

Keele University

QAA Institutional Review 2013 – Action Plan

UPDATED October 2014¹

HOW WE INTEND TO BUILD ON THE GOOD PRACTICE IDENTIFIED IN THE REPORT

Features of Good Practice	Action taken	Target Date
The inclusion in the University's governance structure of the Education Student Liaison Committee and Research Student Liaison Committee, providing a formal deliberative mechanism for the student voice	Both committees continue to conduct an annual review of their continued effectiveness as a standard agenda item and this is reported on to Senate at its first meeting of the academic year.	Completed/Ongoing
The use on arrival of diagnostic language testing for international students in order to tailor English language support to individual needs	A paper with on the effectiveness of compulsory diagnostic testing after the first year of operation reflections and recommendations for further enhancement of this mechanism was considered by ULTC in November 2013.	Completed
The comprehensive and innovative information provided through the Keele International website	The University identified the best practice represented by this website, in particular in relation to the delivery of Advice and Guidance (IAG), and this continues to be used to inform the development of other Keele webpages. For example, SAM (the virtual Student Advisory model) now contains tailored responses to student queries, with versions tailored to the needs of EU and non-EU students. Foreign language versions, in Mandarin, Malay and Hindi are under development.	Completed/Ongoing
The extensive formal representation systems for postgraduate research students	The University has further strengthened efforts to extend these opportunities to groups of students for whom it is difficult to contribute to the campus-based meetings, such as off-campus and part-time students. A working party, led by the President of the Keele Postgraduate Association, which reports to ULTC, continues to explore these issues.	Completed/Ongoing

¹ Update approved for publication by the Academic Strategy Committee on 11 November 2014.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Action to the taken	Completion Date
Provide more systematic training, guidance and monitoring to assure the quality of teaching and demonstrating undertaken by postgraduate research students and graduate teaching assistants	To build on the optional training currently available, Postgraduate Research Committee agreed to making attending this training or equivalent mandatory based on a paper from LPDC. Senate approved the proposal in March 2014. This is reflected in clearer statements in the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degree and updated guidance was issued to Schools.	Completed
Implement a system at institutional level for ensuring that each programme has the expected number of elected and trained student representatives in place	The 2012 StARS Action Plan was fully implemented by the end of 2013/14. Online elections were introduced in 2014 with good results. ULTC agreed to close down the original action plan in April 2014 but will continue to receive annual reports on how the system is operating.	Completed
Take deliberate steps to engage student representatives with external examiners' reports	Re-written guidance was issued to all StARs and to staff representatives on Staff Student Liaison Committees to ensure that the consideration of external examiner reports features as a standard item on the agenda of all SSLCs each autumn. Information about this was included in the StARs training in 2013 and 2014. The cover email sent to Schools when external examiner reports are forwarded now includes a reminder to share the reports widely with the student community. All reports continue to be published on the University webpages.	Completed
Introduce an institutional-level approach for measuring and monitoring the timely implementation of policies and practices and for evaluating their impact, by the start of the 2014-15 academic year	At the autumn meeting of Senate, an annual 'Senate Projects Report' highlights the key business and projects considered by Senate committees during the previous academic year. Unfinished business and projects are identified in this report and clear action plans attached for monitoring these to completion. New projects are also identified and will be monitored via the same mechanism.	Completed
Clarify the expectations for the support of individual postgraduate research students within research institutes, particularly where students have only one supervisor	Faculty Research Directors are now automatically allocated as second supervisor for the few students where temporarily there is no second supervisor in place.	Completed

Recommendation	Action to the taken	Completion Date
Review and revise the support for collaborative link tutors in their quality assurance role, including the training that link tutors provide for staff in partner institutions	<p>(i) The Link tutor role was reviewed and revised in July 2013 and expectations in relation to staff development strengthened. The new role description was shared with link tutors at the Partnership Forum. The Partnership Forum continues to be the main mechanism for staff development of continuing link tutors. New link tutors now receive an induction from QA to their role.</p> <p>(ii) The University is introducing a generic online staff development programme, with some units specifically developed for tutors at partner institutions on matters relating to learning and teaching, academic misconduct, Keele's regulatory framework and board procedures. The first units, i.e. on equality and diversity, were introduced 2013/14.</p>	Completed/ongoing
Ensure that issues arising in the management of collaborative provision can be dealt with at an appropriate level and resolved in a timely manner	For all existing partnerships, an audit of governance arrangements was carried out and, where appropriate, a more formal system of Joint Steering Committee and Joint Board of Studies was introduced. Revisions to the Code of Practice Collaborative Provision include clear statements on the expectations regarding governance arrangements for collaborative provision.	Completed
Systematically provide prospective and current students with accurate information about all costs associated with their programmes	Information on additional costs is now included on the web prospectus entries for all programmes, visible to current and prospective students. There is also an overview page on 'additional costs' which provides indicative costs relating to such matters as printing and photocopying.	Completed
Implement systematic, effective processes to capture and disseminate good practice across the institution, by the start of the 2014-15 academic year	The University Learning and Teaching Committee has strengthened its role in relation to the capture and dissemination of good practice, such as a dissemination workshop item at the start of each ULTC meeting. The A LPDC Faculty link person has a key role in maximising intra- and inter-Faculty sharing and learning. Their effort is supported by the 'Solutions' page. Solutions is a combination of different Keele webpages, external sites and blogs drawn together to enable staff to find different approaches and case studies demonstrating good practice for a range of Teaching and Learning topics.	September 2014

HOW WE INTEND TO CONTINUE THE ACTIONS AFFIRMED IN THE REPORT

Affirmation	Action to the taken	Completion Date
The compulsory training and mentor support that is being implemented for supervisors of postgraduate research students	This has been rolled out consistently to all newly appointed supervisors.	Completed
The action taken to ensure that the information about contract end dates in the register of collaborative provision is complete	A review of the partnership register on the web was undertaken immediately following the IR in 2013 and the term 'review date' has replaced 'end date' for those contracts without end dates.	Completed
The more consistent and coordinated approach by the University Library and schools to ensure annual updating of programme and module reading lists	The University has continued its year-on-year increase in the take up of Aspire online reading list provision to students. Pro Vice Chancellor issues an annual reminder to all Schools in addition to regular reminders sent by the Library. LISC receives annual reports from the Librarian on progress towards targets which monitors availability of lists, comprehensiveness of lists and uptake by students. All Schools are now participating in this scheme.	Completed
The review of the student academic representatives (StARs) system and implementation of the StARs operational plan	The University has now completed the StARs action plan. See above	Completed