Enhancement) manage the questionnaire service to the UCB teams and the use of the questionnaires is integrated into other quality systems, such as the annual performance evaluation and reporting systems. Questionnaires can be designed in partnership with the relevant teams and are updated as necessary.

Students are requested to complete a 'First Impressions' questionnaire shortly after commencing their programme, and a 'Programme Review' questionnaire at the end of each year of their programme. Module Review questionnaires gather valuable information on teaching, learning and assessment for each module. Students are also encouraged to complete destination questionnaires on completion.

Results of surveys including the National surveys are reported to student representatives at the Boards of Study meetings each year

7.1.2 Student Representation

Student representation is integral to UCB quality systems and activities. At programme level, student representatives are elected to attend quality committees such as Subject Boards and Boards of Study. The Subject Boards are the first tier of a committee structure that encourages the debate of quality and academic standards amongst staff, students and management. Subject Boards convene termly and have a joint membership of programme managers, staff and student representatives. They represent a related 'cluster' of programmes of learning and the meetings have a semi-structured agenda. Discussion at this level focuses mainly on the progress of the programmes in terms of the delivery and content of teaching and learning and the quality of the student experience.

Boards of Study are the next tier of committee and there are separate Boards for FE and HE programmes. They are full sub-committees of the Academic Board of UCB. At this level a higher level of academic debate is encouraged and issues common to either FE or HE delivery are discussed and evaluated. Student representatives normally attend Board of Study meetings and are able to participate fully. Minutes of the termly Boards of Study are presented to the Academic Board, which is the reporting committee chaired by the Vice-Chancellor & Principal that monitors the activity of its sub-committees and is charged with the maintenance of standards. Student representation at Academic Board is through the President of the Guild of Students, which is a position open to election by the student body. The President of the Guild of Students is also a member of the Academic Quality, Standards and Enhancement Committee and the Validation and Approvals Committee of the Academic Board in addition to being an active member of the UCB Corporation.

7.1.3 Student Tutorials and Consultation

All students have timetabled tutorials with a named member of staff; in most cases this is their programme manager or tutor. Both group and individual tutorials are designed to provide a forum for engaging with and motivating students. This involves joint discussion on progress and problem solving, the reviewing and setting of learning targets, the identification of appropriate support strategies and resources, as well as gathering student impressions and suggestions on the quality of their learning and UCB experience to date. Student tutorials are an essential part of the learning and development process, where individual access to staff enables specific needs to be met and progress tracked and coached. Tutorials are valuable to staff, as in addition to their coaching and monitoring role the interaction with students via the tutorial process enables student opinion to be assessed and suggestions identified. Many ideas for programme improvement have arisen from this interaction with our student partners.

Student engagement meetings are held each year to discuss the quality of the student experience and may be focused on enhancement opportunities or proposed changes to programmes for example.

The regular internal audits of programme and support areas include an important focus on meeting with student groups.

7.2 External Partners

The approach to UCB quality management and enhancement has always included a willingness to seek external review and assessment wherever possible to enable the confirmation of good practice and high standards, and also to identify areas for further development. This approach has resulted in UCB gaining and holding many quality awards with their consequent regular re-appraisal and examination of UCB work. A partnership with external subject specialists enables high academic standards to be maintained in course content delivery and assessment. A long-standing close relationship with employers also helps to maintain the vocational relevance of appropriate programmes.

Appropriate employers, industry representatives and academic specialists from other institutions are invited to be members of Validation and Approvals Committee with UCB managers to review existing programmes and consider proposals for new ones. Their expertise assists in the rigour of this process and the quality of the validated programmes of learning. External membership of UCB Internal Audit Teams is also sought to provide increased subject specialism, moderated classroom observation and an independent viewpoint in this important quality system.

7.2.1 External Examiners and Verifiers

Awarding bodies and UCB identify suitable subject and academic specialists from other institutions to advise on academic standards and assessment practice. The benefits include the benchmarking of assessment process and procedures against national and awarding body standards and the confirmation of the suitability and rigour of UCB's approach. (FE) Verifiers

represent the appropriate FE awarding bodies and make regular visits to ensure UCB are maintaining appropriate standards.

External Examiners have a key role in the monitoring of assessment practice for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Many of these programmes are awarded by the University of Birmingham under the joint accreditation agreement. External Examiners are an essential part of the UCB assessment process; they approve planned assessments such as examination papers and discuss and moderate assessment outcomes. They cross-mark samples of assessed work and provide a source of independent specialist advice on appropriate assessment practice and student expectations. Verifiers and External Examiners submit regular reports commenting on standards of assessment practice and student work. These reports are integrated within the UCB quality systems. They are reported to academic management and disseminated to programme teams. The appropriate manager makes a response to the reports and any action for improvement is recorded. External Examiners are informed by UCB of action taken to maintain high standards.

7.2.2 Employers and Industrial Partners

UCB is a specialized provider of vocational programmes and close contact with industry is important to ensure the industrial relevance of the programmes and indeed the identification of appropriate programmes for delivery. Most programmes include periods of student placement or work experience and so the ongoing partnership with employers is an important resource that has been developed over many years. A database of employers is maintained, placements regularly checked and assessed for health and safety, and students visited and supported during their placement period.

The close partnership with employers provides opportunities to discuss and identify industrial trends and contemporary practice, and enables the curriculum to be adjusted where necessary to maintain relevance. Current skills necessary for industry employees and managers are identified and integrated within the teaching and learning, and planned changes to existing programmes or new programme opportunities identified. This close contact with industry provides opportunities for staff development and updating as well, with many staff not only visiting employers but spending periods working with them updating skills and techniques. Industry partners are used to help identify resource requirements with major ongoing refurbishments in realistic environments it is essential to match equipment purchasing with the very best the industry has to offer and UCB has an excellent record of this.

7.2.3 External Assessments

The UCB willingness to present itself for external scrutiny reflects not only a confidence and pride in the work it does but also the realisation that opinion must be continual sought against external benchmarks and practice to identify opportunities for innovation and improvement. UCB is a long time holder of many National and industry specific quality awards. Many of these are whole University awards such as Hospitality Assured (Premier) for service and business excellence. Some are area specific, such as the Matrix award for the Careers and Employability service. What these awards have in common is an ongoing re-assessment against quality criteria by external assessors on a regular basis against National

Standards. They are looking not just for compliance against standards but the active development and improvement over time in performance. It is this sort of commitment to using external expertise to maintain internal excellence that has helped UCB maintain high standards of provision and delivery in an increasingly competitive area of provision.

7.3 Staff

The third strand of the quality partnership focuses on the staff contribution to quality development and the maintenance of standards. Staff are valued as an essential resource and effective personnel systems and well-resourced staff development ensures that a high calibre of staff are recruited, developed and rewarded. Induction systems, mentoring and the probationary scheme enable new staff to settle in and achieve their potential quickly. Line manager observation of teaching, and the coaching of staff help identify specific staff development needs and contributes to improving performance and the maintenance of standards.

Staff take part in UCB committee meetings such as the Subject Boards, Boards of Study and the Academic Board as well as the many sub-committees of Academic Board and its advisory groups. These all review and discuss performance and identify action for improvement.

7.3.1 Internal Audit

Staff are encouraged and supported to train for and carry out a number of quality related activities. An important element of UCB quality assurance is the Internal Audit system, whereby a team of staff from across teaching and support areas, are trained in inspection and classroom observation techniques. They form teams of usually five or six (depending on the nature and scope of the audit) to carry out a quality audit of a programme or support area independent of their own area of responsibility. The audit team will also, wherever possible, have an external member to provide subject specialism and an external and truly independent viewpoint and judgment. These external specialists are usually inspection trained or part-time inspectors and bring a valuable moderating influence to Internal Audit outcomes and judgments. Audits are currently planned on an annual rolling programme. Audit Reports include a profile of classroom observation grades following the criteria of the relevant inspection model that is used. Currently, the audit of further education provision is informed by the OFSTED Education Inspection Framework model and audits of HE provision are influenced by the Teaching Excellence Framework requirements and the Higher Education Academy criteria.

7.3.2 Team and Planning Meetings

Staff involvement in quality development is encouraged at every level with regular team meetings encouraging discussion and problem solving and staff disseminating information and good practice after attending development events. Curriculum teams hold planning meetings each year to ensure materials, systems and support mechanisms are reviewed and prepared before the next period of learning.

8. The Accreditation Committee of the University of Birmingham

This committee provides the formal link between the University of Birmingham, and University College Birmingham. The committee is a forum through which the University of Birmingham monitors standards, makes requests and imposes requirements on UCB to ensure the integrity of the Accreditation Agreement and the maintenance of academic standards. The committee has a joint membership of senior staff from both the University and UCB and is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham. The Committee provides a formal route to the Senate of the University and the Academic Board of UCB.

The Committee meets at least twice a year and monitors the work of UCB and the progress of accredited programmes. It has a responsibility for monitoring quality assurance at UCB and a University member of the Committee acts as a quality assessor and visitor at UCB. This quality 'visitor' advises generally on academic quality and the maintenance of standards. The Accreditation Agreement is re-validated through an in-depth University inspection of UCB every 5 years.

9. The Academic Structure

The Academic Structure provides for hierarchically linked formal committees that discuss the quality of provision, the progress of teaching programmes, the quality of the student experience and service, and provide a forum that encourages academic debate and quality enhancement:

9.1 Subject Boards

Subject Boards are the forum for discussion of matters that affect groups of related programmes. Membership of Subject Boards will vary across curriculum areas as a result of the size of student population, type of study, etc. Student representation is effected by the election of group representatives to the board and issues raised by students and staff are recorded, together with a note of which member of staff is to respond and the nature of any action proposed and undertaken in response. Programme managers report results of student feedback questionnaires to the Board, in addition to progress on development plans and programme enhancement.

9.2 FE and HE Boards of Study

This layer of the structure promotes discussion of academic matters that affect whole areas of study. These Boards will be the principal route through which the academic development of programmes is reported to the Academic Board. Student representation is effected by the election of group representatives to the Boards and issues raised by students and staff are recorded, together with a note of which member of staff is to respond and the nature of any action proposed and undertaken in response.

9.3 Academic Board

The Academic Board will continue to oversee the entire academic work of UCB. Utilising its sub-committees and Boards of Study, it reviews all issues relating to academic progress within UCB. Student representation is effected by the ex-officio membership of the President of the Guild of Students and issues raised by students and staff are recorded, together with a note of which member of staff is to respond and the nature of any action proposed and undertaken in response.

9.3.1 Academic Quality, Standards and Enhancement Committee

Meets regularly to discuss all UCB quality and curriculum related issues. It has a monitoring and advisory role. It has a cross-college staff membership ratified by the Academic Board, including student representation through the President of the Guild of Students.

9.3.2 Professional Development Committee

Meets regularly to discuss and monitor all staff and professional development issues, activities and initiatives. It has a cross-college staff membership ratified by the Academic Board.

9.3.3 Equal Opportunities Committee

Meets regularly to discuss and monitor all equal opportunity issues, to develop policy and advise. It has a cross-college staff membership ratified by the Academic Board.

9.3.4 Validation and Approvals Committee

The Committee convenes when necessary to review submissions for new programmes, amendments to existing programmes, periodic reviews, re-validations and the consideration of applications for progression agreements, collaborative arrangements, new off-site learning facilities and proposals for changes to the FE programme portfolio.

The Committee has a membership that includes senior managers from areas independent of the programmes being considered, student representation via the President of the Guild of Students, external representation either from senior academics from other institutions or industry experts or both, whichever is appropriate to the submission. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning) chairs the Committee.

Where accredited programmes from the University of Birmingham are being considered, Minutes of the Validation and Approvals Committee are presented to the next available meeting of the Accreditation Committee for formal approval.

9.3.5 Academic Regulations Committee

Meets when necessary to review, revise and monitor the content and application of UCB's academic regulations. It has a senior academic team membership with representation from Registry and the Student Body. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning) chairs the Committee.

9.3.6 Advisory Committees

There are advisory committees to the Academic Board that meet regularly and have a monitoring and advisory role. Both have a cross-college staff membership.

- The Health and Safety Committee
- The Information Technology Committees

10. Programme Design, Validation and Amendment

With UCB committed to developing a quality management system that meets the requirements of all awarding and funding bodies, procedures have been designed and implemented to ensure quality and consistency in this area. These procedures describe the process of programme validation for new and existing programmes of education whereby the UCB Validation and Approvals Committee of the Academic Board meet to review and consider proposals for new programmes, the re-validation or amendment of existing programmes, the approval of collaborative agreements, off-site delivery resources, and the recognition of overseas programmes for the purpose of progression agreements. Graduate and postgraduate programmes are awarded by the University of Birmingham under an accreditation agreement and these awards are monitored and reviewed by a joint University and UCB Accreditation Committee. Proposals for collaborative agreements and their renewal are considered firstly by the Collaborative Provision Working Group who may recommend proposals to the Validation and Approvals Committee for consideration. The responsibilities for the Validation and Approvals process are as follows:

- The UCB Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for approving the investigation of proposed new programmes of study.
- The Programme Development Team is responsible for appraising proposed programmes and establishing its feasibility.
- The Curriculum and Quality Unit (CQ) is responsible for identifying the validation requirements; for organising the validation event; for seeking ratification for the approved programme and for notifying all relevant bodies.
- The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning) as Chair of the Validation and Approvals Committee, will agree the membership of the Validation and Approvals Committee and the protocol of the validation event.

- The Academic Board, through its Validation and Approvals Committee is responsible for approving any proposal for a new, amended or re-validated programme, either delivered at UCB or via a collaborative arrangement.

11. Staff Professional Development Review

Professional Development Review seeks to identify the training and development needs of all staff by means of an annual appraisal meeting (usually) with an individual's Line Manager. This staff development and performance review is integral to the overall drive to improve the quality of service provided by UCB and is a developmental activity which takes place within the context of institutional and team development.

The aims of the scheme are; to enhance the quality of the service provided by the institution to its client groups; to enhance the current performance and confidence of members of UCB staff in their current and future roles; to support staff in the acquisition of appropriate skills, knowledge and experience; to enable them to develop and meet the challenge of change and to identify, recognise and encourage good practice.

All staff are included in the scheme, which is focused on the annual 'Professional Development Review' meeting. All staff receive training in the scheme, skills building and related equal opportunities issues. The scheme has been developed to link mandatory Line Manager classroom observation of teaching staff to the identification of individual development needs through the Professional Development Review process.

The Professional Development Committee monitors the operation of the Scheme.

12. The Student Charter

The UCB Student Charter has been written by staff and student representatives to clearly set out what we expect of each other and which states the responsibilities of all those within the UCB community. It also states the ways in which students can comment on their programme and student life, and contribute to its enhancement. The Student Charter is not a legally binding contract, but provides a commitment to work together in an effective, productive and inclusive partnership. The Student Charter is reviewed each year.

13. HE Module Review

UCB's degree programmes comprise modules of learning. These define the learning outcomes, syllabus content, delivery and assessment strategies at a certain level of learning. The selection of an appropriate number of modules in each semester, across each year constitutes and identifies the programme of learning or qualification.

The quality, currency and integrity of these modules are essential to the continued relevance and appropriateness of the programme. Indeed, in the primarily vocational programmes in

which UCB specialises, frequent review and updating of module content is essential to maintain industrial, managerial and technical relevance. Contemporary industry practice must be combined with the needs of the student within the context of appropriate academic standards and assessment which measures the achievement of credit and which ensures learning outcomes are met.

Module review involves staff, students and appropriate external consultation in the ongoing development of modules of teaching. A Module Review Panel considers all proposed developments, and changes are approved and ratified by the Validation and Approvals Committee of the Academic Board.

Module review is an important element in the process of programme review, which is the integrating mechanism that brings together the range of micro quality systems, such as student feedback, external examiner comment and staff evaluation of programme performance. Refer to the Module Review Procedure for a detailed description of this process.

14. FE Programme Performance Review & FE Self-Assessment Report

UCB's commitment to providing quality FE programmes and to the maintenance of high academic standards depends, amongst other things, on the willingness to regularly review itself and the way it operates. By following the Programme Performance Review process all programmes of learning address issues central to maintaining and enhancing the quality of programme provision in a common format, that presents information in a clear and logical way and which facilitates internal and external benchmarking.

The process is designed to meet the requirements of awarding and inspection bodies. In addition, inspectors who regularly assess UCB against the requirements of national awards such as Hospitality Assured look to the Programme Performance Reviews for much of their evidence. It is an essential part of the UCB commitment to our students and clients that we show we do all we can to deliver high quality learning opportunities

Programme Performance Review serves a number of important functions. The prime purpose is the identification of programme strengths and weaknesses to enable enhancement of the student learning experience to take place whilst addressing the requirements of external funding, inspection and awarding bodies.

Programme Performance Review uses performance indicators, identified at programme level, as an important tool in helping to evaluate programme quality. Student feedback is also collated and evaluated. Indeed, Programme Performance Review is designed to bring together the various quality assurance processes (such as Subject Boards and External Verifier/Moderator feedback) to enable a considered and encompassing assessment of programme performance and the identification of enhancement opportunities. This process of quality evaluation results in the identification of programme strengths and areas for improvement which enables a structured and considered action planning process to take place and to be carried forward into the next year's Programme Performance Review.

The strengths and issues identified in Programme Performance Review feed into subject self-assessment reports produced each year by academic management for the further education subject areas of UCB.

Self-assessment is a realistic, honest and self-critical process that highlights programme area strengths and weaknesses, supported by evidence within the Programme Performance Reviews. OFSTED and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), place great emphasis on the importance of self-assessment as an essential indicator of the effectiveness of quality assurance systems. The Programme Performance Review is an important document in enabling this process to take place at the level of the individual programme.

15. HE School and Institutional TEF Review

The commitment to regularly review performance and identify opportunities for improvement is central to UCB's approach to quality management. Self-evaluation is an essential stage in many UCB quality processes, which also includes target setting, measurement and the involvement of all stakeholders in the assessment of performance. By evaluating performance against identified standards and criteria, good practice may be identified, validated and shared, and weaknesses identified and addressed.

For higher education programmes, the self-evaluation process follows the guidance and criteria specified by the Teaching Excellence Framework. The self-evaluation enables the higher education provision within the academic schools to produce their own annual self-evaluation documents (TEF Reviews). The TEF Reviews (self-evaluations) provide much of the information and evaluation needed for the HE TEF Review produced by UCB each year. The prime purpose of the self-evaluation of higher education teaching and learning is to maintain academic standards, enhance the student experience and to recognize the current level of performance of a programme or subject area.

Through the evaluation of performance against TEF criteria, the review and self-evaluation promotes the enhancement of academic standards and the quality of provision through the identification of strengths and weaknesses in school provision and UCB operation.

Targets for UCB performance are identified and reviewed by senior management and interpreted locally for individual programmes within the context of historical performance and appropriate benchmarks.

Refer to the HE School and Institutional TEF Review Procedure for a full description of these systems.

16. Internal Audit

UCB has recognised the need for a broad selection of staff to be trained in inspection techniques. These staff have been selected to take part in the UCB Internal Audit system, the purpose of which is to identify and report on the strengths and weaknesses of UCB provision. The audit process includes classroom observation of teaching and the evaluation of students'

learning, together with meetings with students and staff and a review of the performance of programmes within the subject or audit area. In response to the Audit Report the Curriculum or Support Area Team are required to submit an Action Plan for improvement that addresses identified weaknesses, the completion of which is monitored by the Academic Quality, Standards and Enhancement Committee.

Audits may be targeted at; specific 'subjects', programmes, cross-college activity (e.g. staff development and resourcing) and specific activities (e.g. assessment methods and industrial placement).

17. HE Periodic Review

The Periodic Review has been introduced to place the annual monitoring cycle in context with meta-level issues of currency, validity and relevance that all programmes must address at certain periods in their life-cycle.

All higher education programmes in UCB's portfolio will be subject to Periodic Review. This is a formal review of a programme's purpose and performance every five years, which will ensure that the programme continues to be current, relevant, effective, well managed and to provide appropriate value to students and stakeholders. For all qualifications, whether awarded or accredited by external or partner institutions, or awarded by UCB itself, Periodic Review will include a subsequent re-validation of the programme with judgments concerning conditional or recommended approval (or otherwise) for a further period as appropriate.

Periodic Review will utilise existing UCB quality strategies and systems in providing evidence and information in line with the UCB's approach of involving students, staff and external partners in evaluative judgments and decision-making wherever possible. It is a constructive process that encourages in-depth reflection and evaluation by programme stakeholders to identify enhancement, to maintain academic rigour and promote a quality experience and outcome for students. Refer to the Periodic Review Procedure for a full description of this process.

18. Assessment Practice

Awarding body rules and regulations are incorporated in the UCB's procedures for assessment practice that are regularly reviewed and re-issued. The procedures are closely monitored and are adjusted when necessary to ensure the current regulations are addressed and when new innovations are identified representing improved practice. External examiners, moderators and verifiers, teaching staff and managers may identify developments in assessment practice which may be incorporated into the updated regulations. All teaching staff attend update briefing sessions each year when the revised procedures are explained and re-issued.

19. Examination Boards

Examination Boards monitor the arrangements for assessment and recommend the marks and classifications for module assessment. They have a membership that varies depending on the stage of assessment and programme type and level, but includes the Deans and Heads of Department, relevant staff members and external members (External Examiners) as appropriate. Examination Boards include a representative from the Registry who takes minutes and ensures consistency of process and decision-making and a representative from the Examinations Unit. Examination Boards are chaired by a senior academic manager.

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