



Policy for Management and Reporting on Professional, Statutory & Regulatory (PSRB) accreditation

Approved by Academic Council 11 December 2019

1 Introduction

The University has a number of programmes, schools and institutes which are accredited by a wide range of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

1.1 Purpose

While acknowledging the Universities obligations with regard to quality assurance of its programmes the purpose of this policy is to enable alignment where possible, the Universities internal quality assurance procedures with external accreditation activities, thus reducing any unnecessary duplication of effort.

It sets out the circumstances in which programme or School level accreditation may be sought.

This policy will also enable the University to provide accurate information to students, prospective students and other stakeholders on its relationships with PSRBs.

1.2 Scope

The scope of this policy relates to all programmes/schools/institutes of the University that have a formal relationship with any PSRB as defined above.

1.2.1 *To whom does this policy apply*

This policy applies to all staff engaged in the management of programmes or schools that apply for and maintain professional, statutory or regulatory body accreditation.

1.2.2 *In what situation does this policy apply*

This policy applies to all programmes/schools/institutes of the University that have a formal relationship with any PSRB as defined above.

1.2.3 *Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored?*

The Vice President Academic Affairs & Student Engagement is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy. The roles and responsibilities of other relevant parties are outlined as follows:

Head of School/Department or Institute (or nominee)

These individuals are normally responsible for liaising with the relevant PSRB(s), to ensure that a positive and constructive relationship is maintained. The Head of School/Department or Institute (or nominee) must, on request, provide information about PSRB accreditation within their domain, as well as the final versions of all PSRB reports, including the unit response to the report or action plan, to the relevant Faculty Board, and to the Quality Committee (via the QSU).

This must also be provided as supporting documentation to the relevant Periodic Quality Review Self-Assessment Report (SAR). The Head of School/Department or Institute (or nominee) may request information from the QSU regarding the University's statutory Periodic Quality Review process for inclusion in the relevant documentation.

The Head of School/Dept or Institute (or nominee) may also request, from the QSU, an adjustment to the Periodic Quality Review timeline to align with PSRB accreditation, with a view to more effective use of resources.

Dean of Faculty (or nominee)

The relevant Faculty Board is responsible for the quality of the programmes within its remit, and, therefore, the Dean of Faculty (or nominee) may request information about PSRB accreditation from a School, as well as the final versions of PSRB reports, all final commendations and recommendations, and the programme or school response or action plan. The Dean of Faculty (or nominee) shall also liaise with the Quality Committee (via the QSU) to ensure the accuracy of the University's published PSRB List.

Quality Support Unit (QSU)

Acting on behalf of Quality Committee, the QSU will liaise with the relevant Schools, Institutes and Faculty Boards to ensure that the University's published PSRB Register is correct and up-to-date.

Upon request by a Head of School or Institute (or nominee), the QSU will, where possible (and if desired), harmonise the University's Periodic Quality Review schedule to support the programme/school/institute in its preparations for a PSRB accreditation exercise. Where possible, efforts will be made to have simultaneous or mutually recognised events.

The QSU will also, on request, provide a Head of School or Institute (or nominee) with information about the University's statutory Periodic Quality Review process, to assist with the drafting of the relevant documentation for a professional accreditation exercise.

Acting on behalf of the Quality Committee, the QSU may also request a copy of the final version of any professional accreditation report, and a final summary of the relevant commendations and recommendations, as well as the programme/school/institute response or action plan, which will be made available to the Quality Committee.

Quality Committee

As detailed in its terms of reference, the Quality Committee shall receive and consider relevant reports, identifying trends/issues and good practice and recommending appropriate action, as required, including in relation to reports such as external reports on academic provision and professional services, such as PSRB reports. The Quality Committee, via the QSU, may therefore request a copy of the final version of any PSRB report, and a final summary of the relevant commendations and recommendations, as well as the relevant programme/school/institute response or action plan. The Quality Committee also exercises authority over the PSRB List published on University website.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 Professional Accreditation

A designation earned by a person, or bestowed on an academic programme or module or other activity that qualifies an individual, or individuals who have completed a professionally accredited programme/module/activity or are members of a professional organisation, to perform certain jobs, tasks or functions, and/or to enter a profession and practice professionally. Professional accreditation is normally renewable on a regular cycle (normally between 1-5 years) pursuant to a formal accreditation review exercise or other update to professional membership.

1.3.2 Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB)

Any domestic or international

- Professional body,
- statutory or regulatory body,
- authority, institute, association, council, commission, external faculty, register (or registry),
- registration board, qualifications agency, accreditation committee, society or
- other related organisation,

which reviews and/or evaluates and/or accredits and/or endorses programmes, modules, research and/or other similar activity delivered through, at, or by staff, of the University, to ensure that the required standards are met for the relevant professions and that this standard is recognised by employers and other relevant agencies for that profession. PSRBs may have statutory authority over a profession or group of professionals, provide membership services and work to promote the interests of people working in a profession.

2 Legal & Statutory Context

In accordance with core statutory quality assurance guidelines, the University is required to ensure that information on programmes is available to current and prospective students. The availability of accurate professional, regulatory and statutory accreditation information forms part of information set. The University is required to report annually to QQI on its quality assurance activities, including relationships with PRSBs.

3 Policy Statement

The University recognises the positive impact that professional accreditation can have on its programmes, Schools or the Institution as a whole. Professional accreditation can come in many forms, such as:

- Professional Body recognition of a programme where graduates of that programme may apply for membership and/or exemption from professional body examinations
- Accreditation of a School or subject area by national or international agencies that demonstrate specific areas of expertise or quality.
- Accreditation of the Institution as a whole that can result in advancing its reputation nationally and internationally or signals that the University is sympathetic to a particular ideal.

The University recognises that the outcomes of internal quality assurance processes and of external accreditation exercises can be mutually beneficial and will be used to continually enhance programmes. Where possible, the University will seek to align such activities so as to improve information provision and impact on the efficient management of these activities.

3.1 Principles

3.1.1 *New Programme Development*

Programme-level accreditation shall be explored during programme development and University accreditation. Doing so will ensure that the programme outcomes and content are more likely to meet any requirements of the required academic and/or professional accreditation. This is particularly critical where the employability of the graduate is dependent on such accreditation. Appropriate due diligence should be undertaken on the PSRB as outlined in *Policy on Collaborative & Transnational Provision*

3.1.2 *Periodic Quality Reviews*

In the context of periodic quality reviews, information regarding PSRB relationships and accreditation shall be provided in the annual monitoring report or Self Assessment Report (SAR) produced for programme, unit, school or Faculty reviews.

Final versions of PSRB reports, and the programme/school/institute response or action plan, shall be provided by the relevant Head of School/Department or Institute (or nominee) to the relevant Faculty Board, and also as supporting documentation to the Periodic Quality Review Process Self Assessment Report (SAR) for the relevant programme/school/institute. This will enable the relevant Faculty Board, or the Periodic Quality Review Group, to identify any issues in relation to professional accreditation.

3.1.3 *Efficient Management of PRSB Accreditations*

The QSU shall provide, on the request of a Dean, Head of School or Institute (or nominee), information regarding the statutory Periodic Quality Review process which operates within the University, where a professional accreditation exercise or PSRB may require this information.

A Dean, Head of School/Department/Institute may request an adjustment to the schedule of review through the QSU in order to reduce duplication of effort. This adjustment may bring forward, put back or allow in certain cases for the replacement of University quality process by the accreditation process of a PSRB using the procedures outlined in Appendix 1. Replacement of a University quality assurance process means that the University is prepared to accept the outcomes of the PSRB process. This shall take place where it is demonstrated that terms of reference of the PSRB accreditation process is similar to the terms of reference of the University quality assurance process and the evaluation panel is of similar standing and composition to those constituted by the University.

The University shall make a single source of validated core data available to programme, department or faculty teams preparing for accreditation.

3.1.4 *Publication*

The University shall publish the PSRB Register which will include all PSRBs which accredit any programme/school/institute of the University. This list will normally include the name and contact details of the PSRB, the programme/school/institute which is accredited, the date of the last accreditation and the date of the next accreditation;

The relevant Head of School/Department/Institute shall publish the final version of PSRB reports and programme/school/institute response or action plan on the University website. Where such publication is not permitted by the PSRB, an agreed summary report will be published.

3.1.5 *Review & Evaluation*

The Quality Committee shall periodically consider reports on PSRB activity throughout the University. This may include, but is not limited to, a final summary of the outputs of any professional accreditation exercise, and a final summary of commendations and recommendations made by any PSRB. The Quality Committee may, via the QSU, request copies of the final versions of relevant PSRB report(s), and the programme/school/institute response or action plan, from the Head of School/Department or Institute (or nominee), who are obliged to supply the report(s) and response or action plan upon such a request.

3.1.6 *Faculty/School/University Accreditation*

The decision to seek such accreditation is not taken lightly. When considering accreditation, the full extent of the resources required to apply for and maintain accreditations shall be considered.

4 Procedures

Procedures for Requesting Adjustment to the Quality Review Schedule (Appendix 1)

5 Related Documentation

Policy on Collaborative & Transnational Provision

6 Document Control

Document Version	0.1
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Approved by	Executive Committee
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Date	Academic Council: 11 December 2019
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Scheduled Review Date:	[date]

7 Appendix 1: Procedures for requesting adjustment to Quality Review Schedule

This procedure shall be used to request the adjustment of a quality review schedule. This schedule may include periodic programme review, departmental or unit review, Faculty review, support service review.

Using the form template, the Dean/Head/Director of Unit shall outline the nature of the request and the rationale for the adjustment of the schedule. Where the request is for the acceptance of the outcome of a PSRB process, the terms of reference of the University process, e.g. Terms of Reference for Periodic Programme Review, Faculty Review or Support Service review can be met in full by the PSRB process. This shall be demonstrated using a mapping of each of the requirements.

Approval Pathway

Applications for adjustment to the quality review schedule shall be approved by the Quality Committee and APRC (for programme reviews)

The outcome can be

- Approved
- Approved with Conditions
- Rejected

Timeline

Applications for adjustment to the quality review schedule shall be made no later than 18 months prior to the date of the scheduled University review.



Request for Quality Review Schedule Amendment

Instructions: Select the review type and amendment requested from the drop down list

Review	Review Type	Date Scheduled	Amendment Requested	Mapping Included	Can report be published

Rationale

Approval	Committee	Date
	Quality Committee	
	APRC	