

HE Quality Assurance Handbook

2010/11



HE Quality Assurance Handbook: contents

Introduction.....	3
SECTION A: University College Quality Policy	5
The development and review of policy at the University College.....	9
SECTION B: The committee structure of the University College	10
Terms of reference of academic committees	12
SECTION C: Validation and periodic review.....	18
Validation of a new course	18
Periodic Review for Courses.....	26
Course Validation and Review: Guidance notes for external panel members.....	34
Year Zero approval of a new pathway	37
Validation of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Units.....	37
Amendments to validated courses at the University College	38
SECTION D: Annual review process	42
Diagram of the University College's annual review process	49
SECTION E: Causes for Concern Policy.....	51
SECTION F: Student engagement with quality processes	53
SECTION G: Arrangements for monitoring the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework	54
SECTION H: External context for quality assurance	56
Institutional Audit	56
Academic infrastructure.....	56
SECTION I: External examining: principles, procedures and guidelines.....	60
APPENDIX 1: Forthcoming periodic review dates 2010/15.....	68

Introduction

This University College Quality Assurance (QA) Handbook for Higher Education is designed to provide a central point of reference for all staff in relation to quality assurance processes for higher education courses validated by the University College. It sets out the key processes which are used to assure the standards and quality of University College courses.

This handbook is published in both printed and electronic copy. It should be used in conjunction with other documents published by the University College, including the Undergraduate Course Framework and HE Regulations; the Postgraduate Course Framework and Regulations; and other guidance published to the intranet. For Preparation for HE courses, staff should refer to the PrepHE Quality Assurance Handbook.

The Arts University College at Bournemouth was granted taught degree awarding powers by the Privy Council in 2008. All students on taught higher education courses are enrolled on courses validated by the University College.

The University College welcomes feedback on its internal publications. Comments on the value of the Handbook, and suggestions for its improvement, should be sent to the Deputy Principal or the Director of Academic Services.

Professor Jim Hunter
Deputy Principal

September 2010

SECTION A: University College Quality Policy

The University College first developed a Quality Policy for its higher education courses in 1994. The policy is revised regularly, taking account of changes to national quality arrangements; emerging sector practice; and operational experience.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University College is committed to the provision of the highest quality educational experience for its students, in keeping with its aspiration to be the leading specialist provider of higher and further education for art, design, media and performance.
- 1.2 The University College acknowledges that this will only be achieved through the establishment of a culture of high quality delivery and continuous improvement in all areas of its work. The University College has therefore developed systems and processes for the assurance of quality, and its systematic enhancement.
- 1.3 These systems notwithstanding, all members of staff are responsible for ensuring that students and external partners and visitors receive a quality of service commensurate with published standards.

2. The Purpose of Quality Assurance

- 2.1 The University College is responsible for assuring itself and its stakeholders that the academic standards of all its higher education provision are:
 - appropriate to the level of the named award; and
 - comparable to other similar provision and awards on offer elsewhere across the country.
- 2.2 To ensure that this is achieved, the University College has established a quality assurance framework that allows the University College, through its Academic Board and supporting structures, to consider the nature and appropriateness of current and prospective provision in a self-reflective, evaluative and on-going way. This approach is enhanced by seeking the views of the academic staff involved, the students who participate on courses, and external examiners and moderators including practitioners who are able to provide a national perspective on academic standards and best practice.
- 2.3 In common parlance, “quality assurance” is used to refer to the systems and processes used to monitor both standards and quality; these have been disaggregated below, for ease of reference.

3. Setting and maintaining standards

External references

- 3.1 All courses are developed with reference to the FHEQ and the relevant subject benchmark statement, which is tested at validation. Validation includes external panel members to provide an objective evaluation of the course aims and objectives, and their appropriateness. The panel also considers the relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria. External examiners are used to confirm that marking standards are appropriate, and comparable to national standards. A Chief External Examiner has responsibility for taking a holistic view of all courses within the Faculty in which they are appointed, and making report to Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQ). A meeting of external examiners within the same School will be held to consider parity of process. In addition, an increasing number of University College staff hold external examinerships elsewhere, and staff also serve on external validation or periodic review panels. This provides an additional external reference point for staff.

Internal processes

- 3.2 The University College has developed a common Undergraduate Curriculum Framework, which identifies precepts common to all awards. This provides a degree of consistency in the way in which awards are developed and delivered. Courses are all required to develop a programme specification to a common template, which enables a clear overview of the course and its intentions.

Following Subject Review in 2000, the University College developed a Grading Matrix which describes typical performance against generic assessment criteria for each class of mark at each level for all courses. All units at Levels 5 and 6 (Levels 4 and 5 for Foundation degrees) are subject to an element of double marking in accordance with an agreed procedure, published in the *HE Quality Assurance Handbook*. Double marking takes place on all courses and, as well as being arranged within the course team, may be conducted across courses within a School. Where appropriate, cross-Faculty double marking is conducted. Where the markers do not agree on the mark to be awarded, the matter will be referred to the Course Leader in the first instance, who will advise on the action to take (which may include a review of further work, or the moderation of the marks of the whole cohort for that assessment tasks, to ensure that the assessment criteria are being applied consistently and fairly). Final grades on each unit are ratified by the School Examination Board (which includes the external examiner(s)). School Examination Boards are chaired by the relevant Head of School, and, in accordance with AUCB *HE Regulations*, an independent member appointed by the Chair of ASQ will attend the meeting to assure comparability of treatment and consistent application of the regulations. This independent member will be the Director of Academic Services, Academic Registrar, or a Head of School from the other Faculty. All recommendations on progression and award are presented to the Progression and Award Board for ratification.

Analysis of data

- 3.3 Consideration is also given to an analysis of data. School Examination Boards consider the profile of marks achieved on each unit, and across the School as a whole, and compare these both against historical course data, and against national trends. The Progression and Award Board takes an overview of course profiles, and may identify matters for further discussion through the annual or periodic course review process. In addition, ASQ gives consideration to profiles of achievement and considers trends in performance against national data.

Summary

- 3.4 ASQ remains conscious of the need to ensure comparability of standards both internally and externally. It considers that the mechanisms currently used by the University College are both necessary and sufficient. Nevertheless, it continues to monitor the evidence of external examiners' reports, and student data, and will introduce additional processes as appropriate to assure itself that standards are secure.

4. Methods of assuring quality

- 4.1 The intentions of the quality assurance process are to ensure that the University College meets or exceeds the expectations of its students; to identify where it has fallen short; and to put appropriate measures in place to ensure that this is addressed. Alongside this, there is an agreed programme of initiatives which are planned to enhance the quality of the student experience, and to identify and disseminate examples of innovative and successful practice. This programme is set out as part of the University College's Learning Strategy, which is designed to promote the highest quality learning experience.
- 4.2 Quality assurance mechanisms are those which enable the University College to confirm the quality of education provided. An essential point of reference for questions about the quality of the student experience is the QAA Code of Practice, which outlines good practice for consideration and which informs all University College policies and procedures which are connected with the student experience.

- 4.3 The University College believes that quality is best assured as close as possible to the point of delivery, whilst retaining an appropriate degree of distance and hence objectivity. In the same way, the processes which have been adopted to assure quality are designed to be as unbureaucratic or “light touch” as possible, whilst delivering a review which is sufficiently robust to satisfy the University College, and its external funding and monitoring bodies. As far as possible, duplication of data and documentation is avoided.
- 4.4 Quality assurance mechanisms commence with approval of the New Course Proposal form, which outlines the proposed course and the resource and staffing requirements. This consideration is then extended at validation, where the panel considers the quality and coherence of the student experience as a whole.
- 4.5 Once a new course has been approved, there are a range of annual mechanisms to assure the quality of the student experience. Students are acknowledged as members of the creative academic community. The University College clearly identifies, through its Student Charter, that students are co-responsible for their learning. Nevertheless, the University College accepts the centrality of the student experience to the values of the institution, and consequently secures feedback in a variety of ways. These include the Student Perception Survey (SPS); unit evaluations; student feedback (through Course Boards, or provided in more informal ways); and where relevant external examiners comments. An annual evaluation of the course is provided in the Annual Course Review (ACR) process, in which the above indicators are all considered. Since 2005, this also included the outcomes of the National Student Survey. After a period of no more than five years, a course is subject to periodic review, which permits the course and the University College to take a longer term view of provision and to consider a range of quality indicators.
- 4.6 The quality assurance process is evidence-based, and takes full account of student feedback and the comments of external examiners, as well as student data. In addition, the views of other stakeholders such as employer groups and/or professional bodies are considered.
- 4.7 The processes which are used to assure the quality of the student experience are contained as later sections within this Handbook. Specifically, they relate to the validation and periodic review of courses; minor changes to courses during the period of validation; and an ACR process, which is mirrored for business areas and support Units.
- 4.8 Each of the quality assurance processes requires reflection on all relevant evidence, and the presentation of a self-critical evaluative report. This report is then considered through a peer review process. At validation and review, but also as part of the ACR cycle, courses are invited to reflect upon developments within the discipline, the academic subject, the available technology and the workplace, as well as staff expertise and applicant profile, and to consider the positioning of their course in this context. They are also encouraged to consider ways in which the overall quality of learning experience may be enhanced through further course development (and not just secured by addressing existing weaknesses). This is in addition to the University College-wide implementation of the Learning Strategy.
- 4.9 The student Complaints Procedure is an integral part of the quality assurance system. It is explained in simple language, and is easy to invoke. Complaints are monitored centrally through Student Services, and an annual report is made to ASQ on the numbers of complaints, the nature of the complaint, and the resolution. This both enables students to secure redress (where appropriate) for any grievance, and the University College to learn from the experience of one of its key stakeholder groups. In addition, students are invited to record their satisfaction with any particular experience at the University College, or to make suggestions for the enhancement of the service provided.

5. Quality enhancement

- 5.1 Historically, the University College has had a wide range of systems to support the enhancement of quality. These include input from employers (for example through Industry Liaison Groups, or through the use of graduates to inform current students); the Peer Observation of Teaching scheme; the sharing of good practice through the ACR process;

and the development of research and scholarly activity which impacts on the course. Course teams have also been involved in a range of enhancement projects, many of which had a national focus.

- 5.2 The University College introduced a new Learning Strategy during 2007/08. This brings together the systems and processes for the enhancement of quality to ensure a more systematic approach, and will enable a more comprehensive overview of success.

6. Oversight and summative evaluation

- 6.1 ASQ advises Academic Board on all matters of quality assurance and enhancement, and oversees course and service review and evaluation. The Chair of ASQ reports to the Chair of Academic Board on the process and annual outcomes. Such reports will also be made available to relevant awarding and funding bodies.
- 6.2 Validation and periodic review is conducted on behalf of ASQ by a panel established specifically for that purpose. In each case, ASQ receives the panel's report, and confirms it as appropriate.
- 6.3 The ACR process results in course-level reports which are reviewed by the Faculty Board; and Faculty level reports which are reviewed by ASQ. Similarly, service areas conduct an annual, evidence-based review, with reports considered by the Business Service Board. In each case, an action plan is developed to address any areas of weakness, as well as in response to opportunities which have been identified.
- 6.4 Following the end of each academic year, the Chair of ASQ prepares, on behalf of the University College, an Annual Overview Report on the academic work of the institution. This includes reference to the outcomes of the annual review cycle, and takes account of the full range of student feedback, external examiner comment, and student data. It takes account of annual data on complaints, and considers also the outcomes of the validation and periodic review cycle.
- 6.5 The basic methodology for the annual review process entails teams setting standards and targets; critically reviewing performance in relation to these standards and targets; reviewing the appropriateness of the standards and targets to the needs of stakeholder groups; and identifying actions that will improve the effectiveness of the area of work. This methodology also obtains for the Annual Overview Report, which has an action plan attached on which report is made in the following year.
- 6.6 However, the Annual Overview Report also provides an opportunity to reflect more generally on enhancements which have been made, or are planned, to academic provision. It may include discussion of developments within learning and teaching, or in the ways in which good practice has been identified and shared.
- 6.7 The outcomes of quality assurance and enhancement processes are reported to the University College Academic Board, notably through the provision of the Annual Overview Report.

7. Responsibilities

- 7.1 To be fully effective, the processes of quality assurance and enhancement must engage all participants in University College activities. However, certain key responsibilities are defined below.
- 7.2 The Deputy Principal is responsible for the overall operation of the quality assurance and enhancement procedures; and for the preparation of the Annual Overview Report on the academic work of the University College. The day to day operation of the quality assurance and enhancement procedures is the responsibility of the Director of Academic Services, supported by the Academic Registrar.
- 7.3 Deans of Faculty are responsible for the management and collation of Faculty data; and for preparing an overview report on their Faculty.

- 7.4 Course Leaders area managers are responsible for the organisation and preparation of the ACR for individual courses and areas of service.
- 7.5 The Students' Union is involved in the process through student membership at Course and Faculty Boards, and Students' Union membership on key academic committees including Academic Board and ASQ. In addition, the Union prepares a summary report on the student experience of the University College every three years, for consideration by ASQ.

The development and review of policy at the University College

1. The Arts University College at Bournemouth has in place a number of policies and strategies to ensure it meets both the necessary statutory requirements, and the need for clear and transparent processes to govern its operation.
2. Each such policy and strategy is allocated to an appropriate Committee or group, which is charged with ensuring that it meets legislative updates and reflects, as far as possible, best practice in the sector.
3. All policies are reviewed on a regular basis, with a full review conducted at least once in every five-year period. However, where policies are updated, specifically following the introduction of new legislation or guidance, or on the basis of specific research or outcomes of annual review, this may take place more often.
4. Updates to existing documents, or new policies/strategies, will normally be considered at the final meeting of each academic year, although they may be considered sooner, especially if it is considered that a time for reflection and further consideration may be useful, or if final approval will be the responsibility of a parent committee which meets later in the year.
5. The Deputy Principal's office receives all updates from Committee/Group chairs and updates documents through this process, and publishes them through the Intranet.
6. The full list of policies appears as a matrix in the Staff Handbook.

SECTION B: The committee structure of the University College

1. What is a committee?

- 1.1 A Committee is simply a representative group of staff gathered together by the University College to advise or agree on a particular issue or set of issues. Rather than continually calling ad hoc meetings to consider one issue, the University College, in common with most organisations, has agreed some broad areas of business, and has agreed the representative group of staff who are relevant to consideration of these broad areas. What committees do (and do not do) is determined by their remit and constitution. A committee's constitution should ensure that the full range of relevant expertise is available to consider the issues it considers; and nobody should be on the committee who is not relevant to these discussions.

2. Purpose of committee structure

- 2.1 The Arts University College at Bournemouth acknowledges the importance of a shared ownership of its academic values and intentions. The deliberative committee structure, under the ultimate authority of the Academic Board, sets the strategic aims of the University College in relation to its academic offer, and provides the means through which the community confirms the principles, approach and practices which govern its academic work. It is a feature of deliberative committees that each member holds one vote, which is used in a simple democratic forum.
- 2.2 Academic committees consider, confirm and monitor policies, procedures and regulations in support of these aims, and respond to national, regional and local priorities and initiatives. They respond to (and on occasion commission) external and internal reviews of activity, and approve and subsequently monitor any actions arising. The terms of reference and constitution of all academic committees are formally approved by Academic Board.
- 2.3 The University College acknowledges the close links between the academic and executive structures, noting that the executive works to deliver an organisational structure and culture which supports academic priorities, and values academic freedom. It also ensures that the University College meets its obligations as an organisation in receipt of public funds, in respect of legislation (such as relating to equalities, employment law or health and safety); and in respect of policy objectives as determined by the Government or the relevant funding bodies.
- 2.4 The executive committee structure is organised along similar principles to the academic, but differs in that the committee is advisory to the Chair, who holds responsibility on behalf of the University College for ensuring that advice from relevant experts, and representative staff members, is taken into account in determining decisions.
- 2.5 Communications between committees is usually through formal reporting (for instance, each committee sends a report to its parent committee). Communication with other members of the University College is effected through the publication of a brief summary of the outcomes of each meeting via email and the publication of the full minutes via the intranet site. Deans and Directors and other managers might also feedback as appropriate to their teams. Where appropriate, committees will send reports or recommendations to other committees (for instance, a new course proposal will be forwarded to Academic Standards and Quality Committee, even though the Faculty Board formally reports to Academic Board).

3. Committee membership

- 3.1 Each Chair will nominate a Deputy from among the members of the committee to take the chair in his/her place in the event that he/she is indisposed for a specific meeting. All deputies will be approved by the Chair of Academic Board at the start of each academic year.

- 3.2 Ex Officio members are members by virtue of their post and therefore cease to be members on vacating the post unless they are also nominated under another category. There is no maximum period of office for ex officio members. Where an ex officio member is unable to attend a meeting, he/she may nominate an alternate to attend in his/her place.
- 3.3 Nominated members are those who are nominated as stipulated in the constitution, usually by a Dean or Director as a representative of their faculty or directorate. The Chair may review nominations to ensure that overall representation is balanced (both in terms of experience, and in terms of equalities considerations such as gender and age). The term of office for nominated members is three years, with a maximum of two successive terms (ie six years in total). No nominated member may serve for more than two terms in this capacity.
- 3.4 If a nominated member is unable to attend a meeting, the nominator may, at his/her discretion, nominate an alternate for that meeting.
- 3.5 Elected members are those who are elected as stipulated in the constitution, to act as a representative of their faculty or directorate. The term of office for elected members is three years, with a maximum of two successive terms (ie six years in total). No elected member may serve for more than two terms. Elected members may not send alternates if they are unable to attend.
- 3.6 Any nominated or elected member who has attended fewer than 75% of the meetings of any committee during one academic year will normally be deemed to have resigned from the committee.
- 3.7 The Secretary is not a member of the committee, unless expressly included in the constitution.
- 3.8 Many committees offer the Chair the opportunity to co-opt members. Co-option should be used where, in the view of the Chair, relevant expertise is available which is not covered by the existing membership. Co-options are used sparingly, and should only be made where necessary. Co-opted members serve for one year, but may be re-appointed. However if the Chair considers that successive co-options are required, the normal expectation would be that the committee constitution is reviewed, to consider whether this expertise should be included as a full member in future.
- 3.9 Other relevant staff may be invited to attend a committee as an observer, either for individual items or for the whole meeting. With the agreement of the Chair, an observer may present a paper and / or engage in committee discussion, but will not be permitted to vote.
- 3.10 The role of observer may also be used as a form of staff development for staff who are new to higher education, or who lack committee experience. In these instances, the observer will not contribute to committee discussions.

4. Standing orders for committees

4.1 Meetings where no quorum is established

- 4.1.1 The “quorum” for a committee is the minimum number of members required for the committee to take place. For all committees at the University College, quorum comprises more than 50% of the membership (including the Chair and any co-opted members, but not including any observers or the Secretary, unless he/she is a member, *see 3.7 above*). In addition, quorum is not established if neither the Chair nor Deputy Chair is present.

4.1.2 When insufficient members are present to establish a quorum, the Chair may take one of the following courses of action:

- postpone the meeting
- continue with the meeting, making provisional decisions which will be presented to the next meeting for ratification (the record of such meetings will be Notes, rather than Minutes)
- take advice from those members present, and take Chair's action to expedite urgent business.

4.2 Papers and minutes

4.2.1 The agenda and papers for meetings should be distributed one week in advance of the meeting. A second circulation of "late papers" may be made, although this will be kept to a minimum. Only in exceptional circumstances will tabled papers be acceptable. The Committee Secretary will call for papers in good time in advance of the meeting.

4.2.2 Draft minutes should be presented to the Chair for approval within one week of the meeting. When approved by the Chair, they should immediately be circulated to all members of the committee. These minutes should be clearly marked as 'Unconfirmed'. Minutes are "confirmed" once they are approved by the next meeting of the committee.

4.2.3 The Secretary will maintain a list of actions, and ensure that these are notified to relevant staff in order that the necessary action can be progressed.

4.2.4 Minutes of sub-committees should be received by the parent committee at its subsequent meeting. These minutes should be clearly marked as 'Confirmed' or 'Unconfirmed'.

Terms of reference of academic committees

The terms of reference of academic committees follows below. The constitution and membership can be found on the intranet under committees.

Academic Board

As set out in the Articles of Government, the Academic Board shall be responsible for:

- Considering the strategic development of, and holding overall responsibility for, all academic activities of the University College
- Responding to national, regional and local priorities and initiatives such as those introduced by HEFCE, QAA, LSC or other external agencies
- Confirming the criteria for the admission of students
- Agreeing arrangements for the quality assurance of courses, including the procedures for course validation and review, and the appointment of external examiners
- Confirming policies and procedures for the assessment and examination of students on all courses leading to an award of the University College
- Confirming student rights and responsibilities, including confirming the Student Charter and the Student Complaints Procedure
- Confirming the procedures for the award of professorships and honorary fellowships
- Confirming the arrangements for student discipline
- Confirming the University College research policy and strategy, and maintaining an overview of research activity

In practice, operational responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement activities is devolved to Academic Standards and Quality Committee.

Examples of items which should be considered by the Board

- *Minutes of reporting committees*
- *Approval of HE Regulations (including amendments to these Regulations)*
- *Shape of academic year, including term dates*
- *Proposals for the academic development of the University College (including additional student number applications)*
- *Approval of annual quality reports and action plans*
- *Applications to, and reports from, external bodies (eg QAA or HEFCE)*

Academic Standards and Quality Committee

ASQ holds delegated responsibility for the oversight and evaluation of the quality management infrastructure for all courses leading to an award of the University College. This includes:

- Receiving the outcomes of, and where appropriate approving and evaluating the procedures for:
 - Approval, periodic review and minor amendments of courses
 - Annual course review
 - External examination
 - Student perception surveys, including the National Student Survey
 - Annual service review
- Reviewing student data in relation to student retention, progression and achievement
- Considering reports on the operation of quality processes (including student appeals and AP(E)L)
- Developing, implementing and monitoring the academic regulations governing awards of the University College, for recommendation to Academic Board
- Considering, and responding as appropriate, to national developments in quality management, including those issued by QAA and other relevant external agencies
- Preparing for Academic Board an annual overview report on the quality and standards of higher education courses offered by the University College, together with an associated action plan for improvement
- Ensuring that matters of academic standards and quality for Preparation for HE courses are considered appropriately, and in accordance with the requirements of external awarding bodies
- Any other matters relating to the academic standards of awards, or the quality of the student experience, as appropriate.

Examples of items which should be considered by the Committee

- *Revisions to quality assurance processes*
- *Reports of validation and review events (and annual summary of outcomes, and any issues emerging)*
- *Reports of internal quality processes, e.g. Annual Course Reports (ACR)*
- *Annual overview report on annual monitoring and annual University College action plan*

- *University College responses to external quality assurance (QA) issues (e.g. Code of Practice) to provide summary report to Academic Board*
- *Minutes of reporting committees*

Awards and Professorial Group

- To advise the Academic Board and Governing Body on candidates suitable for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University College
- To determine the criteria for the award of the title of Professor and Visiting Professor of the University College
- To advise the Principal and Governing Body on those people thought suitable for the award of Professor and Visiting Professor
- To report the outcome of these discussions to Academic Board
- To keep under review the Criteria and procedures for the appointment of Professors, and to make recommendations for any amendments to Academic Board

Business Service Board

The function of the common Business Service Board is to permit a degree of external scrutiny of each business area's performance against targets, and its operational and quality improvement plans for the following academic year. This Committee will meet once a year and will report to ASQ.

Course Boards

- To provide academic leadership for the course
- To consider the design, management and delivery of the course, including arrangements for learning, teaching and assessment and to provide reports for consideration by the Faculty Board
- To monitor the experience of the students on the course, and the effectiveness of the systems for pastoral and academic support and advice
- To monitor and evaluate the quality of the course through the Annual Course Review process, including considering the reports of external examiner or verifiers, student surveys and other student data
- To consider and propose minor modifications to validated courses
- To prepare and approve documentation for periodic review
- To contribute to the development of academic and other policy in the School
- To propose external examiners for relevant courses.

Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer Committee

- To develop, and monitor the implementation of, the University College's Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer Strategy
- To consider, and where appropriate to advise on, the most appropriate infrastructure to support the culture of enterprise and knowledge transfer within the University College
- To consider the most effective ways in which enterprise and knowledge transfer should contribute to and support research and scholarship within the University College
- To ensure that career education, information and guidance for students is aligned to the University College's strategy for enterprise and knowledge transfer

- To consider the HE-BI survey return on behalf of the University College, and advise on methods for improved data collection and reporting
- To develop appropriate guidance notes and other documentation in support of enterprise and knowledge transfer.

Equalities Committee

- To provide strategic advice to Academic Board and the Senior Management Team across all equalities issues including age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- To develop, review and monitor the University College's Single Equalities Scheme (SES) and related action plan and take an overall responsibility for equalities issues
- To give strategic direction to issues of widening participation including monitoring and reporting on progress of the Widening Participation Strategy and related action plan
- To oversee the Equality Impact Assessment process to ensure the University College's compliance with the SES as well as with UK equalities legislation
- To make recommendations for good equalities practice across all aspects of University College life.

Examination Appeals Group

To undertake the review of decisions of the Course Examination Board in the event of student appeals and other related matters affecting the process of the assessment of students.

Faculty Boards of Studies

- To determine and implement Faculty strategies, policies, and procedures within the framework set by Academic Board
- To consider, agree and promote the existing and future provision of courses within the faculty
- Through regular reporting, to monitor the performance and academic standards of the courses for which the Faculty has responsibility
- To monitor the faculty-level implementation of the University College's teaching and learning strategies and policies and their effectiveness
- To monitor the research and Knowledge Transfer activity of the Faculty, and the performance of its research students as appropriate
- To monitor the experience of the students in the Faculty, and the effectiveness of the systems for pastoral and academic support and advice
- To consider risk issues arising from the work of the Board.
- To consider such other matters as the Academic Board or its sub-committees may refer to it as appropriate.

Gallery Group

To respond to the University College Strategic Plan and curriculum policy to:

- Devise an annual schedule of exhibitions and appropriate publications;
- Liaise with academic courses through the Learning and Teaching Committee to ensure the Gallery supports the curriculum, and report the annual schedule of exhibition;
- Relate the schedule to the end-of-year shows;
- Monitor expenditure and review budgetary needs;
- Consider external sources of funding for the Gallery and bid for these as appropriate;
- To develop and promote text + work and all of its associated activities including partnerships, collaboration and publications;
- To collaborate with MoDiP in promoting practice, research and critical writing in the arts and design.

Learning and Teaching Committee

- To develop the University College's Learning Strategy and monitor its implementation
- To formulate new policy and initiatives in response to regional, national and international developments in learning and teaching (for example from bodies such as HEFCE, the Higher Education Academy, the ADM subject centre and the Institute for Learning) making recommendations to ASQ and the University College management team as appropriate
- To promote the development of policies and services that enhance the quality of the student learning experience, including the implications of the regulatory framework, making recommendations to ASQ as appropriate
- To advise on the curriculum and staff development issues affecting the University College, and to devise a programme of seminars and workshops to address this need
- To advise other committees and boards, as and when appropriate, on matters relating to learning and teaching
- To consider the implications of the University College's policies on equality of opportunity with respect to the above terms of reference
- To prepare for ASQ an annual report on the work of the Committee and its impact on the learning and teaching culture of the University College.

Research Committee

- To develop and monitor the University College's Research Policy and Strategy, which will include pedagogic research and scholarship, making recommendations to Academic Board as appropriate
- To monitor and as appropriate respond to national developments in the monitoring and assessment of research quality
- To consider, and where appropriate to advise on, the most appropriate infrastructure to support the development, furthering and dissemination of research (including the support of a research culture) within the University College
- To develop, implement and evaluate policies and processes to deliver research projects in support of the University College's Research Strategy. This may include some or all of applications to external research funding bodies; Research Fellowships; grants to support research activity; or support for research qualifications

- To ensure that policies and processes in support of research activity are integrated within the academic life of the University College and incorporated within the annual planning cycle
- To lead the work of the Research Forum
- To audit the success of supported projects and their impact
- To retain an oversight of the implementation of the Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer (EKT) Strategy, through reports from the EKT sub-committee and through structured cross-membership of the two committees

SECTION C: Validation and periodic review

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Validation is that process by which all new courses or components of courses (e.g. units) are formally established and approved. Validation confirms that all provision is consonant with, and contributes to, the University College's mission statement and strategic objectives. It also confirms to the University College and its stakeholders that appropriate expertise, experience and resources are available to secure academic standards of provision. Students may not be enrolled on a course, or unit, which has not been academically confirmed through validation.
- 1.2 No course, or component of a course, may be approved for a period longer than five years. Before the period of approval has expired, a periodic review is undertaken; course components are normally also reviewed as part of this review process (except where they are common to more than one course).
- 1.3 Periodic Review provides Academic Board, faculties and courses with a longer term view of provision and confirms its continued appropriateness. This process also ensures that strategic decisions about the nature of provision, particularly where significant changes are being considered, are aligned with the University College's strategic aims and objectives.
- 1.4 The Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQ) has delegated responsibility for overseeing validation and periodic reviews at AUCB. The principles and procedures of the University College are outlined below.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The following principles underpin all validation and periodic review arrangements maintained by the University College:
 - all new HE courses of study offered by the University College should undergo the validation procedures set out below before the provision is made available to prospective students
 - the validated standing of a course will not normally exceed five years
 - in order to retain validated standing, all HE courses of study should normally be subject to periodic review (as set out below) within five years of the original validation or most recent review event
 - all new Year Zero pathways will be considered and approved by ASQ
 - new or replacement units to be introduced into validated courses should be validated through the 'amendments to validated courses' provisions described separately below
 - all periods of course validation approved by the University College will be based upon a final cohort entry date. In cases where the University College wishes to withdraw validation, this will allow the final cohort to complete their studies under the auspices of the University College
 - all proposals for validation should be made in compliance with the University College's regulations governing the operation of the Undergraduate Framework

Validation of a new course

3. Course Validation

- 3.1 The Dean of Faculty should nominate a lead person for the development of the course. The Quality team within Registry will contact the lead person to provide guidance on the arrangements for the main validation event, and the lead person will be responsible for coordinating arrangements with the course team. The course team should include only

those members of academic staff who have responsibility for the delivery of the course, and where appropriate, the subject Librarian and course technician(s). The course team, including the subject Librarian and technician(s), is expected to attend consultation meetings, the faculty event and main validation event.

3.2 Normally new course proposals will emerge from consideration of existing provision and identifying potential niche markets, based on staff expertise, marketing reports, or feedback from employers (for instance through the Industry Liaison Groups). The University College normally operates a two-year course development cycle, with potential course developments identified two years before the first intake, although a shorter timescale may be approved to meet a specific identified need. Alternatively, regional and national initiatives will suggest to the University College alternative provision, which will be agreed through management meetings, and ratified by the senior management team and the Principal.

3.3 In each case a New Course Proposal form will then be completed.

4. Initial approval to develop a proposal

4.1 Faculties wishing to put forward a proposal for validation must alert the University College of their intentions to do so at the earliest possible date. The University College operates a two-year academic planning cycle, which ensures that there is adequate time for course development and resource planning.

4.2 Initial notification of the course proposal should be made using the New Course Proposal form. The University College has adopted a two-stage process for new course proposals. Stage One of the process requires the Faculty to submit an Outline Proposal (available from the intranet site), which gives summary information about the proposal and enables the University College to assess the strategic merit of proposals and to determine which, if any, of the proposals received should be developed further. It is not anticipated that detailed information will be available to support these proposals; robust evidence of markets and resource requirements are not required until Stage Two. In this way, the University College can ensure that detailed work is undertaken only on those proposals which it considers most appropriate. Information provided under Stage One should not be considered final and complete, and the University College acknowledges that further, more detailed work may demonstrate the unsuitability of some proposals. However, all proposers are reminded that initial decisions are taken based on the Outline Proposal, and are asked to be as rigorous as possible in presenting their case.

4.3 Outline Proposals are considered by the senior management team, which agrees those which should be progressed at this time. Those course proposals which are selected for further development proceed to Stage Two, at which a Detailed Proposal (available from the intranet site) is required. The Detailed Proposal form asks for information about the following areas:

- course management (including the identity of any partners involved in the delivery of provision, and any professional or statutory bodies which might accredit the course)
- resource planning
- funding and student numbers
- market information.

4.4 Detailed Proposals must be accompanied by a detailed marketing report and resourcing analysis. The detailed proposal is intended to amplify and update the information given in the Outline, and to provide a sound evidence base on which ASQ can reach a judgement as to which proposals should be progressed to validation. It is acknowledged that some of this information may not have changed since the Outline was presented, and hence may simply be repeated from Stage One.

4.5 Acknowledgement of the proposal is required from Directors of support services, who note the proposal and are therefore informed as to likely future developments; and also from

relevant service managers, to confirm that they are aware of the proposal and have made the appropriate arrangements (for example, the assignment of a UCAS code).

- 4.6 The Detailed Proposal is then considered by ASQ, which may take one of the following actions:
- it may approve the development of the validation documentation within the faculty. This decision would normally be based upon a *prima facie* case which clearly established that the rationale for the proposal was supportive of the University College's strategic plan or
 - it may recommend that further development of the proposal be postponed or
 - it may reject the proposal.
- 4.7 In approving the further development of the validation documentation, ASQ will normally agree that Registry, in consultation with the proposing faculty, set a date for the intended validation event.
- 4.8 The Chair of ASQ will not sign to give formal approval for the validation until all the other relevant parties have signed the form to give their acknowledgement.

5. Documentation requirements - Validation

- 5.1 Once approved by the University College, the faculty is responsible for the preparation and submission of all required documentation in support of the proposal. This normally consists of two separate but related documents. The first document, the Course Context, is developed to illustrate the context in which the provision will operate. The second document is the Course Handbook. Both are discussed below.

6. Course Context

- 6.1 This document should not normally exceed thirty pages in length and should contain an evaluative commentary using the following headings:

1) University College Context and Rationale for the Proposal

This section of the report will explain how the proposal meets the University College's strategic aims and objectives. It will also clarify the fit between the proposed course and the University College mission statement, academic plan and any other relevant plans. In doing so, this section of the document should explain the philosophy underpinning the delivery of the provision by identifying:

- what the course aims and objectives are
- what sort of graduate profile the provision wishes to develop
- what knowledge, skills and competences will be developed by the student

In addition, explicit reference should be made to the way in which the curriculum design and learning and teaching strategies have been informed by and enhanced through research and scholarly activity.

2) Student Recruitment and Selection

The specific entry criteria for the proposed provision should be set out in detail including how admissions tutors will select applicants (if appropriate).

3) Provision Components

This section should be used to specify the precise subject content to be covered through the proposed provision. It should describe and explain:

- why subject material has been chosen
- the discipline balance that will be delivered
- the relationship of these choices to the provision's intended aims and objectives (as set out in (1) above).

4) Delivery Strategies

This section should set out how the learning and teaching methods adopted:

- will contribute to meeting the provision's intended aims and objectives
- are consonant with the University College's Learning Strategy.

5) Academic Quality & Standards

This section should include a brief description of how the course will assure itself that the quality and standards of provision are appropriate and will be maintained. Any staff development or research activities that will be undertaken to enhance provision should be noted here.

6) Provision Resources

This section should specify the staff and learning resources that will be made available to support the provision. These should be directly linked to the intended aims and objectives of the provision. A brief description of what equipment will be used on-course and anticipated costs students are likely to incur on-course should also be noted.

7) Student Support

Identify the types and range of academic guidance and support students should expect to receive as part of the provision.

8) Appendices

- i) Mapping against the relevant subject benchmark statement(s)
- ii) UCAS entry profile for the course
- iii) Staff profiles including curricula vitae
- iv) Expected enrolment projections including a market analysis
- v) The schedule of meetings held to ensure that the views of senior managers and other colleagues involved in supporting the delivery of the course have been part of the development process.

7. Course Handbook

- 7.1 The Course Handbook is designed for use by students. As such, it should explain clearly, without jargon, what the course of study offers and how it will be delivered. It should also make clear what the course will expect of students. The Handbook should be developed using the standard University College template, available from the intranet.

Additional Documentation

The following documentation should also be provided:

- i) A sample of at least two Unit Handbooks
- ii) Schedule of consultation meetings.

Process of approval

8. Faculty Boards of Study

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the Faculty to ensure that the documentation prepared in support of the validation and review process is adequate, and is ready to be released in good time for the event.
- 8.2 The Dean of Faculty, as Chair of the Faculty Board of Study, will confirm the arrangements which will operate within the faculty to ensure that the documentation presented would be likely to meet the expectations and scrutiny of a validation/review panel. This will take the form of an event held within the Faculty to test the documentation, and discuss any issues arising with the course team. This may comprise part of the agenda for a Faculty Board, or may be a separate event attended by a panel as agreed by the Board (*see point 8.3 below*).
- 8.3 Where a separate event is held, this will be chaired by the Dean, the Head of School not involved in the development, or a member of the Faculty Board at Senior Lecturer level or above as nominated by the Dean. It will also include two further members of academic staff from within the Faculty, at least one of whom must be from the School not associated with the development. At least one of these academic staff members must have been a member of ASQ or Academic Board during the previous three academic years. One external consultant should normally be involved in the Faculty process.
- 8.4 Relevant members of the Course Board, including technician staff and professional Library staff, should be invited to development meetings, so that their expertise is also referenced.
- 8.5 Having considered the documentation and the report of the event which considered the proposal, the Dean of Faculty may:
 - release the documentation for final validation/review or
 - withhold the documentation pending further development. In this instance, the Dean of Faculty must give notice to the Chair of ASQ and the Director of Academic Services, in writing, detailing the reasons for the decision and notifying them when a re-submission will be made or
 - reject the proposal with reason(s).
- 8.6 Having received the approval of ASQ to be developed to validation, a proposal must undergo successful validation within either that academic year, or within the two succeeding years. If the proposal has not been successfully validated by this time, the approval will be deemed to have lapsed, and the proposal will need to be re-presented, demonstrating its continued alignment with the University College's mission and strategic objectives.

9. Panel membership

- 9.1 Validations of new courses of study are conducted by a panel appointed for this purpose by the Chair of ASQ. Registry, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, will establish a validation panel once a recommendation to do so has been received from the Faculty Board of Study following a review of complete validation documents.

9.2 The panel will normally be as follows:

- The Chair (who shall normally be a Dean of Faculty, Associate Dean, or a Principal Lecturer with significant validation experience who has been a member of Academic Board or ASQ within the last three years, who has not previously been involved in the proposal). The Chair is not required to have expertise in the subject area to be validated.
- Two internal academic members from Schools not associated with the development, at least one of whom should be from outside the Faculty. At least one member must be a member of Academic Board of ASQ.
- Two external members; at least one should normally be an academic, and one member who should be either an academic, or industrial or professional.

The proposer/course leader is normally entitled to attend all meetings of the panel as an observer.

9.3 Panel members should not have had any prior association with the proposed course of study or its development.

9.4 External members are normally nominated by the Faculty but should not normally have had any association with the University College, its staff or students within the last three years. Registry will brief external panel members on their role in the event and prepare support papers on their role and the University College. The names and curricula vitae, which should include details of relevant external experience (for example, as external examiner or external panel member at validation or review event), of proposed external panel members must be received by the designated Event Secretary at least 6 weeks before the event.

9.5 The panel Chair will consider the appropriateness of the external panel members, and the balance of the panel, before the final panel membership is confirmed. The final panel membership will be confirmed by the Chair of ASQ before the validation is conducted.

10. Event administration

10.1 The Directorate of Academic Services will be responsible for the administration and servicing of the event.

10.2 The documentation must be received by the designated Event Secretary at least 3 weeks before the event.

10.3 Failure to meet this deadline may result in postponement or cancellation of the event by the Chair of ASQ. A schedule will be issued by the Directorate of Academic Services which confirms the respective deadline dates for each event scheduled to be held during the following academic year.

10.4 The event will commence with a meeting to confirm the agenda and to identify particular issues for discussion; this will normally take place during late afternoon of the first day of the event. A standard agenda has been developed to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to each of the relevant issues, which may be amended as required at the discretion of the Chair. All panel members will be asked to complete a proforma before the event, which will enable a provisional agenda to be prepared.

10.5 The main event will normally commence at 9.00 am on the second day, and will normally last the full day. All members of the course team should be available throughout the day.

10.6 There will not normally be a formal dinner with the panel and the full course team. However, selected members of University College staff will accompany the external representatives to dinner as appropriate. In the event that a one-day event is scheduled, for example for the consideration of a one-year award, the event will normally commence at 10.30 am and no evening meal will be arranged.

- 10.7 The Event Secretary will be responsible for arranging validation schedules and meeting dates with panel members, as well as for other administrative aspects of validation events such as requirements for room bookings, hospitality and accommodation.
- 10.8 All documentation developed in support of the validation event will be circulated by the Event Secretary at least two weeks before the validation date. The Secretary will support the panel during its meetings and will assist in drafting the report and recommendations.
- 10.9 Upon the conclusion of the event, the Validation Panel will meet with the course team to inform them of their recommendations to ASQ. The course team will also receive a copy of the final report.

11. Terms of Reference

- 11.1 The Validation Panel, on behalf of ASQ, will ensure that:
- i) the course meets the requirements for the relevant award and that the proposed standards are appropriate, taking account of relevant external reference points (such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, and the relevant subject benchmark statements)
 - ii) the learning environment within which the provision is offered is satisfactory and that the School has appropriate and sufficient staff and learning resources to support the delivery of the provision
 - iii) the course offers a coherent educational experience with relevant subject specific and transferable skills
 - iv) the rationale for the provision is clearly stated and is aligned with and supported by institutional aims and objectives
 - v) the structure of the provision is consonant with the University College's Undergraduate Framework and regulations, as appropriate
 - vi) the provision is consistent with the University College's mission statement and academic policies that flow from it.
- 11.2 To fulfil these requirements, the Validation Panel should give consideration to:
- i) the documentation submitted in support of the proposal. A panel may request additional information to that provided under Item 5. *Documentation requirements* above.
 - ii) the relevant issues to arise from the proposal that should be explored in greater detail during the validation event. These may include:
 - the context of the provision in terms of institutional strategies and plans as well as regional or national demand for provision; this may include strategies which respond to national objectives such as those for Widening Participation
 - the closeness of fit between the specification of the provision and relevant regulations governing the title and award
 - the standards indicated by the aims and objectives of the provision, and their comparability with those of awards at the same level in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
 - the compatibility of the objectives and learning outcomes with any nationally agreed subject benchmarks
 - the planned content, delivery of the syllabus and teaching and assessment methods to be used within each component of the proposed provision (including special projects and work placements)

- the contribution of the teaching, learning and assessment methods to the University College's Learning Strategy and to the achievement of the provision's aims and objectives
 - the appropriateness of the entry criteria and selection strategies for the aims and objectives of the provision as well as the University College's strategic plans
 - the provision's staffing resource including current staffing levels and the qualifications and experience of staff
 - the required learning resources necessary to deliver the specified provision including access to workshop and studio space, library and IT facilities
 - the intended booklist/texts/software for the provision.
- iii) the schedule of meetings held to ensure that the views of senior managers and colleagues concerned with the proposed provision are part of the development process
- iv) the resources available to support the proposed provision through a tour of course-related facilities.
- 11.3 A standard agenda has been developed to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to each of the above issues, which may be amended as required at the discretion of the Chair.
- 11.4 A proforma has been developed which outlines the areas which panels are invited to consider. Each member of the panel is invited to complete this proforma in advance of the event, and to return it to the Event Secretary, noting those areas about which they are satisfied, and the areas which they wish to discuss in more detail with the team. This will enable the Chair and the Event Secretary to devise an agenda which reflects the concerns of panel members.

12. Validation Outcome

- 12.1 The report of the outcome of the validation event will be submitted to ASQ and must contain one of the following recommendations:
- to approve the proposal subject to any conditions or recommendations or
 - to require re-submission of the proposal with a detailed description of areas for further development and a timescale for completion or
 - to reject the proposal with a detailed explanation for the recommendation.
- 12.2 Where the panel identifies a weakness in the proposal, it further stipulates the action which the course team should take to address this weakness. These actions are presented in the form of conditions, required actions and recommendations. Briefly,
- **conditions** are those actions which a course team must complete, to the satisfaction of the Chair, before it can enrol and register students. Conditions therefore relate to actions which the panel considers crucial to the operation of the course
 - **required actions** may also be crucial, but need not be completed before the course enrolls and registers students. Required actions, for instance, may relate to matters such as ongoing staff development, which cannot be completed before the course commences
 - **recommendations** are matters which the course team is asked to consider; the team is required to respond to the Chair of the panel indicating how the recommendations are to be actioned or providing a rationale for rejecting their implementation.
- 12.3 The panel further recommends the period of validation, ie the time before the course will be required to undergo a periodic review, which will be no longer than five years.

- 12.4 Having received the panel's report and recommendation, ASQ will make a final decision on the validated status of the course of study.
- **Validation approval without conditions or recommendations.** This means that the course will have validated status for a period of up to five years, as recommended by the panel. It also means that the Faculty can begin to recruit onto the course for delivery the next academic year
 - **Validation approval subject to meeting conditions.** If conditions of approval apply, the Faculty will be required to meet the terms of the conditions, as confirmed by ASQ, before the course can register and enrol students. However, once the Chair of the panel has confirmed that all conditions have been met, approval may be given by Chair's action
 - **Validation approval subject to required actions.** If required actions are identified, the Faculty must meet the terms of the required actions, as confirmed by ASQ, in accordance with the approved timescale. However, the course will be permitted to register and enrol students
 - **Validation approval subject to recommendations.** If recommendations for further action are made, and confirmed by ASQ, the Faculty must consider these and provide a written response to the Chair of the panel, on behalf of the committee, indicating how the recommendations are to be actioned or providing a rationale for rejecting their implementation
 - **Postponing or rejecting the validation pending further development of the proposal.** The documentation may be returned to the Faculty for further specified work. Following the strengthening of the documentation, the Validation Panel (or a sub-group) will be reconvened to review the proposal in its entirety and make a recommendation to ASQ on this basis. A validation proposal may only be submitted to a panel on two occasions within a single academic year.

Periodic Review for Courses

The Quality team within Registry will contact the Course Leader to provide guidance on the arrangements for the main periodic review event, and the Course Leader will be responsible for coordinating arrangements with the course team. The course team should include only those members of academic staff who have responsibility for the delivery of the course, the subject Librarian and, where appropriate, the course technician(s). The course team, including the subject Librarian and technician(s), is expected to attend consultation meetings, the faculty event and main periodic review event.

13. Context for Periodic Review

- 13.1 All provision validated by the Arts University College at Bournemouth is validated for a maximum period of five years, after which time a periodic review is undertaken. The process of periodic review is similar to initial validation, and the administration is the same for both processes (Item 10. *Event administration above*).
- 13.2 The constitution of the Panel (Item 9. *Panel membership above*) is similar, with two internal and two external panel members, and additionally, up to two existing students who should be on a different course to the proposal. External members are normally nominated by the Faculty but should not normally have had any association with the University College, its staff or students within the last five years.
- 13.3 The focus of periodic review is on providing ASQ with a detailed report that critically reviews and evaluates the provision since initial validation or the last periodic review. In doing so, the process also serves to facilitate the strategic planning process by ensuring that academic provision remains aligned with the University College's mission statement and strategic plans. The process is designed to encourage reflection on developments within the subject, the University College and the wider context, and to ensure that the course remains

fit for purpose for a further five-year period. As such, it is a critical aspect of the University College's quality assurance processes.

- 13.4 The University College has agreed that, on occasion, it may be appropriate to group two or more courses together for periodic review events, especially where there is significant overlap in terms of the resource base, or where some teaching (including possibly some units) might be shared. ASQ will receive proposals for the periodic review of more than one course, and will consider each according to its merits.
- 13.5 Where a periodic review is scheduled to consider more than one course, the event will normally start earlier, and will commence with a discussion of the common elements, before moving to a dedicated discussion of each course under consideration. The Chair of the event, in discussion with the Chair of ASQ, will be responsible for determining whether the panel should be enhanced through additional members, although this will not normally be required.
- 13.6 The Terms of Reference exercised by the Faculty Board of Study and Review Panel are those in Item 11. *Terms of Reference* above, but in addition include a consideration of the performance of the provision in terms of:
- the degree to which the course has been meeting its original aims and objectives
 - student progression and achievement, the retention of students, their academic achievement and subsequent career success
 - quality management and enhancement, achievement of quality action plans, responsiveness to student and examiner feedback, adoption of good practice.
- 13.7 The panel will also meet with students on the course. The course team will identify the student representatives to meet the panel in advance of the event, and the students will be briefed on their role in the event by the Event Secretary. The student group should include at least one representative from each year group and, where possible, one or two recent graduates of the course. The group should not normally comprise more than six in total; Registry should be consulted if the proposed student group will exceed six members.
- 13.8 The names of students who will be available to meet the panel must be provided to the Event Secretary at least 2 weeks before the event.

14. Initial Notification of Periodic Review

- 14.1 The Director of Academic Services will normally provide ASQ with a list of those courses requiring periodic review within one academic year of the proposed event. Having noted this list, the Director of Academic Services will normally, after consultation with the appropriate Chairs of Faculty Boards of Study, submit a calendar of periodic review events to ASQ for approval.

This list will identify:

- the name of the course
 - the award (if appropriate)
 - the original validation date
 - the proposed date for the periodic review.
- 14.2 Once confirmed by ASQ, the Director of Academic Services will notify the Chair(s) of the Faculty Board(s) in writing that a review will be taking place and that a panel will be convened on behalf of ASQ to conduct the review on a proposed date. On occasion, where just cause is found, ASQ may recommend that a periodic review is postponed, pending, for example, the outcome of a major review.

15. Documentation Requirement – Periodic Review of Courses

- 15.1 Once the date of the review has been confirmed by ASQ, the Faculty is responsible for the preparation and submission of all required documentation in support of the review. This requires the submission of a self-reflective and critically evaluative Course Context document which considers the nature and quality of provision as well as student achievement over the period of validation; and reviews the target market and recruitment over the period of validation. As such, this document should draw heavily upon the confirmed validation documentation, Annual Course Review reports and external examiner reports from the review period. Details of the Course Context document are given below.
- 15.2 The draft Course Handbook for the next academic year will take account of all proposed changes to the course, and is presented to the panel for consideration and approval. The template is described in detail in Item 7. *Course Handbook* above. (Where changes are made to the common sections of the Course Handbook for the following academic year, these changes will be made by Registry before printing and distribution.)

16. Course Context

- 16.1 This document should not normally exceed thirty pages in length and should be an evaluative commentary on the course since the last review. Description should be the minimum necessary to enable the panel to understand the background (noting that the panel will also be given copies of the Course Handbook). The emphasis should be on an evaluation of the course throughout the period since its validation or most recent review; of student achievement of the appropriate academic standards; and of the learning opportunities offered to students to support their achievements.
- 16.2 The Context Document should draw on Annual Course Review reports from the review period, as well as feedback from students, external examiners and employers. An electronic template for the Context Document has been prepared by the Directorate of Academic Services and is available through the intranet. Information should be arranged under the following headings:

1) Brief Description of Current Provision

As the introduction of the document, this section of the report should note the following:

- Course title
- Award title(s)
- Faculty responsible for delivery
- Location of delivery
- Date of first cohort intake
- Date of last review
- Name of Course Leader

2) University College and Faculty Context

This section of the report should consider the course in the light of the University College's mission statement and strategic plan including any Faculty plans. This section should comment on the continuing relevance of the subject in light of the University College's mission statement and strategic aims and objectives. Explicit reference should be made to the way in which the curriculum design and learning and teaching strategies have been informed by and enhanced through research and scholarly activity.

3) Discipline Context

This section of the report should consider developments in the discipline within the review period, and how these have been addressed by the course team. It should outline any changes which are proposed to meet these developments.

In the case of courses which have accreditation from an external professional body, evidence of adherence to the body's requirements will be tested as part of the periodic review process.

4) Relation to the Academic Infrastructure

The description and evaluation should make reference to:

- the philosophy and rationale for the course, with reference to the relevant subject benchmark statement(s)
- the validated aims and objectives of the course, with reference to the relevant subject benchmark statement(s) and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- how the QAA Code of Practice has been considered, and any particular issues arising for this course
- whether the aims and objectives have been achieved during the period of validation
- whether changes to the aims and objectives have been introduced during the review period and if so why
- whether these aims and objectives remain appropriate and, if not, how they should be changed and why (proposed changes should be cross-referenced to the relevant sections of the Course Handbook)
- In the case of courses which have accreditation from an external professional body, evidence of adherence to the body's requirements will be tested as part of the periodic review process.

All aspects of the QAA Academic Infrastructure should be clearly referenced in this section.

5) Student Admission, Progression and Achievement

This section of the report should briefly state and evaluate:

- the current admissions criteria for the course, and the UCAS Entry Profile
- any changes to the admissions criteria over the review period
- the application rate for the course over the review period
- the recruitment and selection process and its effectiveness
- the entry qualifications of the student intake over the review period
- the course's strategies to support widening participation and equal opportunities
- any guaranteed entry arrangements
- equal opportunities in access
- the impact the student intake has had on the delivery of the course and the achievement of the course's aims and objectives
- student progression and retention rates on-course (including comparison with Faculty, University College and national norms)
- how progression is supported and monitored

- student achievement and outcomes on-course (including comparison with Faculty, University College and national norms)
- student referral and retake rates on-course (including comparison with Faculty and University College norms).

6) Curriculum Structure

This section should describe and evaluate how the structure of the curriculum has operated during the review period. In particular, the following should be addressed within the context of Undergraduate Course Framework regulations:

- the effectiveness of the curriculum structure in delivering the course outcomes
- the level of optionality available
- whether there have been changes to either the balance of the curriculum or optionality during the review period and if so, what they were and what their impact has been on the achievement of the course's aims and objectives
- any proposed changes to the structure of the curriculum. A copy of the previously validated structure diagram should be included for easy comparison (proposed changes should be cross-referenced, in detail, to the Course Handbook).

7) Course Components

This section of the document should be used to evaluate the appropriateness of the curriculum by considering:

- the breadth, depth and balance of current curriculum, and its effectiveness in delivering the course outcomes
- any changes in the nature of the curriculum during the review period and their impact on the achievement of the course aims and objectives
- any proposed changes in the nature of the curriculum (proposed changes should be cross-referenced, in detail, to the Course Handbook).

8) Learning and Teaching

A description and evaluation of the following should be included in this section:

- the learning and teaching methods used and their effectiveness
- how these methods have contributed to meeting the course's stated aims and objectives
- whether any changes to learning and teaching methods have been introduced and if so, what they were and how they affected the course
- whether any changes to learning and teaching methods have been introduced specifically in response to student disability
- any proposals to change these methods (proposed changes should be cross-referenced, in detail, to the Course Handbook).

9) Assessment Strategies

Assessment methods throughout the course should be mapped into a grid for consideration as part of the periodic review event to ensure that a full range of assessment methods are used (*see Precept 74 HE Regulations*)

This section should describe and evaluate:

- the range of assessment methods deployed across the course and their effectiveness in permitting students to demonstrate the course objectives (assessment methods should be flexible to encourage achievement by students with a variety of strengths and learning styles).
- whether any changes to these methods were introduced over the review period and if so, what they were and how they affected the achievement of the aims and objectives
- any proposals to change assessment methods (proposed changes should be cross-referenced, in detail, to the Course Handbook).

10) Student Employability and Destinations of Leavers

This section should describe and evaluate the achievement of students over the review period. The ways in which the views of employers have been sought and utilised in the development and proposed delivery of the curriculum, and how employability has been promoted, are a central aspect of review and should be considered in detail. Commentary should note any trends in:

- the first destinations of students on-course (including comparison with Faculty, University College and national norms)
- the number (by type, year and stage) of prizes, citations and awards achieved by students on-course during the review period
- how the course has promoted employability during the review period, including commentary on work placements
- how the course has collected and utilised the views of employers in the design and delivery of the curriculum.

11) Quality and Standards

This section should note the methods used to evaluate performance, and highlight the most significant issues to arise during the review period and how they have been addressed. While ACR reports, including action plans, are included as an appendix, the main issues should be discussed here to explain the background to course developments, and responsiveness to feedback from students, external examiners, employer groups and other stakeholders.

12) Provision Resources

This section should describe and evaluate resources available to support the course in the context of its stated aims and objectives:

- the deployment of staff resources to support learning, and how they link to course objectives
- the deployment of material learning resources to support the course including workshops, studios, equipment, library and IT, and how these link to course objectives
- any changes to the staff or learning resources made available to support the course during the review period and how this affected the achievement of the course's aims and objectives
- any proposed changes to any of the above and what the resource implications will be (proposed changes should be cross-referenced, in detail, to the Course Handbook).

13) Student Support

This section should provide a description and analysis of the types and range of academic guidance and support services students received as part of the course. Analysis should focus on:

- what services were made available to students and their effectiveness
- whether any different guidance or support services were introduced during the review period and if so, what they were and what effect they had on the achievement of aims and objectives
- any proposals to change the nature or level of student support in future (proposed changes should be cross-referenced, in detail, to the Course Handbook).

14) Summary of Proposed Changes to Provision

This section should be developed using the previous headings to summarise proposed changes to the current course. It should summarise the main changes, not repeat every amendment.

15) Appendices

- i) Mapping template against the relevant subject benchmark statement(s)
- ii) UCAS entry profile for the course
- iii) Most recent Quality Assurance Action Plan with a report on progress against the actions noted
- iv) Staff profiles including curricula vitae
- v) Analysis of market movement in the subject area

In addition, the following should be provided on CD-ROM:

- vi) Course statistics and External Examiner Reports, for the period under review
- vii) Detailed description of learning resources available to support the course
- viii) Last validation/review report and the summary of actions taken in response to the report

Additional Documentation

The following documentation should also be provided:

- i) A sample of at least two Unit Handbooks
- ii) Schedule of consultation meetings.

17. Periodic Review Outcome

17.1 Where the panel identifies a weakness in the proposed provision, it further stipulates the action which the course team should take to address this weakness. These actions are presented in the form of conditions, required actions and recommendations. Briefly,

- **conditions** are those actions which a course team must complete, to the satisfaction of the Chair, before it can enrol and register students. Conditions therefore relate to actions which the panel considers crucial to the operation of the course
- **required actions** may also be crucial, but need not be completed before the course enrolls and registers students. Required actions, for instance, may relate to matters such as ongoing staff development, which cannot be completed before the course commences

- **recommendations** are matters which the course team is asked to consider; the team is required to respond to the Chair of the panel indicating how the recommendations are to be actioned or providing a rationale for rejecting their implementation.
- 17.2 The panel further recommends the period of continued validation, ie the time before the course will be required to undergo a further periodic review, which will normally be five years.
- 17.3 Having received the panel's report and recommendation on the periodic review, ASQ will make its final decision on the status of the course. The committee can make one of the following decisions:
- **to approve the validated status of the course for a specified time without conditions or recommendations for further action.** Student recruitment for the next intake can continue, uninterrupted
 - **to approve the validated status of the course subject to conditions.** This means that the course's validated status is withheld until the Chair of the panel, on behalf of ASQ has confirmed that the conditions have been met in full. However, once met, the course may continue to register and enrol students
 - **to approve the validated status of the course subject to required actions.** This means that the course's validated status continues, but the course team must meet the terms of the required actions, as confirmed by ASQ, in accordance with the approved timescale. The course may continue to register and enrol students
 - **to approve the validated status of the course subject to recommendations for further action.** This means that the course's validated status normally continues and the course may continue to register and enrol students. However, a written response to the recommendations must be submitted to the Chair of the panel, on behalf of ASQ detailing the way in which the recommendations are being actioned or outlining the rationale for not implementing the recommendations
 - **to suspend the validated status of the course.** ASQ will provide a detailed written report to the University College's Academic Board describing why the decision has been taken and what actions it believes the Faculty Board of Study should undertake and by when. The review panel (or a sub-group) will be reconvened to review the re-submitted documentation in its entirety and make a recommendation to ASQ on this basis. Documentation in support of a periodic review may only be submitted to a panel on two occasions within a single academic year. Student recruitment onto the course normally ceases until the suspended status of the provision has been removed. Students currently on-course continue their studies uninterrupted
 - **to discontinue the validated status of the course.** ASQ will provide a detailed written report to the Academic Board describing why the decision has been taken. Student recruitment ceases but students remaining on-course are allowed to complete their studies.
- 18. Lapse of validated status**
- 18.1 The continuing validated status of any course which does not recruit for three successive academic years will be deemed to have lapsed. The course will be required to be considered through the full validation process (including initial approval). This is to ensure that all courses are reviewed and revised on a regular basis, and remain aligned to the University College's mission and strategic objectives.
- 18.2 In addition, a Faculty may wish to withdraw a course from validation. In these circumstances, the Faculty Board should consider the matter and make a recommendation to ASQ, citing the reasons for the proposed withdrawal, using the template which is available through the intranet. The decision to withdraw a course is at the sole discretion of the committee.

Course Validation and Review: Guidance notes for external panel members

1. The Validation / Review event

- 1.1 Validation is that process by which all new courses or components of courses (e.g. units), are formally established and approved. Validation confirms that all provision is consonant with, and contributes to, the University College's mission statement and strategic objectives. It also confirms to the University College and its stakeholders that appropriate expertise, experience and resources are available to secure academic standards of provision. Students may not be enrolled on a course, or unit, which has not been academically confirmed through validation.
- 1.2 No course, or component of a course, may be approved for a period longer than five years. Before the period of approval has expired, a periodic review is undertaken: this provides Academic Board, Faculties, Schools and courses with a longer term view of provision and confirms its continued appropriateness.
- 1.3 The terms of reference of the validation panel are to ensure that:
- i. the course meets the requirements for the relevant award and that the proposed standards are appropriate, taking account of relevant external reference points (such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), and the relevant subject benchmark statements);
 - ii. the learning environment within which the provision is offered is satisfactory and that the Faculty has appropriate and sufficient staff and learning resources to support the delivery of the provision;
 - iii. the course offers a coherent educational experience with relevant subject specific and key skills;
 - iv. the rationale for the provision is clearly stated and is aligned with and supported by the University College's aims and objectives;
 - v. the structure of the provision is consonant with the University College's Undergraduate Framework, as appropriate;
 - vi. the provision is consistent with the University College's mission statement and academic policies that flow from it.
- 1.4 Additionally, at periodic review, the panel will also consider:
- the degree to which the provision has been meeting its original aims and objectives;
 - student progression and achievement, the retention of students, their academic achievement and subsequent career success;
 - quality management and enhancement, achievement of quality action plans, responsiveness to student and examiner feedback, adoption of good practice.

2. Panel membership

- 2.1 The panel for validation and review events comprises the Chair, who will be a member of University College staff with substantial experience of such events; two internal academic members from Schools not associated with the proposal, at least one of whom should be from outside the Faculty; and two external members who may be academic staff from another institution, or one of whom may be a professional within a relevant industry. Additionally, the panel for a periodic review event might include up to two existing students of the University College, who should be on a different course to the proposal.
- 2.2 External panel members are nominated by the course team, through the Faculty. It is important to the University College that external panel members are demonstrably

independent of the proposing team, and guidelines have been introduced to ensure the objectivity of panel members.

2.3 Broadly, external panel members should not, within the last three years, have:

- been a member of staff, governor or student of the Arts University College at Bournemouth or the former validating body of AUCB, the University for the Creative Arts;
- had a close relationship (such as being a relative, partner or close personal friend) with a member of staff or student within the Faculty;
- held an external examinership at the University College;
- acted as an external panel member for another course within the Faculty.

2.4 If you consider that your circumstances might disqualify you from acting as an external panel member, please contact the University College as soon as possible.

3. Event administration

3.1 A validation/review event will commence during the afternoon to discuss the agenda for the event, which will take place during the following day. During the course of the event, the panel meets with a range of people involved in the design and delivery of the course, and will have the opportunity to view the resources available to support the provision.

3.2 At a review event, the panel will usually meet with students on the course to discuss their learning experience, and to explore further any issues raised during meetings with the staff team.

4. Preparation for the event

4.1 External panel members should receive the necessary documentation two weeks prior to the event. This will include:

- (i) a Context Document which gives background information about the course, including the rationale for its development and the University College context, and the market for the provision
- (ii) a draft Course Handbook, which is intended to be given to students at enrolment and which describes the intended learning experience in detail. This includes the formal unit descriptors
- (iii) in the case of a course review, sample unit handbooks for units on the existing course

4.2 In addition, you will also receive:

- the arrangements for validation and review
- summary of outcomes given in the FHEQ
- the panel membership
- the agenda for the event
- pre-event proforma
- a map to the University College
- fee and expenses claim form.

4.3 The Strategic Plan, Undergraduate Framework and HE Student Regulations are not usually included with the pack. A copy will be available on the day for your perusal if required. However, if you consider that these would be useful in assisting you to understand aspects of the course, please request this from the Assistant Registrar (Academic Standards and Quality) quality@aucb.ac.uk who will forward you an electronic copy.

4.4 You are asked to complete the pre-event proforma and return it to the Event Secretary before the event. (An electronic version of this proforma is available from quality@aucb.ac.uk.) The Event Secretary and the Chair will then gather these responses and prepare a draft agenda for discussion during the first meeting. This proforma is not exhaustive, and you are of course welcome to raise during the event issues which you had not previously identified. However, the advance identification of issues will enable the Chair to focus the discussion on areas where panel members have outstanding concerns and hence to utilise the time available effectively.

5. The role of the external panel member

5.1 All panel members are encouraged to play a pro-active role in the discussion, and if a member is not satisfied that a particular issue has been addressed and/or resolved satisfactorily, should express their concern to the Chair for further consideration of the issue.

5.2 As an external panel member you will not be expected to be fully acquainted with the University College's internal policies and procedures. The scrutiny of such issues as the provision's consistency with the University College's Undergraduate Framework or with the University College's mission statement and academic policies will normally fall to the internal panel members and the Chair of the panel.

5.3 As an external panel member, you will provide the panel with an external perspective, whether from other institutions or from an industrial sector. You may wish to consider some or all of the following issues in relation to the course under validation or review:

- the standards indicated by the aims and objectives of the provision, and their comparability with those of awards at the same level in the FHEQ;
- the alignment of the objectives and learning outcomes with any relevant Subject Benchmarks;
- the context of the provision in terms of regional or national demand for provision, and the employability of graduates;
- the planned content, delivery of the syllabus and teaching and assessment methods to be used within each component of the proposed provision (including special projects and work placements);
- the required learning resources necessary to deliver the specified provision including access to workshop and studio space, library and IT facilities through a tour of relevant facilities.

5.4 In order to do this effectively, you are asked in particular to read the Course Context document, which provides the background to the course (and in the case of a periodic review, gives information about the development of the course over the last five-year period); and the Course Handbook. The other information is provided for your reference.

6. The outcome of the event

6.1 Upon the conclusion of the scheduled meetings with the course team and students, the panel must decide:

- to approve the provision subject to any conditions, required actions or recommendations;
- to reject the proposal (with or without the possibility of resubmission).

6.2 Possible outcomes are explained in more detail in the arrangements for validation and periodic review (*Item 12. Validation Outcome and Item 18. Periodic Review Outcome*)

7. Post-event

- 7.1 Upon conclusion of the event, a report of the event will be circulated by the Event Secretary to the panel members for their comments. You are particularly invited to confirm that any technical or subject-specific details are accurate, as well as confirming that the report is an accurate record of the event.
- 7.2 You will also be asked for your feedback on the event through the means of a brief questionnaire. We should be very grateful if you could complete this and return it to us, as it will enable us to measure the effectiveness of our systems and procedures.

Year Zero approval of a new pathway

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University College Year Zero provision was established in 2006. It comprises three units over the course of one academic year and is offered to students who are clear about the discipline they wish to study, and have an appreciation of the subject, but lack the necessary skills for Level 4 entry.
- 1.2 Students who enrol onto the Year Zero are registered onto the first year of a four-year Honours degree, and progress automatically if they complete the year successfully.
- 1.3 All students on the Year Zero are required to undertake the same generic units, with the same degree of input from both the Year Zero team and the course team. Resources are provided by the receiving course.

2. Process

- 2.1 As the criteria for each pathway is common and the nature of delivery is already established, a full validation event will not be necessary to consider a proposal for a new pathway. The only issues for discussion will be the consideration of the market for the course, and the resources and expertise available to deliver it.
- 2.2 ASQ, or a sub-group established for this purpose, will be charged with the responsibility to consider a proposal to introduce a new pathway. To enable the Committee to give full consideration to the viability of a new pathway, it will require the following:
- i. A statement from the Year Zero Pathway Leader with details about the potential implications of an increase in student numbers, including the impact on resourcing for the cohort;
 - ii. A statement from the receiving Course Leader with details about the demand for the course, and the resources available to support delivery, including staffing.
- 2.3 ASQ, or sub-group, will review the statements and make a decision on whether the new pathway should be introduced.
- 2.4 Year Zero pathways in validation will be formally considered and reviewed alongside the receiving course. This will allow for staffing and other resources to be considered, and also for the progression of students to be reviewed by the panel.

Validation of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Units

- 1.1 If a staff member is interested in developing a unit or receives an external request for a particular unit, they should first discuss the matter with their line manager prior to starting on the development.

- 1.2 Having gained agreement in principle, the unit or suite of units should be written in accordance with the CPD framework and the CPD validation form and CPD unit descriptor completed.
- 1.3 The required documentation should be submitted to the Quality Section within Registry, who will set up a meeting of the ASQ sub-group to consider the units.
- 1.4 The ASQ sub-group will meet on a termly basis (dates to be announced in advance) to consider any proposed units; the group will have two options:
 - Recommending the unit(s) for approval
 - Recommending the unit(s) for further work and subsequent resubmission to the sub-group.
- 1.5 Any units which are recommended for approval are passed to the Deputy Principal as Chair of ASQ for final approval.

Amendments to validated courses at the University College

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University College's Academic Board devolves its authority for the validation of minor modifications to validated courses to ASQ.
- 1.2 The following changes are deemed major modifications and require a full validation or review event:
 - Introduction of new mode of delivery (such as the introduction of part-time mode, or full-time mode for a part-time course)
 - Substantive change to course aims and objectives*
 - Substantive change to course learning outcomes*
 - Substantive changes to more than the permitted number of units in one year, or during the period of validation (see below)*
 - Substantive change to the structure of the course*
 - Any minor modifications which result in more than 60 credits in any one stage being amended since the most recent validation or review.
- 1.3 Where a change of course or award title is proposed, ASQ shall determine whether a full event is required to consider the change, or whether approval might be granted through some other process (such as the provision of a written rationale to the Committee, with or without supporting evidence).
- 1.4 The following changes are deemed minor modifications and may be approved by ASQ on the recommendation of the Faculty Board of Study (a maximum of two units per stage may be changed in each academic year):
 - Changes to course admission criteria
 - Introduction of new required units (and consequent withdrawal of units)
 - Formal introduction or withdrawal of optional units within the course
 - Minor change to course structure (moving up to two units within the academic year)

* Substantive changes are those which result in a change of focus, approach or outcome (or means of measuring this outcome). Changes which are not substantive are those which reflect only a "tidying", or clarification.

- Substantive change to assessment requirements of a unit*
- Substantive change to unit learning outcomes*
- Substantive change in the content of a unit (ie which affects the unit objectives / learning outcomes)*
- Changes to co/pre-requisites of units.

1.5 The following modifications are deemed non-substantive and may be recommended by the Course Board of Study and approved by the Dean of Faculty, as Chair of the Faculty Board of Study:

- Changes to indicative reference material
- Changes to syllabus content which does not affect objectives / learning outcomes
- Changes of unit title
- Introduction or withdrawal of new optional units already validated in other courses
- Drafting changes to other aspects of the unit descriptor[¶].

2. Process

2.1 The documentation for validation and review events includes the unit descriptor for all units to be offered as part of the course. For review events, sample Unit Handbooks are also provided. Units introduced or amended through this process do not require additional paperwork, as their content and appropriateness within the course will be tested by the Panel. Supporting documentation for review events should outline any significant changes to the course and the reasons for these changes.

2.2 All units considered as part of a validation or review event will be individually named, ascribed a level and be tested, as part of the overall validation or review, in terms of their coherence and appropriateness within the course. Units validated through this approach may be selected for use within other named courses. It is up to ASQ to determine which of these units, validated as part of a named course, will be offered as a part of other courses or as elective options for students.

2.3 Units validated or modified outside of a named course of study require the confirmation of ASQ or the Chair of the Faculty Board of Study, as appropriate (*see Items 1.4 and 1.5 above*), taking account of the views of the external examiner for the unit(s). These changes will be recorded using the approved template, which is available from the Registry intranet site.

3. Documentation requirements – unit validation

3.1 **For a new unit**, the documentation should include the draft unit descriptor, together with a brief statement which outlines:

- how it will assist the course in meeting its stated aims and objectives
- a full list of named courses that will use the unit (including appropriate documentation that notes whether the unit will become part of provision or an optional aspect of provision)
- the identification of any additional learning resources required to deliver the unit
- the provision the unit will replace (if appropriate).

The comments of the external examiner for the course area should be attached.

[¶] Drafting changes are those which do not affect the intention of the descriptor, but lead to an amplification, clarification or clearer articulation of this intention.

3.2 **For amendments to an existing unit**, the documentation should include the draft unit descriptor, together with a brief statement which outlines:

- the reasons for the amendment(s)
- a full list of named courses which will / may use the unit
- and the identification of any additional learning resources required to deliver the revised unit.

The comments of the external examiner for the discipline should be attached.

Process of approval

4. Substantive changes

4.1 Substantive changes should be considered and approved first by the relevant Course Board of Study. Quorum will not be established unless the Subject Librarian and a Technician Tutor (where appropriate) is present at the meeting.

4.2 The proposal is then considered by Faculty Board of Study and, if approved, presented to ASQ.

4.3 As part of its deliberations on the proposed modified unit, the Faculty Board and ASQ must give consideration to:

- the rationale for the modification and how it will enhance overall provision
- how the unit fits in terms of subject balance
- whether the level and its location within the intended programme(s) are appropriate
- how the proposal integrates with the intended programme(s)
- whether additional learning resources will be required, and whether they are available
- what type of demand for the unit exists
- the comments of the external examiner
- what proportion of the course will be changed with the introduction of the unit(s) this year and since its validation.

4.4 In the interests of stability of provision, no more than 10 units offered as part of a named course of study may be changed (through the addition or revision of units) during the period of validation.

5. Non-substantive changes

5.1 Modifications which are not material to the aims, outcomes or assessment of the unit may be approved by the Chair of the Faculty Board of Study. The Chair will consider the minutes of the Course Board of Study which gave initial consideration to the changes and will confirm that the proposed changes do not affect the aims, outcomes or assessment of the unit.

6. Record of changes

6.1 Registry will be responsible for maintaining a record of unit modifications, and for ensuring that provision remains stable throughout the period of validation. All completed templates must be forwarded to Registry in advance of their approval; where proposed changes would trigger a full review event, Registry will alert the Faculty to this to enable the proposals to be withdrawn if required.

- 6.2 All revised unit descriptors must be forwarded to Registry immediately following approval for inclusion in the revised Course Handbook.
- 6.3 Additionally, Registry will prepare a brief overview report on unit changes, which will be considered by ASQ as part of the annual monitoring exercise. This will enable the committee to take an overview of the nature of changes proposed, and identify any trends or particular areas of concern.

7. Timing

- 7.1 Amendments to validated programmes will normally be considered during the spring term. All units approved through this process may be offered during the next academic year.

SECTION D: Annual review process

1.0 Overview of the process

- 1.1 The University College requires all courses and service areas to undergo an annual review process which encourages reflection on the past year, and considers improvements which can be made for the future. The process is devised to enable a dialogue between academic and business teams, to ensure that each can respond positively to feedback received through the review process.
- 1.2 The cycle has been designed such that academic courses are reviewed following the graduation of a cohort. Business areas review their service later in the academic year, taking account of issues to emerge from the course review process, and in turn inform the subsequent course review.
- 1.3 Overall University College oversight of the process rests within the Directorate of Academic Services. The Director of Academic Services develops the timetable for the annual review cycle, and consults with the accrediting body to ensure that the timescales for course review will permit external deadlines to be met. Academic Standards and Quality Committee is responsible for confirming the process, and the associated timescales.

2.0 Annual course review

These arrangements apply to all Higher Education courses at the University College; Year Zero pathways will be reviewed alongside the receiving course (see section 4.0 below.)

- 2.1 The purposes of the annual course review (ACR) process are:
 - To assure the University College that the quality and standards of each course remain secure
 - To assure the University College that emerging trends in student data, at University College and course level, are identified and considered in timely fashion
 - To assure the University College that each course remains responsive to the external environment
- 2.2 As such, the process is aligned to the requirements of the University College.
- 2.3 The review process requires course teams annually to reflect on a range of evidence, including the views of external examiners, students and employers, and relevant student data. The University College has agreed that the ACR process should be aligned to the concept of risk analysis, so that course teams concentrate on addressing immediate concerns, and responding to key opportunities and threats. As such, the process is designed to be both backward-looking (and to provide assurance about quality and standards), but also predictive, to ensure that courses are taking appropriate and timely action to respond to developments in the discipline or the sector.
- 2.4 The annual review process focuses on the operation, delivery and positioning of validated courses on a year-to-year basis. This is distinct from validation, which is the process by which all new courses or parts of courses are approved; and periodic review, which takes a longer-term view of provision and considers its continued mission-alignment and strategic value. The procedures for validation and review are contained in a separate section of the Handbook.
- 2.5 The process of ACR is undertaken in a self-critical and supportive environment where the views of staff, students, externals and others that contribute to the delivery of courses can be expressed and fully considered. An intended outcome of the process is to ensure that quality enhancement in the provision of all academic courses is regularly monitored and

sustained. It also provides the primary vehicle for the University College to identify and share good practice across Faculties and courses.

- 2.6 The process will normally take place before the end of the first term of the academic year for undergraduate courses. Schools, through their Associate Dean/Head, are responsible for the process at a local level. Responsibility for confirming the outcomes of annual course review rests with ASQ on behalf of Academic Board.
- 2.7 The ACR process comprises five parts, as outlined below. They comprise: Quality indicators; SWOT analysis; an action plan, and a section for any additional information. Course teams may, for instance, reflect on the first full year of operation following a review event, and the effectiveness of any changes made, in this section. In addition, ASQ will review on an annual basis whether any particular theme should be subject to detailed review, and this will be included. The Course Leader completes the annual course review template, taking account of all relevant evidence.
- 2.8 Where a course must adhere to specific external body criteria in order to ensure accreditation, the Course Leader will be required to provide evidence within the ACR of appropriate adherence to the professional bodies' requirement.
- 2.9 The University College has implemented a system of cross-reading of ACR reports. Cross-readers are nominated by the Deputy Principal, as Chair of ASQ, and are Course Leaders from a School other than that in which the course is based. This both ensures a degree of critical distance from the report, and supports the dissemination of good practice across the University College. The cross-reader is required to attend the meeting of the Course Board which considers the completed review.
- 2.10 Completed proformas are forwarded to the Faculty Board for confirmation at an extraordinary meeting held for this purpose. The Faculty Boards confirm the content of the report including the actions taken in response to the previous year's Action Plan, the evidence used in drawing conclusions during this monitoring cycle and the Quality Assurance Action Plan for the coming year. The Faculty Boards are also responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Quality Assurance Action Plan for each course. The cross-reader for each course is required to attend the meeting of the Faculty Board.
- 2.11 Following the extraordinary meeting(s) of the Faculty Board to consider the reports for undergraduate courses, and the associated action plans, the Chair of the Faculty Board develops an overview report on the operation of the Faculty undergraduate courses for which he/she has responsibility. A template for use by the Chairs has been developed for this purpose. A significant aspect of this report is the establishment of the Faculty Quality Assurance Action Plan. This report is received by ASQ.
- 2.12 Following the submission of the Faculty reports to ASQ, the Deputy Principal prepares an Overview Report which identifies issues to emerge from the annual monitoring process across the institution, and any other quality assurance developments during the academic year. This includes a report on staff development in learning and teaching, which is informed by both the Heads of School, and relevant records held by the HR team. The Overview Report includes a University College Quality Assurance Action Plan. The Overview Report and Action Plan are submitted to Academic Board for approval.

3.0 Summary of the annual course review process

- 3.1 The following section outlines the ACR process which has been approved by ASQ. The current proformas for the annual review exercise are available on the intranet site.

Part A: quality indicators

- A1 Academic Standards and Quality Committee has agreed a range of indicators against which each course is measured. Each of these is a simple metric and does not involve any "judgement". In each case, there is a standard answer approved by ASQ. Only where the course data deviates from this standard answer is comment requested. These include certain "critical indicators", where failure to achieve the standard answer

will always represent a weakness, and will require action during the next academic year. The critical indicators are given in italics.

- A2 In some cases, deviation might be positive (for instance, higher application rates or retention rates than predicted). In these cases, the comment and explanation might be a mark of good practice which could be shared more widely. However, the University College also wishes to seek confirmation that a retention rate of 100% is appropriate, or that applicant: target ratios of 25:1 are sustainable.
- A3 With the exception of the critical indicators, simple deviation from the standard is not a criticism. Courses should not “react” to deviation; they should respond by indicating whether there are grounds for concern. For example, courses which hold consistent applications year on year, but still fall clearly outside the University College average, may simply note that rates have consistently been higher and that there is no cause for concern.
- A4 The comment might include, for example, a response to an external examiner or to disappointing SPS results. This may include action which has already been undertaken to address the issue.
- A5 Where a course must adhere to specific external body criteria in order to ensure accreditation, the Course Leader will be required to provide evidence within the ACR of appropriate adherence to the professional bodies requirements.

PART B: Impact of Learning Strategy

- B1 Each course explains how the provision in the Learning Strategy has enhanced the learning experience for its students.

Part C: SWOT analysis

- C1 The course undertakes a SWOT analysis. This must be rigorous, and reinforced by evidence (rather than anecdote). A list of possible risk factors has been produced, based on those identified by the HEFCE Good Management Practice project, to inform this discussion. This will include a consideration of any action points from the previous academic year which have not been addressed in full, and their implications.
- C2 Teams are permitted to identify a maximum of six strengths and four weaknesses (which may relate to the quality indicators). It should be noted that threats are not necessarily current concerns, but possible concerns as the course develops, or if current trends are continued or even reversed.

Part D: action plan

- D1 The action plan from the previous academic year will be attached, with a report on progress made against each of the action points. Some of these actions may have been longer term, and hence may not have been completed. Where an action has not been completed, this will normally be carried forward to the next year, although the team may consider that other opportunities or risks are now more significant.
- D2 The course will prepare an action plan. The action plan will:
- Identify remedial action to address any weaknesses (this should not include activity which has already been completed, but should be targeted action with a defined timescale)
 - Outline any action to be undertaken in response to the opportunities (this may be longer term, and may include further investigation to be undertaken by the course team, or requests for activity by other members of the University College community)
 - Outline any action to be undertaken in response to the threats (this may also be longer term, but should indicate clear milestones which will enable the Faculty Board, and the course team, to monitor progress and mitigate any threats)

Part E: Additional information

E1 This section is an opportunity to offer any additional commentary or contextualising information. It is strictly restricted to 500 words, and shorter responses are encouraged

Annex:

Courses should include as an annex a list of student successes from the last academic year (including any notable alumni successes, which should be appropriately identified).

Courses should also provide an annex which gives numerical data about work with employers.

Note:

In order that a degree of consistency is achieved across the University College's undergraduate course offer, a number of key themes are identified for particular consideration. These should form the basis of discussion for each course, and apart from comment against the Quality Indicators, may be referenced in the SWOT analysis or in Part E: additional information. Cross readers are tasked with ensuring that due consideration has been given to each of these areas.

For 2010/11 the key themes are:

- External examiners
- Application rates
- Unit referral rates
- Retention rates
- Achievement rates
- National Student Survey
- Student Perception Survey
- Unit evaluations
- Student profile
- Graduate destinations
- Examination Board data

4.0 Annual course review for Year Zero pathways

- 4.1 Year Zero pathways will be considered at annual review by their lead Honours degree course. Relevant quality indicators will be developed for this.
- 4.2 The Year Zero Pathway Leader will prepare an annual report for ASQ which describes the progression of students on the course throughout the year. This report might include reference to any specific concerns about particular pathways, or generally about the experience of students enrolled for a Year Zero. The report should inform the discussions of the course teams about their dedicated students.

5.0 Faculty overview report

- 5.1 The Faculty Overview Report serves two functions. It provides an overview of developments within the Faculty; and brings together all those issues which require further consideration or action at University College level, and cannot be resolved within the Faculty.
- 5.2 This report is therefore in part a summary of the respective course review reports, rather than a higher level response to the same process. Directors are asked to identify any trends, either positive or negative, which emerge from the various course reports, and to present these to ASQ. This allows the Committee to gain an overview of the strength of the academic offer, and to identify University College-level actions as required.

- 5.3 Deans of Faculty are required to comment on:
- i) Any concerns raised through external examiner reports; the NSS; the SPS; or unit evaluations
 - ii) Any trends emerging from student recruitment, retention and achievement data
 - iii) The performance of the Faculty against equal opportunities / widening participation data
 - iv) Any common strengths or weaknesses emerging from courses within the Faculty
 - v) Key opportunities for courses within the Faculty
 - vi) Key threats for courses within the Faculty
 - vii) Any issues arising from course review reports which require action at University College level.

In addition, Deans of Faculty are asked to comment on:

- viii) The performance of the Faculty against equal opportunities data (relating to its staff)
 - ix) Staff management data (such as sickness absence, vacancies carried).
- 5.4 The template for this report is available via the intranet.

6.0 Business section review process

- 6.1 The following section outlines the business section review process. In general, it is assumed that the operational aspects of the service are being delivered through the management structure (i.e. timely and accurate responses to external requirements), and the process focuses on the quality and enhancement of the service.

Part A: quality indicators

- A1 Given the wide range of services covered by Directorates and sections, ASQ does not determine common indicators of performance. Instead, each section is invited to identify its own measures, which are reviewed by the Business Service Board. Each indicator is a metric and does not involve any judgement. As with course reviews, comment is only required where the response deviates from the standard answer.
- A2 In identifying their key indicators of success, sections should reflect upon their key requirements; but should also ensure that they include feedback from service users. This will be secured through the annual Service Questionnaire, but alternative mechanisms are also permitted as long as they are equally reliable.

Part B: summary of the year

- B1 Each section presents a brief summary of the year. This is limited to 500 words, and gives the section the opportunity to note any particular innovations or successes.

Part C: feedback from internal and external sources

- C1 Each section discusses the feedback received from internal and external sources. This will include, for example, any relevant questions in the SPS or NSS; any specific feedback received through Course Boards or management teams; and any feedback from external organisations.

Part D: SWOT analysis

- D1 The section undertakes a SWOT analysis. This must be rigorous, and reinforced by evidence (rather than anecdote). A list of possible risk factors has been produced to inform this discussion. This will include a consideration of any action points from the previous academic year which have not been addressed in full, and their implications.

- D2 Sections are permitted to identify a maximum of four strengths and four weaknesses (which may relate to the quality indicators); and should find a minimum of four opportunities and four threats. It should be noted that threats are not necessarily current concerns, but possible concerns as the service develops, or if current trends are continued or even reversed.
- D3 In preparing the SWOT, sections should consider both the success of the service over the last year, and feedback from internal and external service users, and should ensure that the analysis references any areas where feedback has been disappointing (even where the action relates to better information about the service, rather than a change to existing practice).

Part E: action plan

- E1 The action plan from the previous academic year will be attached, with a report on progress made against each of the action points. Some of these actions may have been longer term, and hence may not have been completed. Where an action has not been completed, this will normally be carried forward to the next year, although the team may consider that other opportunities or risks are now more significant.
- E2 The section will prepare an action plan. The action plan will:
- Identify action to address any weaknesses (this should not include activity which has already been completed, but should be targeted action with a defined timescale)
 - Outline any action to be undertaken in response to the opportunities (this may be longer term, and may include further investigation to be undertaken by the team, or requests for activity by other members of the University College community)
 - Outline any action to be undertaken in response to the threats. This may also be longer term, but should indicate clear milestones which will enable the team and its senior manager to monitor progress and mitigate any threats). In some cases, no immediate action may be required beyond continued monitoring.
- 6.2 The section will also present its operational plan, which sets out its planned work for the coming year, including both cyclical work and specific tasks. The operational plan serves the dual function of informing the wider community about proposed activity; and supporting planning within the section, requiring as it does the advance scheduling of work. The operational plan need not be detailed, but should give indicate timescales for the work proposed.
- 6.3 Following completion of the service area reports, the service Director will complete an Overview Report on the Directorate as a whole. This report is intended to provide an overview of developments within the Directorate; and to bring together all those issues which require further consideration or action at University College level.
- 6.4 Directors are required to comment on:
- Any common concerns raised through the quality indicators
 - The performance of the Directorate against equal opportunities data (relating to its staff)
 - Staff management data (such as sickness absence, vacancies carried)
 - Any common strengths or weaknesses emerging from sections with the Directorate
 - Key opportunities for sections with the Directorate
 - Key threats for sections with the Directorate
 - Any issues arising from section review reports which require action at University College level.
- 6.5 The template for this report is available via the intranet.
- 6.6 The business section reports, together with the Directorate report, are considered by the Business Service Board. Each business section report will be subject to cross-reading by

the head of another business section, who will provide detailed commentary. This both ensures due scrutiny of reports, and facilitates the sharing of good practice.

- 6.7 Once approved by the Business Service Board, Directorate reports are presented to ASQ for confirmation. In addition, the reports of sections which fall outside the Directorate structure will also be presented to ASQ.
- 6.8 In addition, the business areas of the Institute will compile one annual "Data Report". The Data Report is not an evaluative document on the quality of service provision, but provides the key "facts and figures" on performance throughout the last academic year which may be used by a range of committees and stakeholders to monitor progress. This will include information about, for example, progress against targets in the Human Resources Strategy and the Single Equalities Scheme; Freedom of Information requests and Subject Access Requests; and staff development activity. The Data Report will be collated by the service Directors.

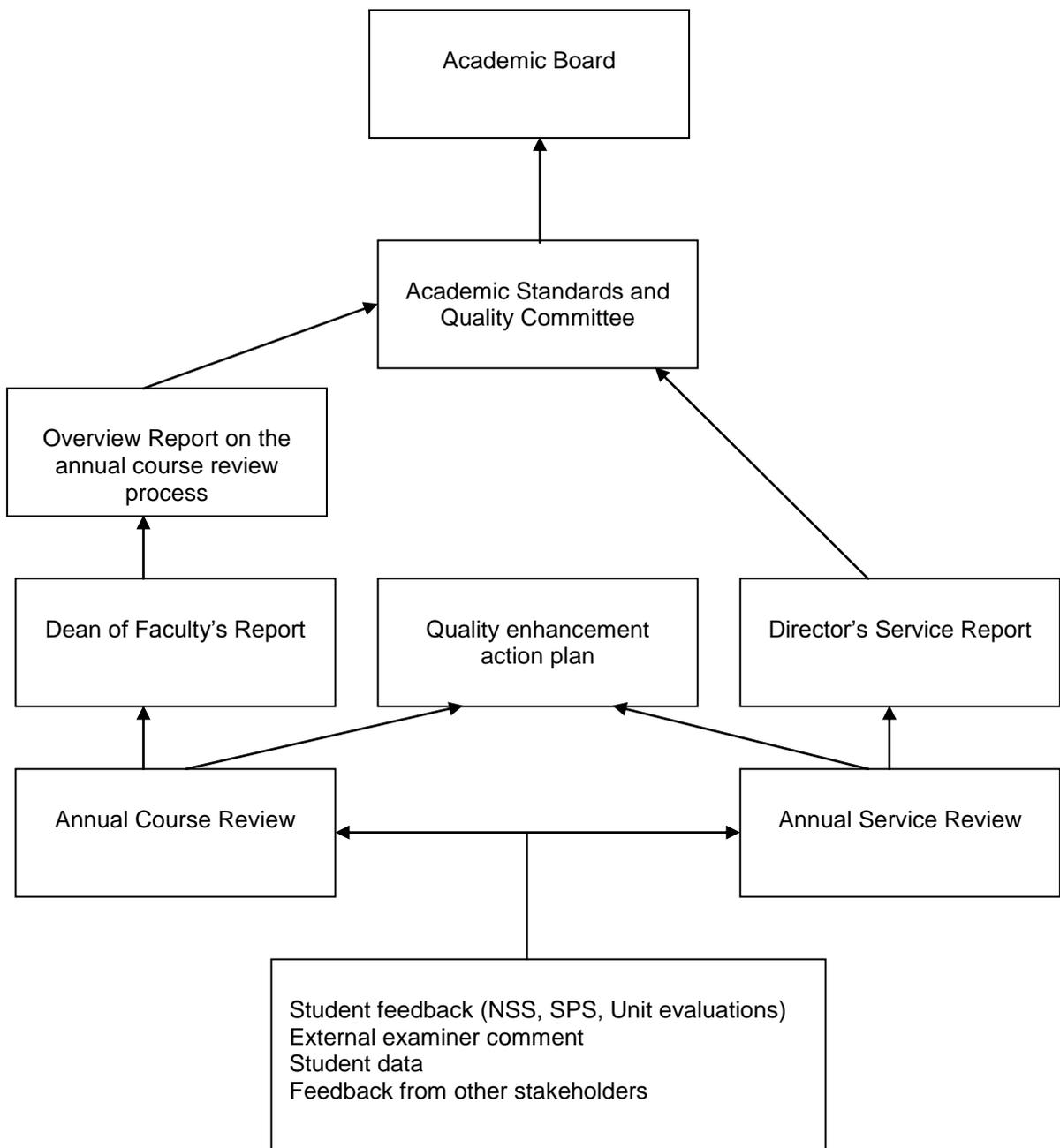
7.0 Timetable

**Please note that this outline timetable is effective until further notice. The precise arrangements are reviewed annually and approved by ASQ. The outline would, for instance, be revised in the event that the shape of the academic year were to change.*

- 7.1 Registry will issue the quality indicators for each course by the second week of July (or within two weeks of ASQ to confirm results, whichever is the sooner). Course teams will prepare their draft report before the end of July. Draft reports should be sent to the Dean of Faculty for information.
- 7.2 Updated quality indicators will be issued in early September once Resit Boards have taken place.
- 7.3 Course reports will be completed by the end of the second week of September, and forwarded to the Dean of Faculty.
- 7.4 Faculty Boards will meet early in the Autumn term to confirm the reports.
- 7.5 Deans of Faculty will prepare a Faculty Report once the Faculty Board has been held. Directors can of course commence this report as soon as they receive the course reports. The template for this report has been agreed in discussion with Directors. The purpose of the report will be to identify any common themes running through course reports; and to raise any issues which need to be addressed at Faculty or University College level, for wider discussion.
- 7.6 ASQ will receive the Faculty Reports at a meeting during the first term of the academic year.
- 7.7 The Deputy Principal will prepare an Overview Report, drawing together common threads from the Faculty Reports, once the Faculty Reports have been received. The Overview Report will be completed by the end of November in each academic year, for presentation to Academic Board at its December meeting.
- 7.8 Business areas will prepare their ASR, to an agreed template to be discussed with Directors, by the end of October. These will draw upon comments in the course reports and Faculty Reports, all of which will be circulated as soon as they have been completed. Completed ASRs will be forwarded to the Director as soon as they are available to inform the Directorate Overview Report.
- 7.9 Business Directors will prepare an Overview Report, to an agreed template, once the section reports have been received. The Business Service Board will meet during November to confirm section reports, and receive and comment on the Directorate Overview Report.
- 7.10 Directorate Overview reports will be received by ASQ before 15 December.

- 7.11 Registry will issue the quality indicators for postgraduate taught provision by the end of the second week of the second HE term.
- 7.12 The Faculty Board for Media and Performance will meet before the end of the fifth week of the term to consider and confirm the report for postgraduate taught provision.
- 7.13 ASQ will receive the report on postgraduate taught provision during the seventh or eighth week of the second term.

Diagram of the University College’s annual review process



Notes on consideration of academic course reviews by Faculty Boards of Study

1. All academic course review reports are considered through peer review against agreed criteria and, as applicable, targets.
2. It is a key principle that where courses are succeeding and demonstrating success this should be formally acknowledged. Similarly, where weaknesses are identified (e.g. through external examiner comment, SPS returns or low achievement or retention) then these should be considered, and action identified to address the issue.

3. The process of review

- 3.1 It is unrealistic to expect all Faculty Board members to read all annual course review reports in detail. Consequently, the University College has developed a system whereby an academic reviewer is allocated to each course. This reviewer reads and reports on his/her assigned course, using the standard report form. The academic reviewer is asked, on behalf of the Faculty Board, to identify:
 - Whether due consideration has been given to the quality indicators, and appropriate responses provided;
 - Any issues emerging from the review of the year;
 - Any issues emerging from minor amendments made to the course;
 - Whether the risk analysis takes account of all relevant concerns;
 - Whether the action plan is appropriate.
- 3.2 The reviewer then offers the Board a view on the appropriateness of the Faculty accepting the ACR.
- 3.3 The academic review reports are collected and filed with the formal minutes of the Board.

SECTION E: Causes for Concern Policy

1.0 Emerging risk process

1.1 The University College has introduced a process which will be used where agreed course indicators suggest that there may be a risk to the maintenance of standards or quality. This process does not supersede or replace annual course review (ACR), or periodic review, but gives the University College, through Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQ), a means of reviewing the performance of a course and ensuring that it is not at risk.

1.2 The process has two stages; each is described below.

2.0 Stage One

2.1 ASQ has agreed a set of “triggers” for the at-risk process. These triggers are given below. Each trigger is based on data which is considered routinely through the annual course review process; none depends on a judgement by the Committee.

2.2 When the quality indicators are considered by the Faculty Board as part of the ACR process, indicators are reviewed to ensure that there is no trigger present. (This is automated by MIS as part of the report.)

2.3 In addition, the Dean may require a course to undertake stage one of the process if he/she considers that the pattern of achievement against standard quality indicators is inadequate, even if none of the triggers applies.

2.4 If one or more of the triggers applies, or if the Dean implements the process, the course team (through the course leader) is required to prepare a detailed response, including the actions which will be taken to address the issue. This will normally include discussion with staff members and students, as well as potential reference to other staff within the University College. The plan must be presented to the Dean within one month, with an expectation that action will be completed within a total of three months from the identification of the trigger. The report will subsequently be presented to the Faculty Board.

2.5 Once the actions have been completed, the course team will report this to the Faculty Board, explaining any further action which has been taken or is planned. It is open to a course team to report that no action is required or would be appropriate. (An example may be if an external examiner had expressed concern about marking standards, but where the investigation and benchmarking indicated support for the marks as awarded.) However this will be the exception; and it will be for the Dean to determine whether this response is acceptable.

2.6 No separate final report is required on the impact of the actions undertaken. This will be reported to the Faculty Board through the ACR process; the primary indicator of achievement is the improvement of performance against any indicators which acted as triggers.

3.0 Stage 2

3.1 If a trigger is repeated in the following year, Stage 2 of the process applies, unless the Dean confirms that no further action is required. Stage 2 requires an investigation into the facts by a panel appointed by ASQ. The panel will comprise a Dean or Head of School from outside the Faculty in which the course is based; a member of staff at Senior Lecturer level or above also from outside the Faculty in which the course is based; a representative of ASQ not otherwise connected with the course; and a member of the course team, nominated by the Course Leader.

- 3.2 The panel will consider the evidence available, will meet with the course team and the students as appropriate, and may also consult other University College officers. It will make recommendations for improvement, which will be reported to the Dean. It is the Dean's responsibility to ensure that action is taken to address any issues. The panel's report, and the response of the Dean, will be reported to ASQ.

Triggers

External examiners	Disagreement with ANY of the key questions; or two successive years of disagreement with any of the other questions, triggers Stage 1. Continuation to the following year would trigger Stage 2.
Unit referral rates	Referral rates which are 10% outside the University College average; and Level 4 referral rates which are 10% outside the University College Level 4 average, are both triggers.
Retention rates	Level retention rates which are 10% below the University College average for the level are the trigger. In addition, if retention of non-traditional learners (Q 42) is more than 4 students below expected, this is also a trigger.
Achievement rates	Whilst not wishing to encourage higher or lower marking per se, any course showing 20% more or less higher classes of degree (First or Upper Second) than the University College norm is a trigger. (Responses might include reference to entry qualifications, and national benchmarking data.)
National Student Survey	Any individual question showing lower than 50% satisfaction; and any theme showing lower than 60% is a trigger. Courses may also need to liaise with colleagues in teams such as Library or ITCS (if these are the areas of low satisfaction).
Student Perception Survey	Any individual course-related question showing lower than 50% satisfaction; and any theme showing lower than 60%. In addition, any question showing 20% lower than University College average on any question is a trigger.
Unit evaluations	The University College is shortly to have a discussion about the use of unit evaluations. In the meantime, it is proposed that a score below 3.7 against either indicator should act as a trigger.
Examination Board data	Triggers include: A unit average which is 10% outside the level average Any unit average which is above 66% or below 52%.

In addition, a total of four triggers in two years leads automatically to Stage 2, as this indicates more significant failings on the course.

SECTION F: Student engagement with quality processes

1. The University College is committed to supporting and promoting activities whereby students have the opportunity to engage in the processes and management of quality assurance and enhancement. This opportunity not only has the benefit of enhancing students' career prospects, it also enables the University College to gain an insight into the student perspective of quality assurance in higher education. Student feedback, secured through a variety of mechanisms is used to develop the curriculum of individual courses.
2. The recent introduction of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) initiative to include students as members of institutional audit and review teams has provided the University College with the opportunity to review the range of activities available for students to engage in quality processes. Following a successful pilot (conducted in 2008/09), the panel membership for periodic reviews now includes students as panel members. Training and support is provided to enable students to participate as a full panel member with authority to ask questions. This opportunity extends to periodic reviews only, and the review can continue in the event that no student is available.
3. The University College has a course representative system established, whereby every cohort of students elects a representative who attends Course Boards and is expected to raise issues on behalf of the group. Unit evaluations are used to secure feedback from students on individual units. Feedback from course representatives and unit evaluations are considered by course teams with responses given in the annual course review (ACR). The panel of a periodic review event will meet with a group of students from the course under consideration; the feedback of which will assist the panel in reaching a conclusion. There is student representation on the central academic committees and sub-groups, and students are invited to take part in staff recruitment processes.
4. Final year students are encouraged to engage in the National Student Survey (NSS), a survey conducted annually by an external agency (currently Ipsos-Mori UK) on behalf of the Funding Council. The purpose of the NSS is to provide feedback on the quality of students' courses, the results of which are published on the Unistats website to enable stakeholders, including future applicants, to compare information across institutions.
5. All students are able to participate in the University College internal survey, the Student Perception Survey (SPS) that is conducted on an annual basis.
6. The results from both the NSS and SPS surveys are used to determine student satisfaction according to different categories; including by course, theme and equality target groups. The results are divided into those that are course specific, the results of which will be reported through the ACR, and those that are University College wide, which will inform the ASR (annual service review). Any issues arising from results that are outside the norm will be identified on the appropriate ACR or ASR action plan. ASQ will consider the results from both surveys and will make a decision on any action that might be required where an issue is identified that gives rise to high levels of dissatisfaction across the full student body. The Equalities Committee will be invited to consider the student experience using the breakdown of results according to equality target groups.

SECTION G: Arrangements for monitoring the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework

Note: This guidance should be used alongside the CPD Framework, CPD Validation Form, and the CPD Unit Descriptor

1. Context

- 1.1 The University College's CPD Framework is a "shell" into which a wide range of different types of learning can be dropped. For example, this might include the accreditation of in-house training courses offered by local companies, or the accreditation of training which is offered by the University College, either to a specific target group, or made publicly available; and there may be opportunities to approve aspects of professional development which take place within the University College.
- 1.2 The intention of the framework is to offer the opportunity to accredit small blocks of learning, each up to a maximum of 15 credits. It would be possible for some units to be linked, or to be designed for successive study, but these could not be built into a qualification. Any programme of study which is expected to lead to a qualification would have to be mapped against the Undergraduate or Postgraduate Curriculum Framework.
- 1.3 It would also be possible for an undergraduate unit or units to be offered, in their entirety, to an external group, where there was a clear market. This would require careful consideration of the issues of structure and design as well as staff and other resources. No staff member would be required to undertake additional duties without the prior agreement of their line manager.
- 1.4 Students passing a unit under this framework will receive a transcript indicating the credit awarded and a certificate of achievement. Any credit achieved might be considered for AP(E)L in the same way as credit achieved by any other entrant.

2. Delivery and Administration issues

- 2.1 The unit leader should carry out the administration associated with the development and delivery of the unit, with the exception of particular duties specified below which will be undertaken by Registry.
- 2.2 Registry will hold the list of approved units and will "operate" the framework, but does not hold academic responsibility for it.
- 2.3 Prior to validation the Unit Leader should make contact with the Student Records team within Registry and provide unit information as detailed on the CPD validation form, in order that the unit can be set up on SITS, the Student Records database. The Unit Leader should also agree appropriate tuition fees with the Income Accountant/Student Accounts Officer.
- 2.4 Details of students undertaking a unit within the CPD framework must be included within the HESA return; it is therefore key that appropriate data is obtained from all students. The unit leader should ensure that all students complete enrolment forms prior to the start or on the first day of the unit delivery. Completed forms should then be passed to Registry.
- 2.5 Fees (if applicable) must be paid prior to or at enrolment; students will be subject to the Fees and Charges Payment Policy.
- 2.6 If attendance is required for unit delivery, a register must be kept and Registry informed if anybody withdraws prior to completion of the unit.
- 2.7 The Unit Leader is responsible for assessment and arranging moderation.

- 2.8 Once assessment has taken place and results confirmed through moderation, the completed register and assessment results should be returned to Registry.
- 2.9 Following approval of the results by ASQ, Registry will be responsible for providing transcripts and certificates.
- 2.10 Evaluation of CPD units should be undertaken by the Unit Leader and provided to the Quality Section in Registry.

SECTION H: External context for quality assurance

Institutional Audit

1. Like all public higher education institutions, the Arts University College at Bournemouth is subject to a rigorous system of quality assurance through the national Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), which is responsible for ensuring that qualifications awarded by publicly funded higher education institutions are of an appropriate standard, and that a suitable quality of education has been provided.
2. The QAA does this by conducting an Institutional Audit, which is an evidence-based peer review process. The Audit is intended to examine the systems and processes which an institution has adopted to manage the quality and standards of its awards, and their effectiveness. At the end of the Audit, the review team will make judgements on:
 - the confidence that can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards, and
 - the confidence that can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.
3. The Institutional Audit of the Arts University College at Bournemouth was held in the autumn of 2005. The next Audit is scheduled for 2010/11.
4. The Handbook for Institutional Audit, which contains details about the aims and objectives of the process as well as its operation, is available from the QAA website at:
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalAudit/handbook2006/default.asp>
5. The Institutional Audit process is supplemented by a Mid-cycle follow-up, which is a paper-based exercise conducted by senior QAA officers who review an institution's statement of its progress since its most recent Audit. The details of this process can be found at:
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalAudit/midCycleGuidance.asp>

Academic infrastructure

To support institutions in defining academic standards, and to enable comparability between subject areas and institutions, the QAA has developed the academic infrastructure for courses in England. The academic infrastructure has four parts:

- Subject benchmark statements
- Framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ)
- Code of Practice
- Programme specifications

1.0 Subject benchmark statements

1.1 Subject benchmark statements set out the typical expectations of student learning and achievement on an Honours degree programme in the specified subject area. Courses are expected to take account of the relevant benchmark statement, which is written in such a way as to permit a degree of innovation and diversity between courses. Four benchmark statements are relevant to the University College's courses:

- Architecture
- Art and design
- Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies
- Dance, Drama and Performance

1.2 All benchmark statements can be accessed through the title page:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/honours/default.asp>

2.0 Framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ)

2.1 *A brief guide to academic qualifications*

The higher education qualifications awarded by universities and colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are at five levels. In ascending order, these are the Certificate, Intermediate, Honours, Masters and Doctoral levels.

2.2 *Level 4*

The holder of a Certificate of Higher Education will have a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject, and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems. He or she will be able to communicate accurately, and will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility. The Certificate may be a first step towards obtaining higher level qualifications.

2.3 *Level 5*

Holders of qualifications at this level will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study, and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field. They will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making. The intermediate level includes ordinary (non-Honours) degrees, the Foundation degree, Diplomas of Higher Education, and other higher diplomas.

2.4 *Level 6*

An Honours graduate will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this, the graduate will have developed analytical techniques and problem-solving skills that can be applied in many types of employment. The graduate will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements, and to communicate effectively. An Honours graduate should have the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.

Honours degrees form the largest group of higher education qualifications. Typical courses last for three years (if taken full-time) and lead to a Bachelors degree with Honours, having a title such as Bachelor of Arts (BA(Hons)) or Bachelor of Science (BSc(Hons)). Also at this level are short courses and professional 'conversion' courses, based largely on undergraduate material, and taken usually by those who are already graduates in another discipline, leading to Graduate Certificates or Graduate Diplomas.

2.5 *Level 7*

Much of the study undertaken at Master's level will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show originality in tackling and solving problems.

They will have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative, in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

Masters degrees are awarded after completion of taught courses, programmes of research, or a mixture of both. Longer, research-based programmes often lead to the degree of MPhil. Most Masters courses last at least one year (if taken full-time), and are taken by persons with Honours degrees (or equivalent achievement). Some Masters degrees in science and engineering are awarded after extended undergraduate programmes that last, typically, a year longer than Honours degree programmes. Also at this level are advanced short courses, often forming parts of Continuing Professional Development programmes, leading to Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas.

(Note: the MAs granted by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are not academic qualifications.)

2.6 *Level 8*

Doctorates are awarded for the creation and interpretation of knowledge, which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research. Holders of doctorates will be able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding.

Holders of doctorates will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, and innovation in tackling and solving problems.

The titles PhD and DPhil are commonly used for doctorates awarded on the basis of original research. Doctoral programmes, that may include a research component, but which have a substantial taught element lead usually to awards that include the name of the discipline in their title (e.g. EdD for Doctor of Education). A doctorate normally requires the equivalent of three years' full-time study.

2.7 *Further information*

- More detailed statements of graduate attributes are set out in **subject benchmark statements** (see above) produced for broad subject areas, at Honours level, and at other levels where there are substantial numbers of taught courses in the subject.
- For each course, the providing university or college writes a **programme specification**, setting out in detail the knowledge, understanding and skills that the successful student should acquire.

2.8 *Foundation degrees (two-year awards)*

2.9 The first Foundation degree offered at AUCB was the prototype FdA Professional Photography which commenced in 2001/02. Subsequently further FdAs were validated and currently 12% of students at the University College are enrolled on Foundation degree courses.

2.10 The aim of the Foundation Degree is to provide advanced vocational education, with an outcome at Level 5 in the Framework for Higher Education (FHEQ) issued by the QAA. This makes it equivalent in level of outcome to existing qualifications such as the Higher National Diploma (HND) and the Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), i.e. approximately equivalent to two years full-time study within higher education.

2.11 In October 2004, QAA issued a Foundation Degree qualification benchmark. This follows for information.

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/foundationDegree/benchmark/FDQB.asp>

3.0 Code of Practice

3.1 The QAA Code of Practice provides advice and good practice to institutions in respect of a range of student processes. The Code was developed in discussion with practitioners from across the sector, and is referred to during external quality processes. The University College regularly reviews its own internal processes, and how these align to the Code. It should be noted that the Code represents guidance, rather than prescription, and that institutions are entitled to deviate from this practice, but are usually expected to explain why they have done so.

3.2 The ten sections of the Code of Practice are:

1. Postgraduate research programmes (not relevant to the AUCB)
2. Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)
3. Students with disabilities
4. External examining
5. Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters
6. Assessment of students
7. Programme design, approval, monitoring and review
8. Career education, information and guidance
9. Placement learning
10. Admissions to higher education

3.3 The most recent versions of the respective sections of the Code can be downloaded at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp>

3.4 The University College's response to each section is available through the intranet site.

4.0 Programme specifications

4.1 The final part of the academic infrastructure is the programme specification, which is a document designed and developed by the institution to describe the features of each programme of study. The University College has designed a template for its programme specifications, based on QAA guidance.

SECTION I: External examining: principles, procedures and guidelines

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The external examining system is an important aspect of the University College's wider quality assurance framework. External examiners contribute to the University College's quality assurance process by assisting the University College in:
- i) assuring itself about the comparability and appropriateness of academic standards and awards as indicated by the practice and experience of other similar higher education institutions;
 - ii) confirming that the assessment process is fair and fairly operated;
 - iii) informing other formal quality assurance processes including Annual Course Review and periodic review;
 - iv) reporting on its responses to the key elements of the QAA's academic framework.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The principles underlying the external examiner system at the University College are that:
- i) the external examiner selection criteria should assure the University College that the purposes of the external examiner system are achieved;
 - ii) an external examiner is appointed to all units contributing to an award;
 - iii) all newly-appointed external examiners will be formally briefed and inducted prior to taking up their role;
 - iv) the external examiner system operates on an objective and impartial basis;
 - v) the membership of all Examination Boards must include external examiners;
 - vi) external examiners are appointed as full and equal members of the Examination Board;
 - vii) the normal term of office for an external examiner will be no more than four years, with the possibility of one year's additional tenure, at the discretion of the University College;
 - viii) all external examiners must visit the University College for the examination process and complete and submit a report to the Chair of ASQ;
 - ix) all external examiner reports will be considered as part of wider quality assurance arrangements with the University College.

3. Role and Responsibilities of External Examiners

- 3.1 The primary role of external examiners is to assist the University College in assuring the academic standards of provision and awards are comparable with other similar HE institutions elsewhere and to ensure fairness in student assessment and the assessment process. To fulfil these dual aims, external examiners act as moderators. As such, they are normally expected to ensure:
- i) the form and content of examination papers, coursework or other assignments that count towards the award are consistent with course aims and the standard of the award;

- ii) student marks are moderated, as a cohort, in consultation with internal markers. External examiners do not have the power to adjust marks for individual students. Examination Boards may, however, adjust the marks of individual units for an individual or a cohort of students on the basis of the sampled assessed work using the principles outlined;
- iii) any proposed changes to course-specific assessment regulations are fully considered;
- iv) assessments are conducted in accordance with approved course regulations;
- v) decisions about progression and awards are reached according to the University College's regulations;
- vi) consideration is given to the assessment process and the schemes used for marking and classification purposes;
- vii) an annual report is completed and submitted to the Deputy Principal, as Chair of ASQ, that considers the above in terms of the quality and standards of academic provision;
- viii) their annual reports are received by the Deputy Principal not later than **three weeks** from the date of the Examination Board.

3.2 In order to fulfil this role, external examiners should normally:

- i) have access to the full range of assessed student work;
- ii) agree a sampling strategy (normally 20% of all student work at Levels 5 and 6) to ensure that assessed work from all award categories, including the highest and lowest (including any failures) and borderlines are considered;
- iii) optionally, to meet with a group of students to discuss their experience of the course;
- iv) have access to appropriate documentation that sets out course regulations and assessment requirements;
- v) attend any relevant meetings and, in particular, the end of year Examination Board;
- vi) be asked to participate in any reviews of student work to arise as a result of an allegation of academic misconduct;
- vii) conduct, if felt necessary, and with the agreement of the Dean of Faculty, an interim visit to the University College to meet with course-related staff and students;
- viii) attend as requested for a formal Induction meeting with the Dean, Course Leader and Course Team, following their initial appointment;
- ix) attend the formal University College's External Examiner Induction programme.

4. Selection Process

4.1 The Academic Registrar will review annually the status of all external examiner appointments. When an upcoming vacancy is noted, the Academic Registrar will notify the Dean in order to seek an appropriate nomination. Before forwarding the nomination for consideration by the Chair of ASQ, the Dean must be assured that the candidate meets the selection criteria set out below.

5. Nomination

5.1 External examiners are nominated by the Faculty in which the course is based. In order to expedite the nomination process, the Deputy Principal, as Chair of ASQ, receives and confirms nominations as appropriate, usually having taken advice from senior members of the Committee.

5.2 The University College has developed a pro-forma for use by individuals nominated as external examiners. The Dean is responsible for ensuring that these forms are completed and signed by the examiner before consideration of behalf of ASQ. Incomplete forms will not be considered.

6. Selection Criteria

6.1 In confirming external examiner appointments, the Chair of ASQ will give consideration to the following selection criteria:

- i) the appropriateness of the academic and/or professional qualifications of the candidate in relation to the subject of study;
- ii) the standing, expertise and experience of the nominee in relation to the subject of study;
- iii) the candidate's past experience as an external examiner elsewhere or other experience in assessing students in the subject area. Where the nominee has no experience as an HE external examiner or the experience is limited, the Committee will seek to assure itself of the candidate's suitability by considering:
 - the nominee's range of experience as an internal examiner
 - the nominee's range of experience at other levels or in other capacities
 - other relevant experience likely to support the external examiner role
 - whether the appointment would be part of an experienced team
 - whether another external examiner within the same Faculty is able to act as mentor to provide support
- iv) the range of institutional and/or professional experience the external examiner can draw upon to inform deliberations about the comparability of academic standards and provision;
- v) the candidate's experience in the light of the balance and experience of other members of the external examiner team (eg, a balance between professional and academic practitioners).

6.2 Candidates for external examinerships will not normally be approved if:

- i) the candidate has had a previous close relationship with the University College within the last five years. For these purposes, 'close relationship' is defined as having:
 - been a member of staff, a governor, a student or a near relative to a member of staff associated with the course;
 - held an external examinership at the University College;
 - acted as an external member of the validation or review panel that considered the course.
- ii) the candidate already holds two substantial external examiner appointments elsewhere (this may be considered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Chair of ASQ);
- iii) the candidate is from an institution already represented on the external examiner team within the Faculty;
- iv) the candidate is from a faculty/school or course where staff of the University College act as external examiner;
- v) the candidate is from the same institution as the retiring external examiner.

6.3 Chief External Examiner

- i) Final decisions about progression and award are made by the Progression and Award Board. This Board includes one external examiner from each Faculty, who is identified as

the Chief External Examiner. The Chief External Examiner will be drawn from the pool of examiners within the Faculty, and his/her responsibilities will include:

- i. To ensure that regulations are applied appropriately
- ii. To ensure that standards and procedures are applied consistently across courses within the faculty
- iii. To ensure fairness and impartiality in the application of award regulations and procedures
- iv. To attend the University College's undergraduate progression and awards examination boards
- v. To ensure that the undergraduate progression and awards examination boards are conducted fairly
- vi. To report annually to ASQ

7. Terms of Appointment

- 7.1 All Examination Boards operate with external examiner membership and it is a requirement that external examiners agree to attend these Boards.
- 7.2 Non-attendance at the Examination Board may result in termination of the appointment and subsequent replacement as external examiner to this Board.
- 7.3 The terms of appointment for external examiners at the University College are as follows:
- i) the normal term of appointment is four years although, in exceptional cases, this may be extended by a further year;
 - ii) where a team of external examiners is appointed, the terms of office will be phased to ensure continuity;
 - iii) the appointment year for external examiners is normally January to December;
 - iv) in the event of an early resignation from office, ASQ will seek new nominations to fill the role at the earliest possible date;
 - v) each external examiner is expected to submit an annual report to the Chair of ASQ;
 - vi) failure to meet the prescribed responsibilities set out in these guidelines could lead to actions by the University College. In extreme cases, this may lead to a termination of employment.

8. Examination Board Remit

- 8.1 The School Examination Board, which is held annually, will consider all student work on named degrees for all courses within the School. The remit of the School Examination Board is:
- i. To consider the assessment and examination of students on all courses within the School involving external examiners and verifiers;
 - ii. To provide recommendations on student progression and award (including classification) to ASQ;
 - iii. To receive a verbal report from each Course Leader within the School on the team's response to the previous report of the external examiner(s);

- iv. To exercise responsibility for the conduct of all assessments leading to an award of credit for a unit and to agree the terms of Referral and Retake;
 - v. To consider the award of compensation for failed units, in line with the *Guidelines for Compensations* in the HE Regulations
- 8.2 Each course has at least one external examiner; the number is determined by the breadth of the course, content of the units and the number of students undertaking those units. The external examiners are proposed by ASQ, on behalf of Academic Board.
- 8.3 To discharge the University College's obligation to ensure consistency of standards not simply within a course but also across all similar courses at the University College, membership of each School Examination Board is supplemented by the Director of Academic Services, Academic Registrar or a Head of School from the other Faculty, in order that it can be assured that the University College regulations are applied consistently across all courses. This process also allows the University College to make similar and appropriate decisions on issues such as mitigation, referral, exit velocity and borderline students.
- 8.4 The School Examination Board comprises:
- Associate Dean/Head of School (Chair)
 - External Examiners for each course under consideration
 - Course Leaders
 - All full-time academic staff contributing to the course
 - Director of Academic Services, Academic Registrar or the Associate Dean/Head of School from the other Faculty
- In attendance:*
- Faculty Registrar (Secretary)
 - Representative from Registry (recording of results)

The Deputy Principal is entitled to attend all meetings of the School Examination Board.

- 8.5 To ensure consistency across all courses at the University College, applications for mitigation are considered through a common process which is coordinated by the Academic Registrar. Applications must be accompanied by relevant documentary evidence, and are ultimately determined by the Deputy Principal, as Chair of ASQ, taking advice from relevant staff. Decisions are notified to the relevant School Examination Board. For further information about the mitigation process, please contact the Academic Registrar.
- 8.6 Moderation
- 8.6.1 To ensure consistency of judgement and standard within individual courses and across courses offered at a similar level within the University College, all unit results are reviewed and confirmed by the full School Examination Board, including external examiners. This may include the moderation of marks as appropriate. Moderation is not conducted by partial reconsideration of marks for units which have already been assessed by due process. Moderation is exercised by reviewing the mark profile of all students within their cohort and ensuring that they conform to University College and national standards. This moderation is informed both by the external examination sampling process, and a review of the overall profiles.
- 8.6.2 On Honours degrees, moderation extends to Level 5 assessment as it contributes marks towards the final Honours classification. All units at Levels 6 and 7 should be reviewed annually and all Level 5 units reviewed at least every other year, in accordance with the schedule agreed by the University College. Level 4 work is not normally considered, although the outcomes are reported, and the external examiner has the right to review work at Level 4 if he/she wishes

- 8.6.3 On foundation degrees all Level 5 units should be reviewed annually and all units at Level 4 reviewed at least every other year.
- 8.7 The full School Examination Board meets in the summer term of each academic year. The School Examination Board may also devolve responsibility for defined aspects of its remit to its internal members, subject to report to the full School Examination Board.
- 8.8 In arriving at an Honours classification, the School Examination Board will be guided by the calculations described in the HE Regulations. The Board will exercise its discretion in reviewing students at borderline marks to ensure that each candidate is placed in an appropriate category. In exercising its discretion, the Board will consider criteria such as the achievement of 70 or more credits in the higher band at Level 6; an overall average in the higher band at Level 6; and the mark for the Extended Major Project falling within the higher band. A student must meet two of these criteria to be moved to the higher band. (Refer to *Assessment Regulations and Associated Procedures* in the HE Regulations).
- 8.9 While a student's grade may be moderated upwards through the process outlined above and in the HE Regulations, the principle of the assessment process of AUCB is that no student's final classification will be lower than that indicated by the overall weighted average mark, unless in the event of proven cases of cheating and plagiarism or as a result of cohort moderation.

9. Attendance at the University College

9.1 Induction

- 9.1.1 Once a nomination has been approved, the Deputy Principal will confirm details of the appointment to the external examiner. The Deputy Principal will provide all existing external examiners with the External Examining Handbook at the start of every academic year for the duration of the examiners period of tenure.
- 9.1.2 Prior to their first visit to the University College the Dean and Course Leader will forward to the examiner the following documentation:
- Course handbook
 - HE Regulations
 - Student lists
 - Sample project briefs and unit handbooks
 - Details of domestic arrangements for the visit
- 9.1.3 The University College will also conduct an induction meeting to provide clarification on:
- i) the procedures for examination
 - ii) the role of the external examiner
 - iii) questions relating to the External Examining Handbook
 - iv) the end of level meeting with other external examiners to the University College to ensure moderation of standards
 - v) the reporting of their visit
 - vi) payment of fees and expenses

9.2 Visit to the University College:

- 9.2.1 The course leader will provide the examiner with a full student list with marks proposed per unit for the year.

9.2.2 The course leader will have prepared a 20% sample of work in the top, middle and lower bands of achievement from Levels 5 and 6 with associated documentation e.g. unit handbook and project brief. The sample will also include;

- All work being judged as at fail or referred grade;
- All work marked at 75% or more (honours degrees only);

A minimum sample of 10 pieces of work will be provided; in courses where there is a cohort of less than 10 students, all work will be sampled.

9.2.3 The schedule for the visit will include a meeting with all members of the course team.

9.2.4 A meeting with students of the course may be included in the schedule, if agreed to be desirable.

9.2.5 The examiner will have an opportunity to consider forthcoming project briefs and any examination papers in order to anticipate the end of level assessments and visit.

9.2.6 If possible, an informal dinner or lunch should be arranged with members of the course team. A meeting with Examiners from other awards within the School will be organised if possible, to consider issues of parity and any other common issues.

10. Reporting Requirements

10.1 All external examiners are expected to prepare and submit an evaluative annual report to the Chair of ASQ.

10.2 The University College has adopted a reporting pro-forma that all external examiners must use. This is available electronically from the Quality team within Registry (email: quality@aucb.ac.uk). The pro-forma has been designed to elicit full feedback from external examiners on the issues/topics raised. Incomplete reports or those lacking clarity in response to the required information will be returned by the Chair of ASQ for re-submission at a later date. Payment will be postponed pending the receipt of the revised report.

10.3 This form, together with the cover sheet giving summary feedback, is available on the intranet.

11. Areas for Report

11.1 The pro-forma asks external examiners to comment on the following in the context of the University College's Mission statement and the course's approved aims and objectives:

- i) The appropriateness of the standards set for the award with reference to published national subject benchmarks and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- ii) The standard of student work in relation to the course outcomes
- iii) The standard of student work in the subject/award(s) examined, in relation to their peers on comparable courses at other HEIs
- iv) The size and range of sample made available to assess the students work
- v) Access to all the material needed to make a judgement, and opportunities to discuss the assessment process with staff
- vi) The conduct of assessment for the subject/award(s), and in particular if it had been conducted in accordance with its programme specification(s)
- vii) The design, structure and organisation of the assessment scheme, and the marking of assessments; making reference to the programme specification
- viii) The range of assessment methods uses – including the assessment of practical work

- ix) A summary of the strengths of the particular unit/course, as revealed through the assessment process
- x) A summary of recommended action points regarding the course, as revealed through the assessment process, that the course team should address prior to the next examiner's visit

12. Report Circulation

12.1 Upon receipt, external examiner reports will normally be circulated by the Deputy Principal to those listed below. However, if required, an external examiner may, on an exceptional basis, write a confidential report to the University College Principal where it is believed that the security of provision may be at risk.

- Chair of ASQ
- Academic Registrar
- Dean of Faculty
- Course Leader.

13. University College Response

13.1 External examiner reports will be given consideration upon their receipt by the Deputy Principal. Any substantive issues raised by external examiners about the quality or security of academic provision will be subject to immediate consideration by the Deputy Principal and action by the Faculty Board. This will normally include contact with the external examiner by the Deputy Principal to discuss their conclusions and any actions that might be taken to ensure that provision remains secure. The nature of the discussion and the external examiner will be noted in a letter to the external examiner, copied to the Academic Registrar that sets out any agreed action including the possibility of an amendment or addendum to the original report to reference action taken.

13.2 All external examiner reports will be considered during the process of annual course review. Commendations and recommendations for action in response to the external examiner report will be noted in these reports. Annual Course Review reports will be forwarded to external examiners after the conclusion of the review process. In addition, all external examiners will receive a formal letter from the University College which identifies the points they have raised, and confirms how they are to be addressed.

13.3 This is the responsibility of the Dean. External examiner reports will also be used to inform the processes of Periodic Review and Institutional Review.

13.4 The Examination Board will also include on the agenda a written report from the course team which responds to the examiners' reports from previous visits.

14. Payment

14.1 External examiners will only be paid after the receipt of a complete annual report. The University College specifies that these reports must be received within three weeks of the Board in order to ensure payment. In addition, the University College will pay (through the Registry) all reasonable fees for travel (at standard class rail travel or mileage), lodgings and meals, if required, during visits to the University College. It is anticipated that external examiners will visit the University College once during the academic year and once for the purpose of induction. The University College will arrange overnight accommodation where requested and will meet the expenses for meals during the visit period provided that receipts are made available.

14.2 The University College pays a set total fee for each course, and fees are reviewed on an annual basis. In addition, a separate fee will be paid for newly appointed examiners who attend the University College's induction programme. The external examiners' claim form is available on the intranet.

14.3 The Academic Registrar will reimburse for external examiner visits as indicated above.

APPENDIX 1: Forthcoming periodic review dates 2010/15

Course	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015
Faculty of Art and Design					
School of Design					
BA (Hons) Architecture					
BA (Hons) Fashion Studies					
BA (Hons) Modelmaking					
BA (Hons) Product Design					
BA (Hons) Interior Architecture and Design* FdA Interior Architecture and Design					
BA (Hons) Textiles* FdA Textiles					
BA (Hons) Fashion Design and Technology* FdA Fashion Design and Technology					
School of Visual Arts					
BA (Hons) Graphic Design					
BA (Hons) Fine Art (inc. part-time)					
BA (Hons) Illustration					
BA (Hons) Visual Communication FdA Visual Communication					
Faculty of Media and Performance					
School of Media					
BA (Hons) Animation Production					
BA (Hons) Digital Media Production* FdA Digital Media Production					
BA (Hons) Film Production					
BA (Hons) Photography					
BA (Hons) Commercial Photography FdA Commercial Photography					
FdA Photographic Practice (part-time)					
School of Performance					
BA (Hons) Acting					
BA (Hons) Arts and Event Management					
BA (Hons) Costume with Performance Design FdA Make-up for Media and Performance					
Year 0	Evaluation for ASQ				
Undergraduate Curriculum Framework					
Postgraduate Framework (Including review of MA Pathways)**					
QAA University Institutional Audit					

*Validation period for Honours year aligned to corresponding FdA course

**Validation period for MA Pathways aligned to PG Framework