Section A

Introduction to the Quality Handbook

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QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the Quality Assurance Policy is to support the University in realising its strategic vision and mission by assuring and continuously enhancing the quality of the student experience while simultaneously safeguarding academic standards and integrity.

Principles of the Policy

The University's approach to quality is attuned with its strategic objectives and is cognisant of the requirements of the relevant external reference points, including the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority (GRA), the Quality Assurance Agency UK (QAA), and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and other relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

The Boards and Committees within the University's Academic Governance structure are inclusive and operate in a fair, consistent and transparent manner.

The University aims to engender a culture of proactive enhancement and to promote and embed good practice across the University, for the benefit of its students, staff and the community.

Stakeholder feedback is greatly valued and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders is integral to quality processes and the University's agenda to continuously enhance the student experience.

The University has mechanisms in place to systematically develop and approve new programmes ensuring that appropriate benchmarking is undertaken and views of suitably qualified external expert(s) are considered.

The University has mechanisms in place to monitor and review the academic performance of programmes with a view to identifying areas for improvement and opportunities for enhancing quality (with reference to the 'Themes' in the University's Quality Handbook supporting this policy). This includes analysis of statistical data.

The University has mechanisms in place to periodically review and evaluate the fitness and effectiveness of its processes and continuously improve these.

Implementation of the Policy

Detailed procedures for the implementation of this policy are contained in the University's academic regulatory framework and Quality Handbook which embodies a comprehensive set of Codes of Practice. The Quality Handbook is made available to all staff and students and is updated annually.

PART I: HOW THE QUALITY HANDBOOK IS DESIGNED TO WORK

The following is designed to provide an explanation of the purpose of the Quality Handbook, of how it is designed to work, and to make the Handbook more readily accessible to staff. This includes providing a summary of key points of each individual document as well as explanations of the key concepts and terminology. In particular, the introduction explains the way in which the Quality Handbook has been deliberately shaped by drawing on 'external reference points' and on established practice in the UK.

This introduction has also been designed to provide a basis for staff induction or development, especially for staff new to the University, new to higher education or not familiar with the UK's approach or how that approach differs from practice in other members of the European Higher Education Area.

Purpose of the Handbook

The Quality Handbook sets out the University's 'quality system': its systematic approach to managing the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the learning opportunities it provides to students on programmes leading to its higher education qualifications. It therefore forms part of the overall arrangements within which the University operates, and through which the University is governed. In particular, it sets out the way in which the University will exercise the degree awarding powers granted to it under the founding University of Gibraltar Act 2015.

The Handbook is designed to provide an accessible and comprehensive set of documents relating to academic standards and quality and to make explicit and transparent where authority for making decisions lies, and who within the University is responsible for which matters. It also sets down the key concepts that relate to managing standards and quality, enabling a shared understanding of these concepts among staff and students. In particular, as set out below, it is designed to make clear the concepts of academic standards and quality (including how they differ from each other).

Key influences

The University's processes and regulations are designed to meet the requirements of the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority (GRA). In addition, the University decided from the outset to benchmark its management of standards and quality against comparable universities, primarily against universities in the UK and to a lesser extent those in the rest of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Its approach is therefore informed by key features of the regulatory system (often termed 'external reference points'):

(a) in Gibraltar, through the Gibraltar Higher Education Commission and the Gibraltar Authority for Standards in Higher Education, the GRA
(b) in the UK, through the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
(c) in the EHEA, through the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

For further information and extracts from the above documents see Annexe 1.

The range of documents set out in the Handbook therefore reflect what is considered to be needed by the University based on the above reference points, and based on an analysis of the web-based Quality Handbooks (or equivalent) of a sample of established UK universities. The Quality Handbook was developed is consultation with an external expert with several years' experience in the UK sector with responsibilities for academic standards and quality at institutional and sector-levels.

Scope

The Handbook applies to programmes which lead to the award of the University's higher education qualifications – that is, qualifications which are recognised as being at higher education level in the UK (by reference to the UK's qualification frameworks) and in the EHEA (by reference to the Qualifications Framework of the EHEA). Qualifications range from Certificates of Higher Education through to PhDs.

While the Handbook does not apply to the University's Professional Certificates and Short Courses, the processes for the management of these courses have been designed to ensure standard practice wherever possible and appropriate.

Matters not covered by the Handbook

As the Handbook is concerned with Academic Quality (including academic standards) it does not address contractual matters relating to the employment and duties of staff or regulations governing the use of the University's computer facilities and library services.

Terminology

It is helpful at this stage to explain some issues of terminology:

- 'programmes' versus 'courses': the University uses the term programme where it is referring to a programme which leads to the award of a higher education qualification (and is therefore covered by this Quality Handbook). The term 'course' is reserved for other provision such as the short courses and those leading to a professional certificate mentioned above
- 'taught' versus 'research': the University follows established practice in higher education of distinguishing programmes which involve a significant level of teaching and those which are principally based on the carrying out of research. In practice the phrases 'taught programmes' and 'taught awards' (and the research equivalent) tend to be used interchangeably. In this Handbook the approach is to refer to 'taught programmes' and 'research degrees'
- 'award': this term is used, according to its context, either as a noun to refer to the outcome of a programme (credits or a qualification), or as a verb indicating that the University has confirmed the achievement of a given outcome.

Note that Academic Board is responsible for determining whether a programme/award is taught or research. (This is usually only an issue in relation to some Master's degrees, as these typically have variants which are taught and others which are research).

Content

The Handbook comprises the following types of document

(a) Academic Regulations (one for taught programmes and one for research degrees)
(b) Codes of practice (abbreviated to 'Code')
(c) Forms (appended to some Codes).

For both taught programmes and research degrees, the Quality Handbook sets out Academic Regulations. In each case these define the rules governing the award of the qualifications it includes and therefore provides the basis for the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of those awards. The Academic Regulations should therefore be considered as the starting point for understanding the arrangements for each qualification. The Academic Regulations are supplemented by Codes which provide additional information and guidance.

For each of the Academic Regulations and Codes a specific style of language is used. This is designed to provide clarity about responsibilities and what is expected of University staff (whether academic staff, support staff, or senior officers including the Vice-Chancellor). Specifically, the following three terms are used:

Must	Indicates that the action is **mandatory** – there is no discretion whether to take it; failure to comply could result in sanction and can be relied upon. For example, not taking the action which then has an adverse effect on a student would provide the basis for an appeal on grounds of 'procedural irregularity' which could render the decision invalid ('must not' would indicate that the action is prohibited on the same basis)
Should	The action is advisable and justification would be required for not taking the action
May	The action is discretionary, but evidence can be required that the action has been properly considered and therefore reasons can be given as to why it was not taken (for example explaining the factors taken into account in making the decision not to act).

Updating

The contents of this Handbook form part of the contract between the University and each student, and while the University will update individual documents from time to time, it will do so in consultation with students (as part of its commitment to working with students as partners), and it will ensure that students are informed about changes that affect them, and ensure that the timing of changes does not adversely affect students' interests. As set out in the Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2) material changes to the Terms and Conditions of the contract with students cannot be made without students' agreement.

There are four circumstances which are likely to lead to changes to individual documents from time to time:

(a) changes will be made ad hoc as the result of experience of implementing specific provisions. While the Handbook has been designed to work for the University, including taking account of it being very small, experience will inevitably show that some provisions can be enhanced or tweaked to work more effectively

(b) the University will systematically review each document according to a schedule which it will develop (and publish)
(c) changes may be required to reflect external requirements or circumstances, such as legal requirements, those of the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority or professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
(d) 'housekeeping' changes will be made, such as updating the title of a role, name of a committee or other factual change, to correct an error or provide clarification of an existing provision.

House Style

To ensure consistency a particular 'house style' has been adopted. Most notably the Handbook deliberately uses plural pronouns and plural possessive adjectives. For example, using 'they' (rather than 'he/she') and 'their' (rather than his/her) to refer to a single student or member of staff.

Structure

Overall structure

As indicated above, the University follows the practice of other universities in classifying its programmes/awards as either 'taught' or 'research'.

The Handbook is structured to distinguish between matters which apply specifically to taught programmes, those which apply specifically to research degrees, and those which apply to both. Therefore:

(a) Section C applies just to taught programmes
(b) Section D applies just to research degrees
(c) Sections A, B and E-H apply to both.

The order of the documents in Section C and within Section D is *broadly* in the order which matches the student journey (albeit these things are essentially cyclical!).

Document structure

Each document also has a set structure to make it easier to navigate.

(a) The cover sheet includes the following key information.
    (i) The University logo
    (ii) The full document title
    (iii) Document reference number
    (iv) Date first approved
    (v) Date coming into force
    (vi) Date last reviewed
    (vii) Approval Authority
    (viii) Scope
    (ix) Responsibilities
    (x) Key contact person
    (xi) Summary / Description

(b) Table of contents
(c) Introduction (which covers the body with authority over the document, its scope and application to collaborative provision)
(d) a footer ensuring that the title and version number of the document and its reference number appear on each page.

Some further explanation:

Annual review
The Quality Handbook is reviewed annually and the date last reviewed updated each year or in the event of any significant changes being made during the year. 'Significant' means one that requires the approval of the Committee stated on the front cover.

Reference number
Each document has a reference number based on the section in which it is located. Reference numbers are abbreviated to e.g. 'QH:C1' in the header and in cross-references within each document.

Date first approved
The date that the current version was first approved is stated here.

Collaborative provision
Collaborative provision means any provision for which the University has entered into a formal legal agreement to work with another organisation (whether an academic partnership, or with a private company or public body) to deliver some or all of a programme which leads to an award of the University. The essence of collaborative provision is that it involves a third party in some aspect of the delivery of the programme, but with the University remaining ultimately responsible for the academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience. In developing such arrangements (especially where they are extensive, such as franchised, joint or dual awards) the University (through Academic Board) will need to determine how the University's existing Academic Regulations and Codes apply and to set this out in the formal legal agreement with the other party (or parties) involved.

Authority
Each document contains a sentence setting out which body within the University has authority over the Code, including over its interpretation, and in granting exemptions to any of the Code's provisions (should a case for exemption be made). Essentially, authority rests with Academic Quality and Standards Committee for taught programmes, Research and Research Degrees Committee for research degree matters. Both committees are accountable to Academic Board for the exercise of their authority.

Scope
Each document specifies the extent of applicability. This might include for example, areas of activity, programmes or collaborative partnerships affected by the Code.

Chapters
Some documents are broken down into chapters – numbered using Roman numerals – to make navigation easier. The Academic Regulations: Research Degrees is divided into 10 chapters.

Paragraphs
Each document contains numbered paragraphs.

Understanding 'standards' and 'quality'

Academic standards

The terms 'academic standards' and 'academic quality' (or just standards and quality) are based on practice in the UK and specifically the definitions set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (hereafter UK Quality Code). These definitions are helpful in that they make clear both that there is a difference between the two (rejecting phrases in common use such as 'quality standards') and help to make clear what is needed in the management of each of them.

'Academic Standards' are what a student has to achieve to be awarded a qualification. The term 'threshold academic standards' is used to refer to the minimum requirement for the award; there are also standards 'above the threshold', for example the level of achievement required for a First Class Honours degree or a Distinction in a Master's degree.

Threshold academic standards should be comparable over time – that is, it should not be 'easier' to get a Bachelor's degree now compared with 10 years ago. The University of Gibraltar is also committed to benchmarking its academic standards with those of UK universities in particular, and therefore will monitor its students' achievements year on year to see how they compare with standards in the UK. Many of the arrangements set out in this Quality Handbook are based on UK approaches (as explained later) deliberately to help ensure the ability to make comparisons. All academic standards should also be comparable within the University. Therefore, it should not be 'easier' to get a Bachelor's in Business Administration than in Sport Management.

In higher education in the UK, universities are bodies which have authority to award degrees (granted in a variety of ways, such as by legislation or Royal Charter), and each 'degree-awarding body' is responsible for setting its own academic standards and for making sure those standards are maintained across all programmes and subjects and over time. The University (of Gibraltar) has the authority to award both taught degrees (including Bachelor's and Master's), other taught higher education qualifications (Certificates and Diplomas) and research degrees (including the MPhil and PhD).

In the case of the University of Gibraltar, authority to award degrees was granted through the University of Gibraltar Act 2015, and while the University is answerable to the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority, the University is responsible for its own academic standards. Specifically, that means that the University is responsible for such matters as:

(a) devising and applying the criteria for deciding who can be admitted to the University's programmes
(b) devising and applying the rules which govern when a student is entitled to the award
(c) devising the content of each programme and how each programme will be taught and assessed
(d) setting assessment tasks (projects, examinations etc)
(e) marking those assessment tasks
(f) making final decisions about awards and classifications using the above rules.

This responsibility also includes addressing issues which affect the integrity of academic standards, specifically various forms of academic/research misconduct (plagiarism, colluding, purchasing essays from the internet or 'contract cheating', and examination offences).

An important feature of both the ESG and the UK system is that in both systems credit and qualifications are only awarded where a student has demonstrated achievement of the learning outcomes for the module or programme in question. Awards are not made for 'time served'. The University's approach in this Quality Handbook firmly reflects this in setting out the rules for each qualification.

Academic quality

Academic quality means the opportunities which the University provides to enable a student to achieve (or try to achieve) the academic standards for the award. This comprises the learning and teaching, and assessment, and the various forms of support provided to students. The UK Quality Code (in its Introduction, 2014) expresses it as follows:

> 'Academic quality is concerned with how well the learning opportunities made available to students enable them to achieve their qualification. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning resources are provided. In order to achieve a higher education qualification, students participate in the learning opportunities made available to them by their higher education provider. A provider guarantees the quality of the opportunities it provides, but it cannot guarantee how any particular student will experience those opportunities. By ensuring that its policies, structures and processes for the management of learning opportunities are implemented effectively, a higher education provider also ensures the effectiveness of its outcomes.'

Enhancing academic quality

Two further terms to be aware of: academic quality can be 'assured' and 'enhanced'. Assurance is the process of providing evidence to demonstrate how well the learning opportunities meet the above objective. Enhancement is the process of seeking to improve those opportunities. As understood in the UK:

> 'Enhancement is the process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. This can take place in different ways and at different levels, but a higher education provider needs to be aware that it has a responsibility to improve the quality of learning opportunities and to have policies, structures and processes in place to detect where improvement is necessary. Willingness to consider enhancement is embedded throughout the higher education provider, but stems from a high-level awareness of the need to consider improvement. Quality enhancement naturally forms part of effective quality assurance…' (QAA, 2014).

Note that occasionally people refer to enhancing academic standards. This is technically wrong if the above definition of academic standards is being used. Academic standards (in terms of the level of achievement required for an award) cannot be enhanced; they must stay the same so that getting an award does not get easier or harder over time and therefore affect the value of awards over time. However, how students perform can of course be improved for example through better teaching, better resources etc.

The credit system

The University has decided to use the credit system used in the UK. Academic credit is a way of quantifying and recognising learning both in terms of the amount of learning expected (the number of credits) and its 'depth, complexity and intellectual demand' (the credit level) [QAA, 2014].

Although there are differences in the credit frameworks within the four countries of the UK, all UK universities operate the same basic credit system – that is, one credit is based on 10 hours 'notional' learning time (where learning time includes time spent in classes, private study, on placement and doing assessments). They also operate a consistent approach to the credit rating of qualifications so that:

(a) a Bachelor's degree is 360 credits
(b) a Master's degree is 180 credits.

Research degrees do not involve credits, although in some cases research students also take research training modules which are credited.

The UK system is mapped to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) on the basis of 1 credit in the UK equates to 0.5 credits in the ECTS, so a Bachelor's degree is 180 credits in the ECTS. The University has decided that each student's final transcript will show both the number of UK credits and those for the ECTS.

Qualifications and qualifications frameworks

The Handbook is designed to be consistent with the qualifications frameworks applicable in the UK and in the European Higher Education Area so that the way in which the University's qualifications compare with the qualifications of UK and other European universities can easily be identified. The key elements of these qualifications frameworks are that:

(a) qualifications are awarded on the basis of the achievement of positively defined learning outcomes (and not the amount of time spent studying)
(b) each qualification is assigned a level (or 'cycle') which indicates the achievement relative to other qualifications (e.g. a Master's degree compared with a Bachelor's degree)
(c) recognised and agreed titles are used for qualifications to ensure comparability and consistency
(d) qualification descriptors articulate the knowledge, understanding, skills and other attributes which can be expected of a person who has been awarded a specific qualification.

Either directly, or indirectly, qualification frameworks are also related to credit systems so that there is a consistent approach to the volume and level of credits required for each qualification.

While there are differences in approach between the EHEA and the UK (and differences within the countries of the UK) fundamentally, the systems are aligned and therefore enable comparability. Therefore, in deciding which qualifications to award, in naming those qualifications, in defining programme learning outcomes, and in setting the volume of credits for such programmes, the University will ensure that its approach is aligned both with:

(a) The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (F-EHEA)
(b) The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies and specifically the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

External reference points

The use of 'external reference points' as the basis for the Quality Handbook is explained above. The following provides a bit more information about those reference points, given that their application is not straightforward and therefore needs explanation.

While the UK is a member of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), it has its own unique approach which is comparable with, but clearly distinct from, the approach of other members of the EHEA. Specifically, while the EHEA has its Qualifications Framework and the European Standards and Guidelines, the UK has its own Qualifications Framework and the UK Quality Code.

The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

One of the purposes of the Bologna Declaration (1999) was to promote co-operation across the European Higher Education Area in the quality assurance of higher education with the aim of developing comparable criteria and methodologies. This led to the development and adoption of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), first adopted by European Ministers in 2005 and most recently revised in 2015.

The European Standards and Guidelines (Part I relating to internal quality assurance) have also been used in developing this Quality Handbook, in particular to ensure that the University's approach is aligned with practice across the rest of the EHEA. However, it has had less direct influence on the Quality Handbook because of the differences in approach compared with the UK Quality Code and in the level of detail it provides. For example, the ESG does not make the same distinction between (academic) standards and quality compared with the UK. The word 'standards' in the ESG is referring to setting standards for universities in managing their approaches, rather than referring to the standards they set for their awards. The 'Standards' in the ESG are also quite broad in their scope making a direct matching less easy and, unsurprisingly, express ideas in different terminology compared with UK practice. In the tables in Part II of this Introduction, where possible reference is made to the relevant ESG Standard. Where this is no helpful match, reference is made to the relevant Guideline (or part of the Guideline).

The text of the Standards from Part I of the ESG are extracted in Annexe 1.

The UK Quality Code

The UK Quality Code was first published in 2012, further developed between 2012 and 2014 and has since been significantly revised again in 2018. It was developed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) on behalf of, and through extensive consultation with, higher education providers (universities and colleges), students and sector bodies, to provide an effective and shared approach to managing academic standards and quality across the diverse range of providers in the UK, and to recognise the differences within the four countries of the UK. (In Scotland and Wales higher education is devolved to the administrations of each country). The Code includes the Qualifications Frameworks and Credit Frameworks.

In developing each of the University's Codes, appropriate use has been made of the guidance set out in both versions of the UK Quality Code. 'Appropriate use' here means that the ideas and the intentions behind them, in each of the two versions of the UK Quality Code have been carefully considered, but they have not been slavishly applied; they are not binding on the University of Gibraltar. The tables in Part II of this introduction highlight specifically which elements of the Code are most relevant to the University. Those elements are explained in Annexe 1 along with the text of each.

The following gives a very top-level account of the UK Quality Code.

UK Quality Code (2014)
The first version of the Code was set out in three parts and contained 'Expectations' which were statements of principle which were binding on each higher education provider. In total there were 19 Expectations addressing academic standards, quality (assurance and enhancement) and information. Part B also contained 11 chapters giving more detailed guidance in relation to specific aspects of academic quality (such as programme approval, learning and teaching, complaints and appeals).

UK Quality Code (2018)
The revised version, although shorter in terms of overall length, contains more levels of obligation on higher education providers: it contains four expectations (two for academic standards, two for quality), 13 'core practices', four 'common' practices and 12 sets (themes) of advice and guidance which each contain a number of 'guiding principles'. The advice and guidance covers topics which are very similar to the chapters in the 2014 version and in many cases the ideas are broadly the same, even if expressed in different terms. The emphasis of the 2018 version is also slightly different in being more focused on outcomes than on process (reflecting the direction in which the regulatory system – at least in England – has moved in the last 2-3 years).

The tables in Part II of this introduction reference the most significant elements of the two versions of the UK Quality Code. Where applicable this is the top level element (such as an Expectation or Core Practice). However, where there is not a directly applicable element then reference has been made to more detailed information, such as the Indicators of Sound Practice (2014) or Guiding Principles (2018). However, the fact that a top level element does not make explicit reference to the matter covered by the University Code does not mean it is not covered by that version of the Quality Code. Particularly in the 2018 version the Expectations and Core Practices are broad, expressing a number of ideas, and which do not map easily to the Codes in this Quality Handbook.

External examiners

A distinct feature of the UK system of higher education is that of external examining, whereby universities appoint people from outside the University but with expertise in the subject area in question at higher education level, or with expertise in managing higher education standards and quality, to provide an independent and constructively critical view of the effectiveness of the University's arrangements including at the level of individual modules and programmes. While there continues to be much debate about the value and effectiveness of the UK system (and the role has changed significantly over the past 30 years), the University has decided to adopt the approach

because it values the feedback and involvement of external experts at all levels of its management of standards and quality.

Information and consumer protection

The University is committed to ensuring that the information it provides for students, prospective students, former students, and other stakeholders is comprehensive, timely, accessible and can be relied upon (for example to enable a prospective student to make an informed decision whether to apply for a programme). This applies whether the information is in student handbooks, on the website or other publications. In developing its approach, the University has drawn on guidance and practice in the UK (for example in Part C of the UK Quality Code (2014)), and in the guidance on UK consumer protection law issued by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). To this end, the University has included within this Handbook provisions designed to protect students' interests (such as the Code on Student Protection) and designed to make explicit students' rights within the contract between the University and each student. Specifically it has set out the 'Terms and Conditions' which are part of that contract, and draws attention to specific terms and conditions which might be considered 'surprising' (in accordance with UK guidance).

While the CMA guidance and UK consumer legislation are not applicable to the University they provide a helpful reference point for ensuring that the University's approach is comparable with UK practice as well as achieving a high benchmark in the way it deals with prospective, current and former students.

References

The following references are for the external reference points mentioned above (with extracts provided in Annexe 1):

https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/UK-Quality-Code-for-Higher-Education-2013-18

https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers-and-students

Academic Governance

Academic Governance refers to the mechanisms for, and process through which, the University ensures that it exercises its degree-awarding powers properly, including transparently, fairly and rigorously. It is therefore the means through which the University ensures that its (higher education) qualifications are consistent with national and international expectations, comparable with other universities, and are only awarded where students have met the published requirements for the programme and qualification demonstrated through fair, valid and reliable assessments. It is therefore part of the overall governance of the University but focused specifically on its higher education provision through:

(a) the Board of Governors
(b) the Academic Board as the 'senior academic authority' of the University
(c) the Academic Board's two sub-committees with authority on academic matters: Academic Quality and Standards Committee (taught programmes) and Research and Research Degrees Committee (research degrees).

As indicated above, this Handbook defines the rules that set out the authority and responsibilities of committees, officers (such as the Vice-Chancellor, Director of Academic Programmes and Research, the Academic Quality and Learning Manager and the Registrar), panels and examiners and defines the principles and rules governing the making of decisions. It defines the conditions that must be satisfied for the award of qualifications, and defines the processes through which the University assures itself, students and external stakeholders that all aspects of higher education provision are being carried out properly. Final responsibility for approving these rules rests with Academic Board. In formal terms (as expressed in the 2014 version of the UK Quality Code) the Quality Handbook constitutes the 'academic framework and regulations' of the University.

Academic Board is also the (only) body within the University which has the authority to award credit and qualifications. Although decisions are made by Examiners (research degrees) or the Board of Examiners (for taught programmes) those decisions are not effective until ratified by the Academic Board. At that point, the qualifications are said to be 'awarded' (and that is the point at which a Transcript of Academic Record can be issued). Degrees are subsequently 'conferred' at a ceremony and a Certificate issued. Note also that Academic Board is responsible for the appointment of external examiners.

Another feature of academic governance is that once the rules are set down, decisions can only be made outside those rules with the explicit and transparent approval of a designated body. For example, for a Board of Examiners to make a decision which is not permitted in the Academic Regulations, it must obtain the approval of the Academic Board or Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

Within this Quality Handbook Academic Governance is addressed (in Section B) only as a series of links to documents held elsewhere which define the University's academic governance such as the membership and terms of reference of the Governing Body, Academic Board and its sub-committees. The Handbook provides this link to demonstrate the fundamental importance of academic governance to the way in which the University exercises its degree-awarding powers and oversees its management of academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities it provides to students.

Authority to make decisions

The Academic Regulations and Codes in this Handbook assign the authority to make decisions to specified officers, panels and committees. This authority is delegated by Academic Board which retains overall responsibility for academic governance as explained above. An important principle of that delegation is that authority has been assigned to ensure that decisions are made by the most appropriate decision-maker, taking account of their expertise (e.g. academic staff in the role of examiners) and to ensure their independence in matters where they must be independent (such as when determining the outcome of an appeal or complaint). The following is designed to illustrate this point:

Senior Officers
The Academic Regulations and Codes assign specific responsibilities to the following: Vice-Chancellor, Director of Academic Programmes and Research, Academic Quality and Learning Manager, Registrar, Recruitment and Student Experience Manager. This assignment is based on the nature and seriousness of the matter in question and its appropriateness for the officer concerned. As indicated above, it also helps to ensure independence where that is needed. For example, while admissions decisions for taught programmes are the remit of the relevant Programme Coordinators in terms of the applicant's suitability for the programme, whether they meet the general entry requirements is the responsibility of the Registrar (including such matters as when criminal convictions are declared). The Registrar therefore has the final say on whether an applicant is offered a place. Where an applicant subsequently makes an appeal regarding their application (or refusal of their application) the matter falls to the Academic Quality and Learning Manager and not the Programme Coordinator or Registrar.

Research Degrees
For research degrees internal and external examiners are assigned specific responsibility for examining each candidate's thesis and for making recommendations about the outcome, including whether to make the award. Such recommendations are subject to the approval of the Research and Research Degrees Committee and then (for awards) the Academic Board.

Board of Examiners (for taught programmes)
For taught programmes the Board of Examiners has responsibility for decision-making: at the module level for determining the marks awarded for each module; at the programme level for determining each student's progression through the programme and to the final award (or an Exit award where applicable). At each level, there is clearly and distinctly defined responsibility. Decisions at programme level cannot involve changing a mark for an individual module – that would constitute a procedural irregularity. Again, decisions about awards are subject to the approval of the Academic Board.

Panels
For some matters, it is appropriate to establish, on an ad hoc basis, a panel of suitably qualified people to determine a specific matter. The Academic Regulations and supporting Codes define when this can happen, what the membership of the panel should be, and what the powers of the panel are. Examples of the use of panels set out in the Quality Handbook include: for considering the approval or major amendment of taught programmes, for determining applications for mitigating circumstances, for determining allegations of academic or research misconduct, for determining student complaints.

Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman
The University is subject to the jurisdiction of the Public Services Ombudsman, and legislation extends the right of students of the University to take a matter to the Ombudsman if they have completed the appropriate internal procedure of the University and remain dissatisfied with how the matter has been handled. Where that student has completed the internal procedures, the University will provide a letter confirming the 'Completion of University Procedures' and directing students to the Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman's website (http://www.ombudsman.org.gi) should they wish to take the matter further.

The following Codes involve decisions of the University which may ultimately result in a student (or applicant) taking the matter to the Ombudsman if they are dissatisfied with the outcome having completed all internal procedures.

Code on Recruitment, Selection and Admission (QH:C3)
Code on Academic Appeals (Taught Programmes) (QH:C11)
Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1), chapters III and X
Code on Complaints by Students (QH:G1).

Themes and key ideas

The Quality Handbook is underpinned by a number of themes, some of which are reflections of themes embedded in the UK Quality Code (QAA) and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) which help demonstrate the University's approach to developing and managing its quality system. These themes include:

(a) equality and diversity: a commitment to every student ensuring that individual views, perspectives and needs can be expressed and considered and reflected in teaching and learning and in decision making; not just in providing reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities but recognising differences in the backgrounds, experiences and ambitions of individual students;

(b) the value of student engagement and partnership in:

  (i) the learning process: students engaging in a dialogue with staff about their learning and reflecting on their progress, about the nature of the learning and assessment process (such as the complexity of assessment), and in taking increased responsibility for their own learning as they develop as independent learners;
  (ii) the management of the quality system (see students as partners below): students having the confidence that their views and perspectives will be listened to and will help shape their student experience at the University, and the experiences of future students;

(c) the individual, as well as the collective, responsibility of staff to reflect on their practice as academics, and to take responsibility for their development both in relation to their subject area and in relation to pedagogy.

For an inspirational and concise account of these ideas, read the introduction to Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching of the UK Quality Code (2014 version) [https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/UK-Quality-Code-for-Higher-Education-2013-18].

Students as partners

An important feature of the University's approach to managing its quality system is its commitment to working in partnership with students. The University recognises the value that involving students can provide in achieving the best approach it can to designing and delivering programmes and modules, to enabling students to learn and achieve, and to providing the most effective support for them as they progress through their studies and into - or to continue - their careers. The University's commitment is realised in a number of ways:

(a) involving student representatives on University committees (including Academic Board and the Governing Body)
(b) consulting with/listening to student representatives in Student-Staff Liaison Committees at programme level
(c) involving students in specified decision-making panels (such as complaints, periodic reviews)
(d) seeking student views individually through a variety of surveys and consultations including ranging from soon after admission through to post completion
(e) taking seriously and responding to formal academic appeals and complaints by applicants and by enrolled students (as well as trying to resolve matters informally where this is appropriate).

Oversight of Performance and Management of Information

The University understands the value of collecting and analysing data and information to assist in the evaluation of performance. The following identifies those Codes which specifically require the collation and reporting of management information:

Topic	Requirement	Reference
Admissions appeals and complaints	Academic Board will receive an annual report of appeals and complaints made by applicants	Code on Recruitment, Selection and Admission (QH:C3) Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) – chapter III
Recognition of prior learning	AQSC will receive an annual report from the Registrar on claims for recognition. The report to include a quantitative and qualitative summary of the cases processed and actions taken, and to highlight trends.	Code on Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning (QH:C4)
Academic misconduct	AQSC will receive an annual report on cases of academic misconduct under this Code including: (a) the number of cases proven and not proven by type of offence (b) the penalties imposed (including the number of Cautions issued) (c) the profile of students involved, by programme and programme stage and their individual characteristics (including gender, ethnicity, disability). RRDC will receive the same information for research misconduct.	Code on Academic Misconduct (QH:C7) Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) – chapter VII)

External examining	The Academic Quality and Learning Manager is responsible for making an annual report to AQSC on University level issues raised in external examiners reports and for providing feedback to external examiners as determined by AQSC. The report will also include examples of good practice which are considered transferable beyond the programme to which they relate.	Code on External Examiners (QH:C10)
Research degrees: annual progress reviews	RRDC is responsible for reviewing on an annual basis the annual reviews for all research candidates and any actions taken and for making recommendations for improvements to any aspect of the management of the University's research degree provision as it considers appropriate.	Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) – chapter V
Academic Appeals	Academic Board will receive an annual report of academic appeals made by students	Code on Academic Appeals (QH:C11) Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) – chapter VIII
Complaints by students	Academic Board and the Board of Governors will receive an annual report on the number and nature of formal complaints.	Code on Complaints by Students (QH:G1) Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) – chapter X
Programme Monitoring and Review	The Academic Quality and Learning Manager is responsible for making an annual report to AQSC providing an oversight of academic quality that will include examples of good practice which are considered transferable beyond the programme to which they relate.	Code on Programme Monitoring and Review (QH:C12)

Monitoring and review of the Quality Handbook

The University will systematically monitor and review the Academic Regulations and supporting Codes set out in this Handbook. The Academic Quality and Learning Manager's annual Report on Quality to AQSC will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the processes set out in the Handbook with recommendations for improvement and development.

Acknowledgements

In developing this Handbook extensive use has been made of the equivalent Quality Handbooks and/or specific sets of regulations, codes or guidance of universities, especially of those in England. The basic approach of the Handbook is based on the model developed by the University of Hull from 2003 onwards, including the use of cover sheets, version control and the 'must', 'should', 'may' terminology (which was later adopted by University College London).

The University therefore wishes to acknowledge that this Handbook has been significantly informed by practice at a number of universities, specifically including the following: Hull, Kingston, Leicester, London South Bank, Oxford, Oxford Brookes, UCL, Wolverhampton, Worcester.

In addition, the Handbook draws on the work of, and guidance produced by, a range of specialist bodies. The following section indicates some of the most significant and useful organisations (mostly UK-based). The following is also designed to provide a basis for further reading (but is not intended to be exhaustive).

Further reading

Remit/area of specialism	Title and references
General	WonkHE: https://wonkhe.com/ Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI): https://www.hepi.ac.uk/about-us/ JISC: https://www.jisc.ac.uk/ Advance HE (incorporating the former Higher Education Academy, Leadership Foundation and Equality Challenge Unit) https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/ https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ https://www.ecu.ac.uk/ https://www.lfhe.ac.uk/ in particular: The Higher Education Academy (2012) A Marked Improvement: Transforming Assessment in Higher Education - https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/A_Marked_Improvement.pdf Academic Registrars Council: https://arc.ac.uk/ NB its practitioner groups: https://arc.ac.uk/Practitioner_Groups.aspx Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA): www.qaa.ac.uk

Remit/area of specialism	Title and references
	QAA Scotland – Enhancement Themes: https://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/ Association of University Administrators (AUA): https://aua.ac.uk/
European/international	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA): https://enqa.eu/ Universities UK (UUK) - International Unit: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/international Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) [Australia]: https://www.teqsa.gov.au/ International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE): http://www.inqaahe.org/
Academic Partnerships and Collaborative Provision	Council of Validating Universities (CVU): http://www.cvu.ac.uk/
Consumer rights	Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/competition-and-markets-authority
Credit /recording achievement	UK Credit Forum: http://www.seec.org.uk/about-us/ukcf/ NUC (or NUCCAT): https://www.nuc.ac.uk/ SEEC: https://www.seec.org.uk/about-us/ Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA): www.recordingachievement.org Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR): www.hear.ac.uk European Commission, Outline Structure of the Diploma Supplement: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/doc/ds_en.pdf
Recognition of Prior Learning	European Guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning, CEDEFOP, 2015 - http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/node/11010
Admissions	Supporting Professionalism in Admissions - https://www.spa.ac.uk/ - especially Good Practice statement on Admissions Policies (April 2014)
Research degrees	Salzburg Principles, as set out in the European Universities' Association's (EUA) Bologna Seminar report (2005): www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Salzburg_Conclusions.1108990538850.pdf Salzburg II Recommendations (this augments the existing Principles):

Remit/area of specialism	Title and references
	www.eua.be/Libraries/Publications_homepage_list/Salzburg_II_Recommendations.sflb.ashx The European Charter for Researchers - The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers: http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/whatIsAResearcher Vitae Research Development Statement and Research Development Framework: www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-developmentframework/the-vitae-researcher-development-statement UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE): http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/
Placement learning	ASET (the Work Based Learning and Placement Learning Association): www.asetonline.org - especially: Good Practice Guide for Work based and Placement Learning in Higher Education (2013) and Good Practice Guide for Health and Safety for Student Placements (2016) UCEA (the Universities and Colleges Employers Association): https://www.ucea.ac.uk/ National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB): www.ncub.co.uk/
Academic/research misconduct	Bretag, T. and Mahmud, S. (2014) Exemplary Academic Integrity Project, Academic Integrity Toolkit. https://lo.unisa.edu.au/course/view.php?id=6751 Carroll, J, (2007) A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism in Higher Education (2nd ed.), Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford QAA (2017), Contracting to Cheat in Higher Education: How to Address Contract Cheating, the Use of Third-Party Services and Essay Mills, October 2017 (QAA, Gloucester, UK) http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Contracting-to-cheat-in-higher-education.pdf
External examining	Higher Education Academy - https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/degree-standards https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/training-events/professional-development/external-examining-course
Academic appeals/complaints by students	Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education – www.oiahe.org.uk In particular see the good practice Framework documents published on their site. Academic Registrars' Council (2011) A Reference Document For Academic Appeals and Extenuating Circumstances for University Practitioners:

Remit/area of specialism	Title and references
	www.arc.ac.uk/PageInfo.aspx?practitioner-7-Student-Complaints-and-Appeals.html National Union of Students Charter on Student Complaints and Appeals: www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/open/highereducation/NUS-Charter-on-Complaints-and-Appeals/ Improving Dispute Resolution Service: www.staffs.ac.uk/idr/index.html National Union of Students Charter on Student Complaints and Appeals: www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/open/highereducation/NUS-Charter-on-Complaints-and-Appeals/
Learning, teaching and assessment	Staff and Educational Development Association - www.seda.ac.uk Higher Education Academy – UK Professional Standards Framework - https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf Association for Learning Development in Higher Education (ALDINHE - www.aldinhe.ac.uk Sambell, K, McDowell, L, and Montgomery, C, (2012) *Assessment for Learning in Higher Education*, Routledge, London
Students as partners	WISE (Wales Initiative for Student Engagement): https://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/events/wales-initiative-for-student-engagement-project--wise/ Sparqs (student partnerships in quality Scotland): https://www.sparqs.ac.uk/aboutus.php National Union of Students and QAA (2012) Understanding the Barriers to Student Engagement: http://qualitymatters.nus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/NUS_QAA-BarriersReport_V2.pdf Higher Education Academy publication: Collecting and Using Student Feedback - A Guide to Good Practice: www.heacademy.ac.uk/node/3008 National Union of Students resources - Rewarding Reps and Accreditation: www.nusconnect.org.uk/campaigns/highereducation/studentengagement/ courserephub/supportingcoursereps/rewardingreps/
Student support	AMOSSHE: https://www.amosshe.org.uk/ National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP): http://nadp-uk.org/ National Union of Students: Academic support charter: www.nusconnect.org.uk/campaigns/highereducation/archived/learning-and-teachinghub/academicsupport/ Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS): www.agcas.org.uk

Remit/area of specialism	Title and references
	Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR): www.agr.org.uk/

Acronyms and abbreviations used in the Quality Handbook

As far as possible the use of acronyms and abbreviations has been kept to a minimum. However, the following are used occasionally within the Quality Handbook.

Acronym or abbreviation	Full title
AQSC	Academic Quality and Standards Committee
DAPR	Director of Academic Programmes and Research
AQLM	Academic Quality and Learning Manager
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
MEER	Module Evaluation and Enhancement Report
PREP	Programme Review and Enhancement Plan
PSRB	Professional, statutory or regulatory body
ROQ	Annual Report on Academic Standards, Quality Assurance and Enhancement
RRDC	Research and Research Degrees Committee
SORA	Statement of Reasonable Adjustments
SSLC	Student-Staff Liaison Committees
VC	Vice-Chancellor

PART II: QUICK GUIDE TO EACH CODE

The following is designed to make each Code readily accessible and to facilitate an overview of how the Codes interrelate with each other. For Sections C-G of the Quality Handbook it provides concise explanations for each document of:

- its purpose
- its scope
- cross-references to other Codes in the Handbook
- 'things to watch out for' in the document – ideas, requirements or restrictions which might not be anticipated
- key concepts and definitions used in the document
- extracts from the most influential external reference points (ESG and UK Quality Code, explained above)
- any time limits specified.

Section C sets out the Academic Regulations and Codes which apply specifically to taught programmes, including Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Section D sets out the Academic Regulations which apply specifically to research degrees – the MPhil and PhD.

In managing either taught programmes or research degrees reference must also be made to the Codes set out in Sections E, F and G as these apply to all provision however classified and therefore supplement Section C or Section D as applicable.

Section B – Academic Governance

As indicated in Part I above, Section B provides a series of links to other documents which set out the arrangements for the academic governance of the University, specifically the membership and terms of reference of the Board of Governors, Academic Board and its two sub-committees (Academic Quality and Standards Committee and Research and Research Degrees Committee).

Section C – Taught programmes

C1 - Academic Regulations (Taught programmes)

Purpose of the Academic Regulations	This document sets out the University's rules and regulations governing taught programmes leading to the award of its higher education qualifications. It defines the requirements for those programmes and is set out in two parts: the first part (Chapter I) governs the award of all qualifications; the second part provides a single chapter for each qualification for which the rules governing progression and award are different. The Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes are the cornerstone of the University's quality system in defining how it will exercise its degree-awarding powers, and in setting out the requirements which

	enable academic standards to be maintained. They provide transparent and accountable rules which set out the authority for all aspects of the assessment and award process and the entitlements of students in relation to each award. They provide the definitions and key principles for a number of matters which are then set out in more detail in supporting Codes; such as Boards of Examiners, External Examiners and Assessment Procedures. The provisions in the Academic Regulations form part of the legally binding contract between the University and each student (see further Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2)) and failure on the University's part to follow the provisions could constitute a 'procedural irregularity' which could constitute a ground for appeal (under QH:C11) resulting in rendering the decision void if the appeal is upheld.
Scope	The Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes apply to all programmes classified by the University as taught and leading to higher education qualifications of the University. Chapter I sets out the rules applicable to all taught programmes. Chapters II to VII apply to programmes leading to specific qualifications. (Note that chapter III – Foundation Degrees is currently a placeholder. Specific provisions will be developed in the event that the University decides to offer this qualification.)
Cross-references	Admission - Code on Recruitment, Selection and Admission (QH:C3) Programme approval - Code on Programme Approval (QH:C2) Assessment and reassessment - Code on Assessment Procedures (QH:C6) Reasonable adjustments – Code on Reasonable Adjustments (QH:E4) Academic misconduct - Code on Academic Misconduct (QH:C7) Examination offences - Code on Assessment Procedures (QH:C6) Credit transfer/recognition of prior learning – Code on Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning (QH:C4) Board of Examiners - Code on Boards of Examiners (QH:C9), Code on External Examiners (QH:C10) Appeals - Code on Academic Appeals (QH:C11) Complaints - Code on Complaints by Students (QH:G1)
Things to watch out for	**Taking a module twice** A student cannot retake a module which has been passed with the aim of achieving a better mark.

Double counting
The Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes contain provisions to prevent double counting, for example a student with a Bachelor's degree in Law seeking another such degree in the same subject.

Limitations on the transfer of credits
The Academic Regulations set out limits on the volume of credits awarded by another institution which can be transferred and on the volume of prior learning which can be recognised towards a University of Gibraltar award. This is designed to ensure that each student undertakes sufficient study at the University to justify being awarded a University of Gibraltar award. Other universities have similar rules in part to prevent students collecting more than one award by just reusing the same credits. In the case of the Ordinary degree no limitation is specified on the basis that there is no direct entry to the Ordinary degree and therefore the issue does not arise. (See further Code on Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning (QH:C4)).

Anonymous marking
Anonymous marking is required for all summative assessments unless the nature of the assessment makes it impossible. In deciding whether it is impossible consideration should be given to whether the second marking (where required) could be anonymous. For example, while a tutor marking a dissertation may know the identity of the student if they have also been the supervisor of the work, but the second marker may not have such a connection.

Module and Pass marks
All modules (except those classified as pass/fail) are marked on a scale of 0-100. However, the pass mark depends on the *level* of the module (and not the level of the programme). Modules at levels 3-6 have a pass mark of 40, modules at level 7 have a pass mark of 50. In each case modules passed by reassessment are capped at the pass mark.

Rounding
The Academic Regulations set out clear rules on the rounding of marks both at module and the end of stage: marks of .44 and below are rounded down; marks of .45 and above are rounded up to the nearest whole number. In the case of degree classification a mark of 69.45 and above is automatically rounded to 70. A mark of 69.44 and below is rounded down. Note that in calculating stage weighted averages and classifications the unrounded module marks are used to prevent double rounding.

Borderlines (degree classification)

	A student achieving a final weighted average of 0.46-1.55 below the higher classification (e.g. 68.45-69.44) has the mark rounded as explained above, but they are considered to be in the borderline range. They can only be awarded the higher classification if: (i) they have achieved more than 50% of credits counting for the classification in the higher class, or (ii) there are valid mitigating circumstances which have not previously been considered.
Key concepts and definitions	**Qualifications** The Academic Regulations set out the qualifications which the University will award exercising its degree-awarding powers. This list can be extended (provided that is in accordance with the applicable Gibraltar legislation). Note that the University does not permit direct entry to the Ordinary degree, but a student may be awarded this as an Exit award where they have not been able to complete successfully their Bachelor's (Honours) degree. **Credits required for qualifications** The University has adopted the UK credit system and therefore the number of credits required for each qualification is based on that system. Levels for each qualification (and for each module within programmes) is also based on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The University's qualifications are therefore directly comparable with those of UK universities. **Assessment Tariff** The Tariff is designed to provide general guidance for the volume of assessment within and across modules. Specifically, it is designed to ensure as far as practicable that students on modules of the same credit value experience a comparable assessment load, and that the assessment for a 30 credit is broadly twice that of a 15 credit module. The Tariff recognises that comparisons are difficult given the potentially wide (and legitimate) variety in assessment methods especially in different disciplines. **Suspension on grounds of risk** A student who is judged to be unfit to study because they pose a risk to themselves or others can be required to suspend their studies and not attend the University. The decision rests with the Vice-Chancellor and is intended to be temporary while the student seeks appropriate help in resolving the issues in question. **Late submission** Work for summative assessment is deemed late if it is submitted after the published deadline. If it is submitted within two working days of the deadline the student is entitled to receive a mark not

	exceeding the pass mark for the module. If it is submitted after that time a mark of zero must be awarded for the piece of work. **Academic discipline: University Warnings, Exclusion and Termination** Non-attendance at compulsory teaching sessions, late/non-submission of assessed work and non-attendance at examinations makes a student liable for disciplinary action on academic grounds (unless absence/extension has been granted for exceptional circumstances). Action can include: ▪ the issue of a University Warning formally putting the student on notice (but also inviting them to talk to staff if the absences are caused by problems not so far disclosed) ▪ exclusion from assessment or termination of their programme (provided that a University Warning has previously been issued and conduct has not improved) ▪ exclusion from reassessment where a module has been failed at first attempt (this does not have to be have been preceded by a University Warning). **Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP)** The MCP is established as required to determine applications for absence/mitigating circumstances. It is designed to ensure that as few people as possible have access to the circumstances of the student, but membership of the Panel is designed to ensure consistency across all programmes. Extensions for coursework can be determined by the relevant Programme Coordinator exercising delegated authority. **'Good Cause'** Extensions and absences from examinations can be granted for 'good cause'. The Academic Regulations define what can and what cannot constitute good cause; the distinction is essentially whether the matter is beyond the reasonable control of the student. **Fresh attempt** A fresh attempt can be awarded by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel where a student is unable for good cause to attend an examination/assessment or the attempt was severely affected. A fresh attempt gives the student another opportunity at the examination/assessment unaffected by the circumstances. Where the attempt was a first attempt, the new attempt is therefore also a first attempt. Where the attempt was a second attempt

	(reassessment) so is the new attempt, the mark for which will therefore be capped. **Moderation** The Academic Regulations follow UK practice in emphasising the importance of the moderation of assessment, especially internal moderation undertaken by University staff designated as internal examiners. Moderation applies both in the setting of assessment tasks and in the marking of assessed work. Its purpose is to ensure that there is effective and collective scrutiny of, and responsibility for, assessment tasks (in whatever form), and to ensure that there is a shared understanding among all the internal examiners which promotes consistency in the application of the marking criteria. It is also the means through which differences of opinion between examiners can be resolved. **Role of the external examiner** External examiners provide independent scrutiny and oversight of all aspects of the assessment process. They must never be used as additional markers or be asked to resolve disagreements between internal examiners. Their role is to ensure that assessment has been undertaken rigorously and fairly, including that marking criteria are appropriate and have been applied appropriately. **Board of Examiners** As indicated earlier, the Board of Examiners has separate jurisdiction when considering performance at module level (Module Board) and when considering progression at the programme level (Programme Board). Modules must always be considered first. One Board cannot interfere or change the decision of the other. In practice for each programme the staff involved are likely to be the same, or substantially the same, for both the Module and then the Programme Board and the meeting might effectively appear to be one meeting, but in conducting the business of the meeting and in recording the decisions, staff must always be clear which jurisdiction they are exercising at any given time. **Permitted decisions** Permitted decisions for Module and Programme Boards are set out in the Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes and detailed in the Code on Boards of Examiners (QH:C9). **Aegrotat awards** A qualification can be awarded as an Aegrotat in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to complete their studies for compelling reasons (including death or serious illness). The premise of the award is that the student would have successfully

	completed but for the exceptional circumstances. Awards can be made posthumously. In deciding whether to make the award the (Programme) Board should consider whether an Exit award is more appropriate. For example, a student who has just completed the Diploma stage of the Bachelor's degree when the circumstances occur, could properly be awarded the Diploma (based on 240 credits already gained) rather than seeking to determine whether the student would have successfully completed the Bachelor's stage. The final decision rests with Academic Board. Aegrotats are awarded unclassified. The award certificate never mentions that it is an Aegrotat award. **Exit awards** A student who does not complete their programme successfully (either through not meeting the criteria for progression and therefore being failed, having their programme terminated or because they choose to permanently withdraw from the programme) is entitled to an Exit award based on the number of credits achieved at that point. Where the credits achieved are too few for an award (e.g. fewer than 120 on an undergraduate qualification), they receive the credits that have been achieved, certified through the Official Transcript (but not through a certificate). Where a student is permitted to interrupt their studies and to return at a set date (e.g. 12 months later), they are not entitled to an Exit award. **Award and conferment** Qualifications are first awarded and then conferred. Award occurs when Academic Board (as the senior academic authority) approves the results sent to it by the Programme Board of Examiners. Award is evidenced by the Official Transcript which carries the date of Academic Board approval. Conferment takes place at a ceremony (although some students may choose to graduate *in absentia*) and is evidenced through a Certificate which bears the date of the ceremony. (Note typically UK universities have ceremonies only for degrees but not Certificates and Diplomas). **Revocation** The University (though Academic Board) can revoke a qualification or credit on one of three grounds: administrative error, academic or research misconduct, misrepresentation of entry qualifications/experience.

Ways of redeeming failure – explanation of concepts

The Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes and Board of Examiners Code (QH:C9) provides a number of ways in which a student might be allowed to continue their programme with one (or occasionally more) modules failed after first or second attempt. The following explains these concepts but note that their explanation depends on the qualification in question and the stage reached within the qualification:

Continuation

A student who has not completed the assessments (whether first or second attempts) as a result of mitigating circumstances (approved by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel) may be allowed to continue to the next stage of the programme and complete the outstanding assessments at the next opportunity.

Pass by compensation

A module which is narrowly failed (up to five marks below the pass mark) may be treated as a pass (and the credits awarded) provided very specific criteria are met including a limit on the number of credits within the stage and across the programme. Compensation is based on the premise that a student can achieve the intended learning outcomes for the programme notwithstanding a restricted number of narrow fails. Note that to be compensated the module must not have been classified (in the approved and published programme specification) as 'non-compensatable.' (Pass by compensation is entirely different from a 'pass with mitigation' granted where the narrow fail is explained by mitigating circumstances and is determined by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel.)

Fail-Repeat

A student on the Certificate stage of the Honours programme (only) who fails more than 60 credits at *first* attempt is automatically denied reassessment. However, the Programme Board can exercise its discretion to allow the student to restart the programme, wiping the first attempts (including any modules passed) from the record.

Other forms of repeat period

Where a student's progress has been severely affected by mitigating circumstances, they can be permitted (by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel) to repeat a semester or the entire year. The period to be repeated is removed from the record (including any

	credits gained). Such repeat periods cannot be used by a student seeking to improve their marks.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.1** Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders. (NB: the ESG uses the word 'standards' in a different way to UK reference points, and does not make an explicit distinction between academic standards and academic quality). **UKQC 2014 – Part A** *Expectation A1* In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies: a) ensure that the requirements of The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland/The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland are met by: ▪ positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications ▪ ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications ▪ naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications ▪ awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. *Expectation A2.1*

	In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications. *Expectation A3.2* Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where: ▪ the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment ▪ both the UK threshold standards and the academic standards of the relevant degree-awarding body have been satisfied. **UKQC 2018 – Expectations: Standards** The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework. The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualifications and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards. **Core practices: Standards** The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks. The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how programmes are delivered or who delivers them. The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.
Time limits	▪ Change of module: within the first two weeks of the semester ▪ Examination dates: published no later than eight weeks before the examination

	▪ Absence/Extensions for good cause: no later than two working days after the date of the examination or date on which submission was due ▪ Mitigating circumstances: no later than two working days after the date of the examination or deadline for submission of assessed work to which the application relates ▪ Fresh attempt: student must accept or decline within 14 days of being notified of the decision.

C2 - Programme Approval, Amendment and Withdrawal

Purpose of the Code	The Code sets out the University's requirements for the approval of new programmes, and for the amendment, suspension and withdrawal of programmes and of free-standing credit-bearing modules. It also details the arrangements for maintaining the 'definitive record' of programmes (and their constituent modules).
Scope	The Code applies to all programmes leading to the award of the University's higher education qualifications classified as taught. It also applies to any free standing credit-bearing modules at higher education level.
Cross-references	Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) Code on Programme Monitoring and Review (QH:C12) Code on Periodic Review (QH:C13) Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2) Code on Student Protection (QH:E3)
Things to watch out for	**Professional accreditation** If professional accreditation is being sought for a new programme, or has been granted for an existing programme, the University will work with the relevant body in relation to the approval process enabling a single process that meets the needs of both organisations wherever possible. **Contractual obligations** Admitting students to the University's programmes involves both parties entering into a legally binding contract. Those contracts include the programme specification and module descriptors published at the time each student was made an offer. The terms of those contracts can therefore only be changed with the agreement of both parties. Thus major amendments (to definitive aspects of the programme), if they are to apply to current students (as defined below) can only be made with the written agreement of the students concerned. (See further Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2)). The University is also committed to not withdrawing an existing programme without 'teaching out' the programme - that is enabling current students to complete – unless this is completely unavoidable. (See further Code on Student Protection (QH:E3)).

Key concepts and definitions	**Programme** A programme is a defined set of core and optional modules leading to one of the University's qualifications and satisfying the criteria as to number and level of credits in the UK Higher Education Credit Frameworks. A programme specification sets out the intended learning outcomes of the programme, the modules (core and optional), and the award to which the programme leads. **Module** A separately assessed unit of learning with specified learning and teaching strategy, assessment and reassessment methods and learning outcomes. Each module is assigned a credit value and a level. A module descriptor sets out the details of the modules, including the intended learning outcomes **Inclusive design** An approach where the programme is designed to anticipate the needs of a diverse body of students making learning and assessment as accessible as possible. This can reduce the extent to which reasonable adjustments are required for individual students. **Initial Programme Planning Approval** This is the first of 3 stages of programme approval and is designed to ensure that any proposed new programme will be viable in terms of demand, will meet the needs of employers and can be properly resourced by the University (especially if specialist equipment or additional expertise are required). **Full programme development** Once approval has been granted, the development of the programme begins with internal planning by the programme team where timelines, delegation of the work and identification of potential external experts. Once the full set of programme documentation is checked and complete, they may be submitted to the Approval Panel. **Programme Approval and Validation** At the final stage of approval a Panel, established to review the proposal, will provide their collective initial comments to the proposal team. Membership includes at least two external members, one of whom is expert in the subject of the programme and the other in academic standards and quality assurance in higher

	education. The programme team and panel will meet to discuss and consider the proposal and the team's responses to initial comments. The Panel is empowered to approve the programme, whether with conditions or recommendations, or reject it. Panel decisions are reported to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. **Amendments to programmes** Amendments are classified as major, minor or operational, according to the extent of the change and the reason for the change. A number of minor amendments can result in them being classified as major (including every third minor change). Major amendments, if applied to current students affect the terms of the legally binding contract between University and student and therefore require students' written agreement. (see further Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2) and Code on Student Protection (QH:E3)). **Suspension of programmes** Suspension is temporary and is used where the University wishes to put recruitment on hold for a maximum of two years. Suspension of recruitment has no effect on the delivery of the programme to existing students. Suspension is contrasted with the withdrawal of a programme, which is permanent. **Current students** This includes enrolled students (including those who have been permitted to interrupt their studies) and prospective students: those who have accepted an offer but not yet enrolled *and* those to whom an offer of a place has been made and this offer has not been rejected (or accepted). (See further Code on Student Protection (QH:E3)). **Definitive record** This is the means by which the University ensures that it is always clear which programme and modules are the current version being used for learning and teaching, and which previous versions relate to which previous cohorts of students.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.2** 'Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher

	education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.' **UKQC 2014 – Part A – Expectation A3.1** 'Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.' **Expectation A3.4** 'In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether: ▪ UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved …' **Chapter B1 Expectation** 'Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice (Standards).** The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent. **Core Practice (Quality)** The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality programmes. See also Advice and Guidance on Course Design and Development which includes 7 guiding principles).
Time limits	Submission of proposed major amendments: three months before the date on which the changes would take effect.

C3 - Recruitment, Selection and Admission

Purpose of the Code	The Code sets out the University's approach to, and procedures for, the recruitment, selection and admission (RSA) of students and applies up to the point at which a prospective student is enrolled on

	a programme. It sets out the University's commitment to abide by the principles of 'fair admission' (specifically the 'Schwartz principles' set out in the report of that name published in 2004) and its commitment to equal opportunities. Applications for admission to a University programme will be considered only based on whether the applicant meets the University's entry requirements (general and those specific to the programme). The University will also provide support to enquirers and applicants who need additional help in the RSA process. The Code details the relationship between a prospective student and the University and the rights and obligations at each stage of the process. It includes opportunities for applicants to provide feedback, and to make a complaint or lodge an appeal.
Scope	The Code applies to all activities up to the point where an applicant is formally enrolled as a student at the University. It addresses three stages: ▪ recruitment (activities designed to enable a prospective student to make an informed decision whether to apply, and the process of applying) ▪ selection (the process of deciding whether to accept an application) ▪ admission (the process of confirming an offer and moving through to the enrolment stage) The provisions governing appeals and complaints are specific to applicants and relate only to the admission process. Enrolled students must use the provisions in C11 (academic appeals) and G1 (complaints). Prior learning which is sought to be used to fulfil or partially fulfil the entry requirements for a programme is considered under this Code. Prior learning in relation to specific modules within the programme (as a form of exemption) is covered under Code on Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning (QH:C4).
Cross-references	Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) Code on Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning (QH:C4) Code on Academic Appeals (Taught Programmes) (QH:C11) Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2) Code on Student Protection (QH:E3) Code on Complaints by Students (QH:G1)

Things to watch out for	**Reasonable adjustments** An applicant may require assistance with the application process in addition to any requirements they may have to help them undertake a programme. The Student Experience Office is responsible for ensuring that individual needs can be discussed and provided for. **Students under 18** Where an applicant is under 18 and will be under 18 when they start the programme additional rules apply because a person under 18 cannot enter a legally binding contract (see below) and because the University has an increased duty of care towards the student in certain circumstances. **New programmes** A new programme can be advertised before it has received final approval but only if the advertising makes clear that the programme has not received final approval and may therefore either not be approved or be subject to amendments. Applications to the new programme cannot be considered until final approval has been granted. **Fees and additional programme costs** Part of fair admission and the University's obligations is to ensure that applicants are properly informed about any fees and additional costs for which they will be liable when undertaking the programme. **Former students of the University** While former students/graduates of the University are encouraged to apply the following restrictions apply – no admission: ▪ to a programme where the applicant already has that qualification or a closely related subject (including from another university) ▪ where the applicant has previously failed the same or a closely related programme ▪ where the applicant has previously had their programme terminated on grounds of academic misconduct. **Rejected applications** Where an application is rejected the applicant must be informed in writing of the reasons for the decision and of their right to make an appeal and/or complaint. **Appeals by Applicants** An applicant cannot challenge the judgement through which the University determines whether the application is accepted or not; only the process leading to that judgement can be challenged. An applicant has the right to take the matter to the Gibraltar Public

	Services Ombudsman where they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal. The University will include in the notification of the outcome of their appeal or complaint set wording advising them of this right and how to access the Ombudsman service.
Key concepts and definitions	**Fair admission** The principles of 'Fair admission' are set out in a report published in the UK in 2004, and have become known as the Schwartz principles after the principal author of the report. **Contractual obligations** Admitting a student to a programme involves a legally binding contract between the University and the student. The University has an obligation to ensure that each student understands, before entering the contract, the nature of the obligations they are accepting, including any unexpected terms or conditions, and their rights as a student. The Code is therefore supported by a document called 'Terms and Conditions' (QH:E2) which provides a summary of the legal obligations and rights of each party. This document is based on practice in the UK (primarily reflecting UK consumer protection law and guidance issued to UK universities). A copy of the Terms and Conditions must be sent to the applicant with the offer. The Code makes explicit who has the power to commit the University to a contract (through making an offer). This is the relevant Programme Coordinator regarding academic matters, and the Registrar regarding general matters (such as criminal convictions). **Criminal convictions** The University has a duty of care to the whole University population and therefore anyone who applies for admission to a University programme is required to declare whether they have any criminal convictions. A criminal record does not necessarily prevent a student from studying at the University but declaration enables the University to undertake a risk assessment **False or misleading information** Where an applicant is suspected of having provided false or misleading information in support of an application the Registrar will conduct an investigation (even if by then the applicant has been enrolled as a student). The investigation might result in the application being cancelled or the student's programme being terminated.

	Changes to programmes – student protection The University is following the approach of universities in England of putting in place a 'Student Protection' Code which sets out how the University will protect the interests of students in certain situations such as the closure of a programme or when making major changes to a programme. See further the Code on Student Protection (QH:E3). In summary, the Student Protection Code provides that the University will not make major changes to a programme that will apply to current or prospective students unless the written agreement of those students has been obtained. The University will also not withdraw a programme where that withdrawal will affect current or prospective students. Prospective students in this case means those to whom an offer has been made and who have not rejected that offer. **Definition of appeal and complaint** An Appeal is a request to formally review the outcome of an application for admission to the University, or the conditions of an offer. A Complaint is a specific concern about the standard of service provided by the University in considering an application, whether relating to an action or a failure to act.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.4** 'Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B2 Expectation** 'Recruitment, selection, and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice** 'The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.'

Time limits	▪ The University will publish deadlines for applying for programmes; late applications may be accepted in exceptional circumstances as determined by the Registrar ▪ Notification of the University's decision on the outcome of the application: 20 or 25 days (depending on the nature of the selection process) ▪ Acceptance of an offer: within 10 working days ▪ Evidence that the conditions of the offer have been met by the applicant: no later than two weeks before commencement of the programme ▪ University response to request for informal resolution of an appeal/complaint: 14 days ▪ Submission of formal appeal or complaint: 30 days from the event/decision which is disputed ▪ Outcome of Academic Quality and Learning Manager's investigation notified to applicant: 30 days (unless panel established) ▪ Where Panel established: 14 days' notice to the applicant of the date/time of the panel ▪ Where Panel held, outcome of panel hearing: 5 days

C4 – Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning

Purpose of the Code	To set out the University's approach to, and rules governing, the recognition of prior learning, including the process for making an application, the principles which will govern it, and the general and specific criteria which must be satisfied - including the limits on the number of credits which can benefit from recognition.
Scope	The Code applies to prior learning where recognition is sought as the basis for exemption from modules within the programme but not to prior learning relating to meeting the entry requirements for the programme. The prior learning is therefore judged against the learning outcomes of the programme and the modules within the programme.
Cross-references	Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) Code on Recruitment, Selection and Admission (QH:C3)
Things to watch out for	The University (in line with practice at other universities) sets limits on the number of credits which can benefit from recognition. This is to ensure that a student takes sufficient credits at the University to justify being awarded a University of Gibraltar degree.

	Claims can only be made in respect of whole modules, rather than parts of modules. Recognition is granted ungraded and therefore the prior learning in question is not counted towards any classification used for the award (such as Bachelor's/Master's degree classification). Students whose application for RPL is rejected may appeal against the decision under the grounds set out in the Code on Academic Appeals (Taught Programmes) (QH:C11).
Key concepts and definitions	**Types of prior learning** The Code addresses three types of prior learning: ▪ prior learning in an academic framework – otherwise known as credit transfer (i.e. where higher education credit has been awarded) ▪ prior certificated learning ▪ prior experiential learning. Experiential learning can only be recognised based on the learning gained from that experience; it is not the experience itself which is being recognised. **Recognition** The Code uses the term 'recognition' (which reflects the approach in the UK Quality Code). A number of institutions use the term 'accreditation'. There is no practical difference between the two. **Appeals** Students have the right to appeal to the Board of Examiners on specified grounds if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their application for recognition. **Completion of University Procedures** A student has the right to take the matter to the Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman where they are dissatisfied with the final outcome of their appeal relating to recognition. The University will include in the notification of the outcome of their appeal set wording advising them of this right and how to access the Ombudsman service.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.4** Not explicitly mentioned in the standard but the supporting Guidelines state:

	'Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on -- institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention; -- cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B6 Expectation** 'Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice** Not explicitly mentioned in the Expectations or Core Practices but the Advice and Guidance on Assessment includes the following: 'Information on opportunities for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) is readily accessible to potential applicants, and guidance and support in applying for RPL is provided. Regulations and requirements in relation to RPL are clear and explicit. They include: - reference to minimum and maximum limits on the award of credit or exemption through RPL - whether and how RPL will be graded - how credit and exemptions will be used for the purposes of progression and for the award and classification of qualifications - processes for investigating allegations of fraudulent applications for RPL - processes for considering appeals against RPL decisions. Where RPL meets the requirements for learning outcomes for the relevant part of the course, it is consistent with national reference points.'

Time limits	Appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the student being informed of the outcome of their recognition application

C5 - Placement Learning

Purpose of the Code	This Code is designed to set out the University's approach to placements, including the rights and responsibilities of students, placement providers and the University. It demonstrates how the University will protect the integrity of its awards and the quality of the student experience, when part of the delivery – and in some cases the assessment – of the programme is carried out by a third party, such as an employer. As noted in Part I of this Introduction, placement learning is currently the only form of academic partnerships leading to one of the University's awards in which the University engages.
Scope	This Code applies to placements which are provided as part of a published programme of study leading to a higher education qualification of the University, and which are integral to that programme, in that they are summatively assessed and thereby contribute to the achievement of the programme learning outcomes and are designed to lead to the award of credit within the programme. Placements are specifically those learning activities which take place in a situation provided by an organisation external to the University, whether an employer, charity or another education provider. Placements therefore include periods of study at another University (as a semester or year abroad), and also include placements which are designed to enable students to acquire and demonstrate the competences of professional practise required as part of a programme to meet professional requirements (such as Nursing, Teaching or Social Work). They also include work-based learning (WBL): that is learning which is based in an employer setting and where the student is regarded first and foremost as an employee rather than a student.
Cross-references	Code on Programme Approval (QH:C2) Code on Recruitment, Selection and Admission (QH:C3) Code on Assessment Procedures (QH:C6) Code on Boards of Examiners (QH:C9) Code on External Examiners (QH:C10) Code on Programme Monitoring and Review (QH:C12)

	Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2) Code on Reasonable Adjustments (QH:E4)
Things to watch out for	**Risk assessment** Placements are challenging in that students are not under the direct supervision of the University, but the university remains responsible for the student's experience on the placement and the student continues to be entitled to access University facilities and services, and retains the same rights (e.g. to make a complaint). The right balance has to be achieved between sufficiently extensive risk assessment and the burden created by that to ensure that the placement is both safe and appropriate in terms of providing an effective learning opportunity. This also means ensuring that arrangements are put in place well enough in advance of the placement starting, including finalising the written placement agreement so that all parties are clear about their rights and responsibilities before the placement begins. **Allocation of placements** The rules governing how the placement will be found/allocated must be clear in advance especially if the student is to be responsible for finding the placement, as well as the implications if a suitable placement cannot be found. **Assessment of placements** If placement providers (such as employers) are to be involved in the summative assessment of students' work they must be provided with appropriate training relating to the assessment process, including the learning outcomes and marking criteria, and their marking must be subject to effective moderation. **Unexpected end of a placement** Placements can go wrong for a number of reasons resulting in an unsuitable learning experience or one that is terminated prematurely. Staff need to be clear about what action will be taken in this situation and be able to advise the student of their rights and of the implications for their academic progress. **Approval of placements** Approval is a two-part process: approval of the placement provider; approval of the specific placement. The latter ensures that the specific opportunity is suitable for the student in question (including taking account of any reasonable adjustments for that student).

Key concepts and definitions	**Risk assessment** The key to ensuring the success of placements lies in undertaking effective assessment of the risks posed at the level of the placement provider, and the intended placement activity, and carrying out risk assessment in a way which is not burdensome to those involved. Placements in other countries tend to pose a higher risk requiring more extensive control measures. **Placement agreement** A written agreement signed by the placement provider, student and University Programme Coordinator to ensure that roles, rights and responsibilities are understood before the placement begins. **Confidentiality agreement** Depending on the nature of the provider's business, they may require the student to sign an agreement regarding the confidentiality of matters to which they have access during the placement.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.2** The Standards do not make explicit reference to placement learning but they are addressed in the Guidelines under Standard 1.2: 'Study programmes are at the core of the higher education institutions' teaching mission. They provide students with both academic knowledge and skills including those that are transferable, which may influence their personal development and may be applied in their future careers. Programmes … -- include well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B10 Expectation** 'Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice** *Not explicitly mentioned in the core practices but advice and guidance has been produced on work-based learning.*

Time limits	There are no specific time limits in the Code but the majority of requirements it sets out need to be resolved well in advance of the placement commencing. There are also matters that must be notified to (prospective) students at the time an offer is made relating to: their responsibility to find a placement (where this is the case) and any additional costs arising from the placement.

C6 - Assessment Procedures

Purpose of the Code	This Code sets out the University's arrangements for: ▪ the conduct of examinations which form part of the summative assessment of modules, where those examinations are organised by the University in designated examination rooms ▪ 'class-based assessments' – other forms of summative assessment which are the responsibility of the Programme Coordinator or other member of teaching staff.
Scope	All summative assessments forming part of taught programmes.
Cross-references	Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) Code on Academic Misconduct (QH:C7) Code on Boards of Examiners (QH:C9) Code on External Examiners (QH:C10) Code on Reasonable Adjustments (QH:E4)
Things to watch out for	**Invigilation** Invigilators have a significant responsibility in ensuring that examinations are conducted properly, that the risk of academic misconduct is minimised, that any suspected academic misconduct is identified and reported, and as much supporting evidence is gathered as possible. **Permitted items in examination rooms** Invigilators and students need to have clarity about what is permitted and not permitted, as possession of prohibited materials constitutes an examination offence (see below). **Starting and ending examinations** The Code specifies that the examination starts and ends as directed by the invigilators, although students are permitted to enter their

	candidate number on the front of any answer book (if applicable) before the examination starts. **Formative assessment** The provisions for class-based assessments do not apply to formative assessments, other than that the member of staff organising the formative assessment must ensure that the room in which the assessment is being held is suitable for the purpose. **Alternative arrangements** Where a class-based assessment is being conducted the member of staff responsible must ensure that the requirements of any student's Statement of Reasonable Adjustments are complied with, including where this stipulates a separate venue. (see further Code on Reasonable Adjustments (QH:E4) for the Statement of Reasonable Adjustments).
Key concepts and definitions	**Examinations versus class-based assessments** The Code makes a distinction between examinations and class-based assessments. The University is responsible for identifying which constitute the former. The distinction attaches greater formality to the former and designates responsibility for them to University officers (principally the Registrar and Academic Quality and Learning Manager). The latter are the responsibility of the member of teaching staff running the assessment. The aim is to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for conducting the assessment taking account of the suitability of the venue and ensuring the integrity of the assessment (minimising the risk of academic misconduct). **Examination offences** The Code identifies a number of examination offences relating to various forms of cheating or designed to minimise opportunities for cheating. Suspected offences will be addressed under the Code on Academic Misconduct (QH:C7).
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Guideline to Standard 1.3** '-- Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B6 Expectation** 'Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.'

	UKQC 2018 – Core Practice (Standards) 'The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.'
Time limits	▪ Students must arrive at an examination room no later than 15 minutes before the start of the examination. A student arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of the examination will be refused entry to the examination room and will be deemed to have failed the examination.

C7 - Academic Misconduct

Purpose of the Code	This Code sets out the University's commitment to the effective but fair investigation of allegations of academic misconduct. It reflects the University's firm belief that the interests of the vast majority of students who do not cheat in any way must be protected, and in turn the integrity of the University's awards and reputation must be protected. The University regards all misconduct as 'serious' and some forms as 'severe'. The Code defines the process for investigating and determining allegations of academic misconduct, whether plagiarism or other misconduct, and sets out the penalties which can be imposed where misconduct is proven.
Scope	All taught programmes; (research misconduct is addressed under Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) Chapter VII). The Code applies to academic misconduct in relation to summative – but not formative – assessment. Students may appeal against decisions of Academic Misconduct Panels in accordance with the Code on Academic Appeals (Taught Programmes) (QH:C11). Fitness to practise, including any form of professional misconduct, is addressed in the Code on Fitness to Practise (QH:C8) and applies only to provision the award from which entitles the student to practise a profession – specifically Teaching and Nursing.
Cross-references	Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) Code on Assessment Procedures (QH:C6) Code on Boards of Examiners (QH:C9) Code on Academic Appeals (Taught Programmes) (QH:C11)

Things to watch out for	**Examination offences** Academic misconduct applies to any form of summative assessment. Specific examination offences are also identified as one form of academic misconduct. Examination offences are further explained in the Code on Assessment Procedures (QH:C6). **Minimal plagiarism** Where the examiner identifies 'minimal plagiarism' the plagiarised text should be disregarded but after marking the examiner should make it very clear to the student that there was plagiarism. This does not apply if the student has previously received a caution or penalty. **Extending the investigation** A case to answer (see below) may also result in the Academic Quality and Learning Manager directing that other work by the student be investigated where there is reason to believe that other work might also be plagiarised or be the result of some other form of academic misconduct. **Penalties** Only Academic Misconduct Panels can impose penalties for academic misconduct, but the Board of Examiners (whether at Module or Programme level) can make a decision which might appear to contradict or override the AM Panel's decision; that is legitimate provided that the decision is permitted by the Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) and is for reasons *other than* for academic misconduct. Under no circumstances can the Board of Examiners decide that it disagrees with a penalty imposed by the AM Panel and try to change that penalty. **Mitigating circumstances** Mitigating circumstances normally do not provide justification for plagiarism or other forms of cheating. They will be considered, either following initial consideration of an offence or on appeal, only where they are considered to be very exceptional. **Applications following termination of programme** The University will not consider an application from a prospective student for any short course, professional certificate or (HE) programme where that student has previously had their programme terminated for academic misconduct.
Key concepts and definitions	**Poor academic practice** Where the student has not sought to gain unfair advantage or to misrepresent the originality of their work. It includes incomplete or

	incorrect referencing or properly referenced work which is over reliant on quotations and/or paraphrasing. **Academic misconduct** Any conduct by a student which may give that student an illegitimate or unfair advantage or benefit for themselves or another or which may create a disadvantage or loss for another. Table 1 in the Code sets out more detailed definitions of each type of academic misconduct (though the table is not exhaustive). **Plagiarism** Presenting the work of others (e.g., thoughts, ideas, writing, images, artefacts) as one's own without proper acknowledgement. **Case to answer** The Academic Quality and Learning Manager is responsible for determining if there is 'clear evidence' of academic misconduct and therefore a case to answer. If there is no case to answer the matter is closed. **Caution** A caution is a means of putting a student formally on notice that they have plagiarised work and providing them with an opportunity to properly reference the offending content. Cautions only apply for plagiarism and for the possession of unauthorised materials in examinations and can only be issued (by the Academic Quality and Learning Manager) in specified circumstances. **Academic Misconduct Panels** Panels are responsible for determining allegations, for ensuring a fair process, and if the Panel judges the allegation proven, for determining the penalty in accordance with the published tariff. **University Warning** Where a student is issued with a penalty which does not involve termination of their programme, the penalty will include an official University Warning (issued by the Academic Quality and Learning Manager) making clear the seriousness of the matters involved and the likelihood that any further offence would result in termination. **Retrospective investigation** Progression through a programme or even award or conferment are not bars to an allegation being investigated and, if proven, penalised. The University is empowered to revoke a qualification in specified circumstances – the decision to revoke rests with the Academic Board.

External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Guideline to Standard 1.1** 'Quality assurance policies are most effective when they reflect the relationship between research and learning & teaching and take account of both the national context in which the institution operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach. Such a policy supports: -- academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B6, Indicator 14** 'Higher education providers operate processes for preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to unacceptable academic practice.' **UKQC 2018 –Advice and Guidance: Assessment** **Guiding Principle 10** 'Assessment encourages academic integrity.'
Time limits	▪ referral of an allegation to the Academic Quality and Learning Manager: without delay ▪ determination of a case to answer: 20 working days ▪ informing the student of case/no case to answer: without delay ▪ re-submission by student of assessed work following Caution: within seven days of receiving the caution ▪ submission of response by student to case to answer: 15 working days ▪ notification of the date, time and location of an AM Panel: no fewer than 10 working days ▪ student's explanation of the misconduct accepted and case closed: without delay ▪ notification of the outcome of the AM Panel: 48 hours ▪ notification of consideration of fresh evidence: without delay ▪ submission of an appeal: 20 working days of being notified of the outcome of the AM Panel decision

C8 - Fitness to Practise

Purpose of the Code	This Code sets out the University's commitment to the effective but fair investigation of cases where a student's fitness to practise is in question, whether based on their conduct, behaviour or health. It is designed to protect the interests of the users of a particular profession or service, such as school pupils and patients, as well as protecting the students themselves.

	The Code defines the process for investigating and determining cases where fitness is in question and sets out the penalties which can be imposed where a Panel is satisfied that a student is not fit to practise.
Scope	The Code applies specifically to programmes which enable students to seek to qualify to practise a particular profession and throughout which each student is expected to display the conduct, behaviour and character expected by the relevant regulatory body for the profession. This currently includes the PGCE and Adult Nursing degrees. In cases where a student is alleged to have committed academic misconduct, the University will determine whether this constitutes an issue of fitness to practise which will therefore be addressed under this Code. If not, the matter will be addressed under Code on Academic Misconduct (QH:C7)
Cross-references	Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) Code on Academic Misconduct (QH:C7) Code on Boards of Examiners (QH:C9) Code on Academic Appeals (Taught Programmes) (QH:C11)
Things to watch out for	**Suspension** Where unfitness to practise is in question the Academic Quality and Learning Manager is empowered to suspend the student from all or part of their programme (such as a placement) to safeguard the well-being of the student and/or other persons, such as service users (pupils/patients). Such a suspension will be reviewed by the fitness to practise Panel. **Applications following termination of programme** The University will not consider an application from a prospective student for any short course, professional certificate or (HE) programme where that student has previously had their programme terminated under this Code.
Key concepts and definitions	**Code of Conduct** Any code of conduct, standards or equivalent (however entitled) published by the relevant regulatory body applicable to students on one of the University's professional practice programmes, and which is provided to each student in full no later than the commencement of their programme.

	'Relevant regulatory body' An organisation, whether statutory, regulatory or professional, which has the authority to oversee the training of students and their admission to, or registration for, a profession in Gibraltar either immediately following graduation from the University's programme or after a period of further training. **'Fitness to practise'** Defined in terms of conduct, character and health and supplemented by reference to the applicable Code of Conduct for the profession to which the programme relates. **Case to answer** The Academic Quality and Learning Manager is responsible for determining if there is 'clear evidence' of unfitness to practise and therefore a case to answer. If there is no case to answer the matter is closed. **Panels** Panels are responsible for determining cases, for ensuring a fair process, and if the Panel judges that the student is unfit to practise for determining the penalty in accordance with the published tariff. **University Warning** Where a student is issued with a penalty which does not involve termination of their programme, the penalty will include an official University Warning (issued by the Academic Quality and Learning Manager) making clear the seriousness of the matters involved. **Retrospective investigation** Progression through a programme or even award or conferment are not bars to an investigation. The University is empowered to revoke a qualification in specified circumstances – the decision to revoke rests with the Academic Board.
External reference points	No specific reference but see C7 above regarding academic integrity.

Time limits	▪ notification to students of the applicable Code of Conduct for their programme: commencement of the programme ▪ determination of a case to answer: 20 working days ▪ informing the student of case/no case to answer: without delay ▪ informing the student and other relevant parties of a suspension: without delay ▪ submission of response by student to case to answer: 15 working days ▪ student's explanation accepted and case closed: without delay ▪ notification of the date, time and location of a Panel: no fewer than 10 working days ▪ notification by student of person accompanying them to the hearing: 4 working days ▪ notification of the outcome of the Panel: 48 hours ▪ notification of consideration of fresh evidence: without delay ▪ submission of an appeal: 20 working days of being notified of the outcome of the AM Panel decision

C9 - Boards of Examiners

Purpose of the Code	To provide detail on the workings of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel, Module and Programme Boards (supplementing what is detailed in the Academic Regulations) including such matters as the membership and quoracy of the Boards and the conduct of meetings. For each of the three bodies it sets out in a series of tables the decisions which each is permitted to make (based on the rules set out in the Academic Regulations), indicating where there is discretion and the limits of that discretion and also indicating the result which must be recorded on the Official Candidate List.
Scope	All taught programmes leading to the award of higher education qualifications of the University. The University has a single Board of Examiners exercising powers and responsibilities on behalf of the Academic Board. The Board of Examiners will exercise separate jurisdiction as follows: (a) when determining the award of marks for individual modules it will sit as a Module Board and resolve matters for each

	individual module in turn, without reference to student's performance in other modules (b) when determining the progression of students to the next stage of the programme or to the award of the qualification it will sit as a Programme Board. When sitting as a Programme Board the Board has no jurisdiction over matters of the Module Board and must not question, review or change any decision made by a Module Board. The Board of Examiners also has the authority to convene a Mitigating Circumstances Panel with the same chair but with membership restricted to minimise the number of people involved in discussing individual student's personal circumstances.
Cross-references	Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) Code on Assessment Procedures (QH:C6) Code on Academic Misconduct (QH:C7) Code on Academic Appeals (Taught Programmes) (QH:C11)
Things to watch out for	**Awarding qualifications** While decisions about assessment and progression are made by the Board of Examiners (Module and Programme respectively) only Academic Board, as the senior academic body of the University, can approve the award of qualifications, including final classifications and Exit awards. **Mitigating circumstances - consistency** The key to ensuring fairness is to ensure as far as possible that decisions made by the MC Panel are consistent between students and over time, in applying the criteria of 'good cause' and what constitutes mitigating circumstances. Fairness includes fairness to all students by ensuring that applications are only accepted where they are supported by clear evidence. Having at least one member the same for all cases (the Chair) helps ensure that consistency. **Notifying outcomes of results** Decisions to allow students to progress to the next stage of the programme are formally decisions of the Programme Board and can therefore be notified after the Programme Board has concluded its business. Decisions to award the qualification can only be notified to students after Academic Board approval. **Special cases** The Board of Examiners (at Module or Programme level) can only exercise the powers given to it under the Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1). In very rare circumstances the Board

	may consider that fairness requires a decision which is not permitted. In such a case the Board **must** apply to the AQSC for approval setting out the reasons for the decision. AQSC will have to determine that the decision is fair both to the individual student and to all students. **Discretion** Generally, the Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) permit very limited discretion to the Board of Examiners (at Module or Programme level) including when determining degree classification. The purpose of this is to provide greater transparency, including making it possible for students to predict their outcomes. The Regulations are also underpinned by the principle that discretion – in the form of academic judgement – is exercised when academic staff set, mark and moderate assessments.
Key concepts and definitions	**Board of Examiners** The University has a single Board of Examiners (BoE). This sits as a Module Board to determine outcomes at the module level (taking each module separately) and then sits as a Programme Board to determine progression to the next stage and to the award (including classification where applicable). The Programme Board has no jurisdiction over matters at the module level and can never change a decision made by the Module Board (such as the mark awarded). **Mitigating Circumstances Panel** MCP decisions relating to mitigating circumstances/absence with good cause are final with one exception only: where the MCP refers the matter to the Programme Board for consideration at the end of the programme. In this case the decision of what to do with the mitigating circumstances rests with the Programme Board (but the MCP's judgement that the mitigating circumstances are valid cannot be questioned). Other than that one case decisions of the MCP can never be reviewed or changed by the Module or Programme Board. **Permitted decisions** The Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) define the decisions which the Module and Programme Boards and the Mitigating Circumstances Panel can make. To help make this clearer C9 has a number of tables setting out those decisions and how they should be recorded:

	▪ Tables 1-3 - Mitigating Circumstances Panel ▪ Tables 4-5 - Module Boards ▪ Tables 6-13 - Programme Boards. **Pass marks** Pass marks are determined by the level of the module (and not the level of the programme in which the module is offered): ▪ 40 for modules at levels 4-6 ▪ 50 for modules at level 7 ▪ Pass or fail must be used for any module identified in the module descriptor as 'pass/fail'. ▪ Following reassessment ('second attempt') the final mark for the module must not exceed the pass mark. **Official record of results** The formal record of the decisions of the Board of Examiners (either in relation to module results, or programme level decisions) is signed by the chair of the Board and the external examiner and forms part of the Official Record of the University.
External reference points	**ESG 2015** (no particular reference) **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B6** **Indicator 15** 'Degree-awarding bodies specify clearly the membership, procedures, powers and accountability of examination boards and assessment panels, including those dealing with the recognition of prior learning; this information is available to all members of such boards.' **Indicator 16** 'Boards of examiners/assessment panels apply fairly and consistently regulations for progression within, and transfer between, programmes and for the award of credits and qualifications.' **Indicator 17** 'The decisions of examination boards and assessment panels are recorded accurately, and communicated to students promptly and in accordance with stated timescales.' **UKQC 2018 –Advice and Guidance: Assessment** 'Degree-awarding bodies operate, or oversee the operation of, examination boards (or equivalent bodies) to make judgements and decisions on which the award of credit and qualifications is

	ultimately based. The powers, authority and accountability of the board are clearly specified and understood by members of the board.'

C10 - External Examiners

Purpose of the Code	The University has adopted the UK approach of appointing external examiners to provide independent academic and subject specialist expertise at the level of individual modules and each programme, and to provide assurance that the assessment process is conducted rigorously and fairly, and is broadly comparable with other universities. The Code therefore details the arrangements for the appointment and induction of external examiners and their role in relation to the assessment of students and the operation of the Board of Examiners. It also details the requirement for each external examiner to provide an annual report to the University, how these reports will be addressed by the University, and how the reports will be shared in full with students.
Scope	The Code applies to the appointment and role of external examiners in relation to taught programmes only. (Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) deal with the role of external examiners in research degrees).
Cross-references	Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) Code on Assessment Procedures (QH:C6) Code on Boards of Examiners (QH:C9)
Things to watch out for	**Role in assessment** External examiners must not be allowed, or be asked, to be directly involved in the assessment of students, for example by setting assessment tasks or marking student work. They provide 'external moderation' once internal marking and moderation has been completed to provide assurance that grading/marking criteria have been properly applied and that assessment has been conducted rigorously and fairly. They can never change an individual student's mark. **Meeting students** External examiners may meet with students as part of their induction to the University and the programme or modules for which they will be responsible. The University will, where possible, and particularly if requested by the external examiner,

	arrange for external examiners to meet with student representatives on the programme. While this is not officially part of the assessment process, the University regards this as good practice and an opportunity for the external examiner to gain an impression of the programme from the students' perspective. **Sharing external examiner reports with students** As part of the University's commitment to working in partnership with students (Code on Students as Partners (QH:F1)), the University will make external examiner's report available to students on the relevant programme (through Canvas). It will also discuss issues and recommendations raised in the reports with students as part of the ongoing discussions about modules and programmes. Reports must not include information which identifies individual students or staff members.
Key concepts and definitions	**The role of the external examiner** The external examiner provides advice and guidance to the University both about the academic standards of the University's awards and about the quality of the student learning experience. The external examiner's judgement is not binding on the University and can therefore be rejected as the University is responsible for its provision. However, their judgement should only be rejected where a reason for that rejection is shared with the external examiner. **Appointments** Programme Coordinators are responsible for nominating external examiners but the appointment can only be made by Academic Board which will apply the criteria for appointment set out in the Code. The criteria are designed to ensure that the nominee is properly qualified for the role and is sufficiently independent of the University to ensure effective externality. **Induction** External examiners must be given an induction in relation to the specific modules and programme(s) for which they will be responsible and in relation to the University's requirements and its rules governing assessment and award. The practicalities of fulfilling the role, and arrangements for communication between the University and the external examiner, are a matter for discussion with each external examiner, but the University must ensure that each external examiner has sufficient information to enable them to carry out the role.

	Confirmation of decisions The decisions of the Board of Examiners are recorded for each module and for each programme (see Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1)). The external examiner must sign the relevant list, indicating that the external examiner is satisfied that the list is an accurate record of the decisions of the Board and that the Board has been conducted properly. It does not necessarily indicate that the external examiner agrees with each and every decision (as such agreement is not required - see above). **External Examiner reports** A key part of the role is the provision by the external examiner of an annual report. These must be considered at two levels: (i) by the Programme Coordinator and teaching team in relation to the programme (and see re students, above) (ii) by the Academic Quality and Learning Manager in relation to university-level issues (such as matters set out in the Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes). In relation to both levels the external examiner must be provided with feedback about how the issues raised in their report have been addressed, especially if their advice has been rejected. **Termination of contract** An external examiner's contract can be terminated where the external examiner is not fulfilling the role specified in the Code, especially where they are failing to provide annual reports or such reports provide insufficient feedback. This should be a last resort where discussion with the external examiner has not resolved the University's concerns. The decision rests with the Vice-Chancellor following discussion with the relevant Programme Coordinator and the Academic Quality and Learning Manager.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.** (There is no direct European equivalent to external examiners, however the ESG make reference to using external stakeholders in quality assurance – Guidelines to 1.1 and to designing programme drawing on external expertise (1.2) **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B7 Expectation** 'Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice (Standards)** 'The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.'

	Common Practice (Quality) 'The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.'
Time limits	▪ External examiners must be in place early enough in the academic year/programme to enable effective external moderation of summative assessment tasks and student assessed work. ▪ External examiners will be appointed for a period of four years. ▪ Annual reports must be submitted to the Academic Quality and Learning Manager within one month after the meeting of the Programme Board ▪ If a report is not received by the deadline, the Academic Quality and Learning Manager must write to the external examiner within 14 days. ▪ If a response or report is not then received the Academic Quality and Learning Manager must consult with the Vice-Chancellor and Programme Coordinator within 14 days.

C11 - Academic Appeals

Purpose of the Code	This Code sets out the University's arrangements for academic appeals by students on taught programmes. Students can appeal against decisions made about assessment outcomes and decisions about their progression and award made by the Board of Examiners (at Module or Programme level), a Mitigating Circumstances Panel or an Academic Misconduct Panel.
Scope	The Code applies to all registered students on taught programmes leading to the award of a higher education qualification. It includes students who are on placement or who have been permitted to interrupt their studies. Appeals by applicants relating to the decision whether to admit them to a programme are addressed in the Code on Recruitment, Selection and Admission (QH:C3). Complaints by students (including academic and non-academic matters) are addressed in the Code on Complaints by Students (QH:G1).
Cross-references	Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) Code on Recruitment, Selection and Admission (QH:C3)

	Code on Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning (QH:C4) Code on Academic Misconduct (QH:C7) Code on Complaints by Students (QH:G1)
Things to watch out for	**Local resolution** Students are encouraged to try and resolve the matter informally. This might involve seeking confirmation that the decision has been properly made in accordance with University's requirements (primarily the Academic Regulations). This is termed 'verification.' An appeal cannot be resolved informally if that involves revising an assessment decision. If the University identifies that an error has been made it can however refer the matter back to the relevant decision-making body for it to revise the decision. **Graduates cannot appeal** Graduating (whether involving attendance at the degree ceremony or having the award conferred *in absentia*) constitutes acceptance of the award and all assessment decisions which led to the award, including any final classification. An appeal cannot therefore be pursued if the student graduates before the appeal has been resolved. Complaints (see G1) are not subject to this limitation. **Right to be accompanied** A student has the right to be accompanied at an appeal hearing by a person of their choosing. This is not restricted to a member of staff or another student. However, the person in question is not the advocate of the student and cannot speak to the Appeal Panel unless invited to do so by the Chair of the Panel. As the process is intended to be appropriate for an internal matter of the University, neither the appellant or the University can be legally represented at the hearing. **Consequences of a successful appeal** If an Appeal Panel upholds the appeal, the original decision (which is the subject of the appeal) is immediately rendered void and therefore invalid. The Panel can then make one or more directions, for example requiring the original decision-maker to reconsider its decision unaffected by the factors which justified the appeal. The Appeal Panel cannot award or change the award of any mark, credit or qualification.

Key concepts and definitions	**Definition of academic appeal** An academic appeal is a challenge to an academic decision such as the award of a mark for an assessment, a final degree classification or decisions relating to applications for mitigating circumstances, absence from an examination or extension. The appeal seeks a change to that decision. (See under G1 for Complaints). **Malicious, frivolous or vexatious** The University will not consider appeals which are judged to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious. This includes appeals which are harassing, repetitive, abusive or seeking unreasonable or unrealistic outcomes. **Appeals Panel** Where there appear to be valid grounds for appeal Academic Quality and Standards Committee will establish an Appeals Panel to meet with the student and relevant staff, hear the evidence and determine the outcome of the appeal. The Panel will comprise three members, two of whom must be members of AQSC. **Grounds for appeal** An appeal can be lodged on three grounds relating to procedural irregularity, mitigating circumstances, and bias or prejudice on the part of the decision makers. Where the decision makers have discretion (for example under the Academic Regulations) failing to consider whether to exercise the discretion can constitute a procedural irregularity. **Academic judgement** An appeal cannot be lodged against academic judgement, such as the judgement of the examiners as to the merit of a piece of work and the mark awarded, or the decision of a Mitigating Circumstances Panel as to whether a valid claim has been made. **Review** A student whose appeal is rejected by an Appeal Panel or who is otherwise dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal may seek a review of the appeal by writing to the Vice-Chancellor (VC). If the VC considers there are grounds the matter may be remitted to an ad hoc panel involving staff not so far involved in the appeal in any way. **Completion of University Procedures** A student has the right to take the matter to the Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman where they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of their appeal. The University will include

	in the notification of the outcome of their appeal set wording advising them of this right and how to access the Ombudsman service.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.3** The Standards do not make explicit reference to appeals but they are addressed in the Guidelines under Standard 1.3: 'A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B9 Expectation** 'Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice (Quality)** 'The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.'
Time limits	▪ Submission of formal appeal to the Registrar: within 20 working days of the date of notification of the decision to which the appeal relates ▪ Acknowledgement of receipt of the appeal by the Registrar: 5 working days ▪ Meeting of appeals panel where required: within 30 working days of the date of receipt of the notice of appeal. ▪ Informing student of the outcome of the appeal hearing: within 10 working days of the hearing. ▪ Request for a review of an appeal: within 10 working days of notification of the Appeal Panel's decision.

C12 - Programme Monitoring and Review

Purpose of the Code	This Code sets out the University's approach to the monitoring and review of its academic programmes and their constituent modules. The process is designed to be streamlined and forward-looking in that its focus is on identifying opportunities to enhance the quality of learning opportunities provided to students and on identifying effective practice and innovation that can be shared across the University. The process also has a key role in providing assurance to the University (Academic Quality and Standards Committee and

	Academic Board) and to students and external stakeholders that programmes are current, relevant and meeting the objectives identified at the approval stage, and that the University's academic standards are being maintained and are comparable with other degree-awarding bodies. The process brings together the ongoing evaluation of the provision at module and programme level and is founded on three key elements: engagement with students in a variety of ways; other sources of feedback (including staff, external examiners and external stakeholders); and the analysis of data relating to each module and the programme as a whole (including data from previous years).
Scope	The Code covers all programmes (and their constituent modules) classified as taught and leading to higher education qualifications of the University.
Cross-references	Code on Programme Approval (QH:C2) Code on External Examiners (QH:C10) Code on Periodic Review (QH:C13) Code on Students as Partners (QH:F1)
Things to watch out for	**Confidentiality** Feedback provided by students, staff and others should be shared with students unless that information would identify individual students or it has been provided in confidence. **Student engagement** An important element of successful monitoring and review lies in encouraging students to provide feedback on their experience even where they will not directly benefit from any changes implemented as a result of their feedback. Successful engagement also depends on demonstrating through practice that students will be listened to and that where practicable changes will be made. **Sharing external examiners' reports** The Code on External Examiners (QH:C10) provides that each external examiner's annual report will be provided in full to students (via Canvas). This is part of ensuring that students have sufficient information to be able to engage in a dialogue with staff to identify improvements to their programme.
Key concepts and definitions	**Data** The analysis of student data is an important element of monitoring and review both in relation to each module, at the level of the

	programme and in comparison with previous years to identify trends. **Module Evaluation and Enhancement Report** The performance of every module is evaluated at the end of the relevant teaching period focusing on 3 key elements: analysis of data relating to each module; student engagement and feedback, feedback from the teaching team and support departments. The report includes an enhancement action plan informed by these elements, comments from external examiners' reports and other sources. The effectiveness of the actions is continually monitored and updated. Students are made aware of actions taken, particularly in response to the feedback they have given. **Programme Review and Enhancement Plan** This is the process of formally reviewing the programme at the end of each year, drawing together feedback and data from different sources. It is developmental in the sense of the focus being on what improvements can be made to the programme, but it also provides assurance to the University (through the Academic Quality and Standards Committee) that academic standards are being maintained and that students are getting a high-quality learning experience. **Report on Quality and Vice Chancellor's Annual Report** The Academic Quality and Learning Manager produces annually the University's Report on Quality (Annual Report on Academic Standards, Quality Assurance and Enhancement) summarising key issues, themes and risks emerging from the monitoring and review of each programme. The Vice Chancellor reviews and adds key assurances to the Annual Report on Academic Standards, Quality Assurance and Enhancement and signs off the Report prior to submission to the Quality Enhancement Committee, Academic Quality and Standards Committee and Academic Board. **AQSC Oversight** AQSC will draw Academic Board's attention to any programme (or constituent module) where there is concern that academic standards or the quality of the student learning experience appear to be at risk. It will also draw Academic Board's attention to very notable examples of effective or innovative practice.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.9** 'Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any

	action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B8 Expectation** 'Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice** No explicit Core Practice but Advice and Guidance on Monitoring and Evaluation which includes seven Guiding Principles.
Time limits	The University (through the Academic Quality and Learning Manager) will notify deadlines for each stage of monitoring and review.

C13 - Periodic Review

Purpose of the Code	The Code provides for the systematic and periodic review of programmes in the form of Periodic Review and Mid-Cycle Review. The former is intended to be conducted no fewer than every six years. The latter, conducted for each programme after three years, will be a largely internal process drawing on the outputs of the preceding Programme Review and Enhancement Plans (Code on Programme Monitoring and Review (QH:C12).
Scope	The Code covers all programmes (and their constituent modules) classified as taught and leading to higher education qualifications of the University.
Cross-references	Code on Programme Monitoring and Review (QH:C12)
Things to watch out for	**Confidentiality** Feedback provided by students, staff and others should be shared with students unless that information would identify individual students or it has been provided in confidence by an external body. **Informing students** The Programme Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that students are informed of the outcome of the Mid-cycle Review

	including providing a copy of the review report, and for involving them in developing an action plan to respond to the report.
Key concepts and definitions	**AQSC Oversight** Academic Quality and Standards Committee oversees the review process. At the end of each academic session it will provide Academic Board with a summary of issues and recommendations from each Mid-cycle Review to facilitate identification of recurrent themes, as the basis for staff development, dissemination of good practice, enhancement of quality systems and other activity.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.9** 'Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B8 Expectation** 'Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice** No explicit Core Practice but Advice and Guidance on Monitoring and Evaluation which includes seven Guiding Principles.
Time limits	Periodic Review after progamme has run for 6 academic years, then every 6 academic years; Mid-Cycle Review after 3 academic years then midway between Periodic Reviews.e.

C14 - Observation and Development of Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Purpose of the Code	To set out the University's approach to, and requirements for, observation of the delivery of any aspect of learning, teaching, assessment and feedback by peer or manager. It sets out the University's principles including that the scheme is designed to be developmental and a means to help individual staff reflect on their practice and take some responsibility for their own professional development needs. It is based on a dialogue between observee

	and observer in a way that is not judgemental and relies on the sense of mutual trust and support between colleagues.
Scope	All staff involved in any form of teaching and/or assessment of students on taught programmes must engage in the Scheme through being observed on at least one occasion in each academic year. Where staff are new to teaching or on probation the requirement is for once per semester. The Scheme, and observations conducted under it, is designed to be formative. The University may determine that an observation needs to be conducted for summative purposes, for example as part of performance management. This will be conducted separately according to principles and a process to be established by the University in due course.
Cross-references	Code on Programme Monitoring and Review (QH:C12)
Things to watch out for	**Being an observer** Being an observer is also a developmental opportunity as well as a role in facilitating the observee's development. Staff will be encouraged to be observers where this is practical taking in account the nature of their role (for example recognising this is more difficult for part-time/hourly paid staff). **Selecting an observer** Ideally the observee will select their observer, and this might be a colleague involved in a different programme, thus encouraging a cross-fertilisation of ideas between disciplines. However, there will be occasions where it is more appropriate for the relevant Programme Coordinator to conduct the observation; the Code leaves this open for the University to determine.
Key concepts and definitions	**Record-keeping** Record-keeping of peer to peer observations is limited to providing assurance to the Programme Coordinator(s) that the process has been conducted and, where applicable, a summary of particularly effective or innovative practice is provided as the basis for wider dissemination within the University. Any other notes or records, for example made by the observer during the observation, are confidential to the two colleagues involved.

	Monitoring AQSC is responsible for overseeing the scheme, both in terms of its effectiveness, and in terms of ensuring that effective or innovative practice is disseminated across the University. Programme Coordinators are responsible for providing a summary in their Programme Review and Enhancement Plan (PREP) on observations conducted involving staff on their programme. This is designed to ensure an effective link between the Scheme and the ongoing and annual review of each programme. (See further Code on Programme Monitoring and Review (QH:C12)).
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.5** 'Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.' Guideline supporting 1.5 'Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their staff and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. Such an environment … - offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of teaching staff; - encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; - encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapters B3 and B6** No explicit reference in the Expectations but the following indicators are relevant and informed the writing of the Code: 'Learning and teaching practices are informed by reflection, evaluation of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship.' (B3:3) Assessment and feedback practices are informed by reflection, consideration of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship.' (B6:5) **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice (Quality)** 'The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.'

	See further the Advice and Guidance on Learning and Teaching which includes the following Guiding Principles: 'Effective learning and teaching is informed through reflective practice and providers enable staff to engage in relevant, timely and appropriate professional development that supports students' learning and high-quality teaching.' (GP4)
Time limits	Specific requirements for the timing of observations will be set out by the Programme Coordinators each academic year.

Section D – Academic Regulations: Research Degrees

Note that Section D takes a slightly different approach compared with Section C, in that the entire document is entitled 'Academic Regulations: Research Degrees' but addresses matters in its ten chapters which for taught programmes are covered in separate Codes. This is done primarily for two reasons: matters which might be part of a (single chapter) regulatory framework are covered in later chapters as that is easier to follow – such as the process and criteria for the formal progression points and award and conferment; for practical purposes as some of the chapters are relatively short. This approach does not affect the status, validity or meaning of the contents of the document.

D1 - chapter 1: Qualifications and academic standards

Purpose of the Chapter	The Academic Regulations: Research Degrees is the cornerstone of the University's quality system in defining how it will exercise its research degree-awarding powers, and in setting out the requirements which enable academic standards to be maintained. It provides transparent and accountable rules which set out the authority for all aspects of the assessment and award process and the entitlements of the candidate in relation to each award. The provisions in the Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (all 10 chapters) form part of the legally binding contract between the University and each student (see further Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2)) and failure to follow the provisions could constitute a 'procedural irregularity' which could constitute a ground for appeal (under QH:C11) resulting in rendering the decision void if the appeal is upheld.
Scope	Chapter I is focused on the research degree qualifications awarded by the University and its overall approach to ensuring the security and comparability of its academic standards. The chapter is supplemented by chapters II-X.

	The Academic Regulations: Research Degrees applies to MPhil/PhDs by research and by publication.
Cross-references	Code on Reasonable Adjustments (QH:E4)
Things to watch out for	**Maximum periods of registration** The University places a time limit within which the research and the thesis must be completed. The stated maximum periods include any period of interruption of studies or writing-up. Extensions to the maximum period can be granted in exceptional circumstances.
Key concepts and definitions	**Qualifications** The Academic Regulations: Research Degrees set out the qualifications which the University will award exercising its research degree-awarding powers. This list can be extended (provided that is in accordance with the applicable Gibraltar legislation). **Interruption of studies** A research candidate can apply to interrupt their studies for example because they are experiencing ill health or similar circumstances which are preventing them from progressing with their research. Decisions are matters for the Director of Academic Programmes and Research if involving a period of up to six months. Longer periods (up to a maximum of 18 months) are determined by RRDC. In all cases interruption is subject to the maximum period of registration (see above). **Suspension on grounds of risk** A research candidate who is judged to be unfit to study because they pose a risk to themselves or others can be required to suspend their studies and not attend the University. The decision rests with the Vice-Chancellor and is intended to be temporary while the student seeks appropriate help in resolving the issues in question. **Research Environment** UK external reference points emphasise the importance of a University which offers research degrees providing an environment in which high quality research is taking place so that candidates are interacting with established researchers and are able learn about research through that interaction. Candidates are also supported through being advised of and enabled to take up opportunities for broader engagement with research skills and research in their discipline, for example through attending conferences and giving presentations. The University, although small, is committed to

	fostering such an engagement, including by drawing on its extensive external contacts and networks.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.1** 'Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.' (NB: the ESG uses the word 'standards' in a different way to UK reference points, and does not make an explicit distinction between academic standards and academic quality). **UKQC 2014 – Part A** *Expectation A1* 'In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies: a) ensure that the requirements of The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland/The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland are met by: ▪ positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications ▪ ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications ▪ naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications ▪ awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.' *Expectation A2.1*

	'In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.' *Expectation A3.2* 'Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where: ▪ the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment ▪ both the UK threshold standards and the academic standards of the relevant degree-awarding body have been satisfied.' **UKQC 2014 – Expectation B11** 'Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.' **B11 Indicator 1** 'Higher education providers that are research degree awarding bodies have regulations for research degrees that are clear and readily available to research students and staff, including examiners. Where appropriate, regulations are supplemented by similarly accessible, subject-specific guidance at the level of the faculty, school, department, research centre, or research institute.' **Indicator 4** 'Higher education providers accept research students only into an environment that provides support for doing and learning about research, and where excellent research, recognised by the relevant subject community, is occurring.' **Indicator 16** 'Higher education providers that are research degree awarding bodies use criteria for assessing research degrees that enable them to define their academic standards and the achievements of their graduates. The criteria used to assess research degrees are clear and readily available to research students, staff and examiners.'

	UKQC 2018 – Expectations: Standards 'The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework. The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualifications and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.' **Core practices: Standards** 'The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks. The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them. The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.' **Core practices: Quality** 'Where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments.' **UKQC 2018 – Advice and Guidance: Research Degrees** **Guiding Principle 1** 'Provision of information is clear and accessible to research students and staff.' **Guiding Principle 2** 'The research environment is supportive and inclusive for all research students.'
Time limits	**Maximum periods of registration** PhD by research: 60 months (full-time), 96 months (part-time) PhD by publication: 24 months MPhil by research: 48 months (full-time), 72 months (part-time)

D1 – chapter II: Recruitment, Selection and Admission

Purpose of the Chapter	The Chapter sets out the University's approach to, and procedures for, the recruitment, selection and admission (RSA) of students to research degrees and applies up to the point at which a prospective student is enrolled on a programme. It sets out the University's commitment to abide by the principles of 'fair admission' (specifically the 'Schwartz principles' set out in the report of that name published in 2004) and its commitment to equal opportunities. Applications for admission to the University will be considered only based on whether the applicant meets the University's entry requirements (general and those specific to the research degree). The University will also provide support to enquirers and applicants who need additional help in the RSA process. The Chapter details the relationship between a prospective student and the University and the rights and obligations at each stage of the process.
Scope	The Chapter applies to all activities up to the point where an applicant is formally enrolled at the University. It addresses three stages: ▪ recruitment (activities designed to enable a prospective student to make an informed decision whether to apply, and the process of applying) ▪ selection (the process of deciding whether to accept an application) ▪ admission (the process of confirming an offer and moving through to the enrolment stage).
Cross-references	Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2) Code on Student Protection (QH:E3) Code on Reasonable Adjustments (QH:E4)
Things to watch out for	**Reasonable adjustments** An applicant may require assistance with the application process in addition to any requirements they may have to help them undertake research. The Student Experience Office is responsible for ensuring that individual needs can be discussed and provided for. **Fees and additional programme costs** Part of fair admission and the University's obligations is to ensure that applicants are properly informed about any fees and additional

	costs for which they will be liable when undertaking the programme. **Former students of the University [needs checking]** While former students/graduates of the University are encouraged to apply the following restrictions apply – no admission: ▪ to a programme where the applicant already has that qualification or a closely related subject (including from another university) ▪ where the applicant has previously failed the same or a closely related programme ▪ where the applicant has previously had their programme terminated on grounds of academic misconduct. **Rejected applications** Where an application is rejected the applicant must be informed in writing of the reasons for the decision and of their right to make an appeal and/or complaint.
Key concepts and definitions	**Fair admission** The principles of 'Fair admission' are set out in a report published in the UK in 2004, and have become known as the Schwartz principles after the principal author of the report. **Contractual obligations** Admitting a student to a programme involves a legally binding contract between the University and the candidate. The University has an obligation to ensure that each candidate understands, before entering the contract, the nature of the obligations they are accepting, including any unexpected terms or conditions, and their rights. The Code is therefore supported by a document called 'Terms and Conditions' (QH:E2) which provides a summary of the legal obligations and rights of each party. This document is based on practice in the UK (primarily reflecting UK consumer protection law and guidance issued to UK universities). A copy of the Terms and Conditions must be sent to the applicant with the offer. The Code makes explicit who has the power to commit the University to a contract (through making an offer). This is the Research and Research Degrees Committee regarding academic matters, and the Registrar regarding general matters (such as criminal convictions). **Criminal convictions** The University has a duty of care to the whole University population and therefore anyone who applies for admission to a University

	programme is required to declare whether they have any criminal convictions. A criminal record does not necessarily prevent a person from studying at the University but declaration enables the University to undertake a risk assessment. **False or misleading information** Where an applicant is suspected of having provided false or misleading information in support of an application the Registrar will conduct an investigation (even if by then the applicant has been enrolled as a candidate). The investigation might result in the application being cancelled or the candidate's programme being terminated. **Changes to programmes – student protection** The University is following the approach of universities in England of putting in place a 'Student Protection' Code which sets out how the University will protect the interests of candidates in certain situations such as the closure of a research degree programme or when making major changes to such a programme. See further the Code on Student Protection (QH:E3). In summary the Student Protection Code provides that the University will not make major changes to a programme that will apply to current or prospective candidates unless the written agreement of those candidates has been obtained. The University will also not withdraw a programme where that withdrawal will affect current or prospective students. Prospective students in this case means those to whom an offer has been made and who have not rejected that offer.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.4** 'Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B2 Expectation** 'Recruitment, selection, and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.'

	UKQC 2014 - Chapter B11 - Indicator 5 'Higher education providers' admissions procedures for research degrees are clear, consistently applied and demonstrate equality of opportunity.' **Indicator 6** 'Only appropriately qualified and prepared applicants are admitted to research degree programmes. Admissions decisions involve at least two members of the higher education provider's staff who have received training and guidance for the selection and admission of research degree students. The decision-making process enables the higher education provider to assure itself that balanced and independent admissions decisions have been made in accordance with its admissions policy.' **Indicator 7** 'Higher education providers define and communicate clearly the responsibilities and entitlements of students undertaking research degree programmes.' **Indicator 8** 'Research students are provided with sufficient information to enable them to begin their studies with an understanding of the environment in which they will be working.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice** 'The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.'
Time limits	▪ notification of the University's decision on the outcome of the application: 20 or 25 days (depending on the nature of the selection process) following the relevant meeting of the RRDC. ▪ acceptance of an offer: within 10 working days ▪ evidence that the conditions of the offer have been met by the applicant: no later than two weeks before commencement of the degree.

D1 – chapter III: Feedback, Appeals and Complaints by Applicants

Purpose of the Chapter	Chapter III sets out the right of applicants for research degrees to lodge an appeal or a complaint relating to the handling of their application. It also details opportunities for applicants and potential applicants to provide feedback to the University on its recruitment, selection and admission process and related activities and information.

Scope	The provisions governing appeals and complaints are specific to applicants and relate only to the admission process. Enrolled students must use the provisions in Chapter X (academic appeals) and G1 (complaints).
Cross-references	Code on Complaints by Students (QH:G1)
Things to watch out for	**Appeals and complaints** An applicant cannot challenge the judgement through which the University determines whether the application is accepted or not; only the process leading to that judgement can be challenged. **Anonymous appeals and complaints** Anonymous appeals will not be considered. Anonymous complaints will only be considered to the extent that the University considers that there may be something useful that can be learned from the complaint which would benefit the University, such as improving the clarity of information or procedures.
Key concepts and definitions	**Definition of appeal and complaint** An Appeal is a request to formally review the outcome of an application for admission to the University, or the conditions of an offer. A Complaint is a specific concern about the standard of service provided by the University in considering an application, whether relating to an action or a failure to act. **Completion of University Procedures** An applicant has the right to take the matter to the Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman where they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal or complaint. The University will include in the notification of the outcome of their appeal or complaint set wording advising them of this right and how to access the Ombudsman service.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.4** 'Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B2 Expectation** 'Recruitment, selection, and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher

	education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice** 'The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.'
Time limits	▪ University response to request for informal resolution of an appeal/complaint: 14 days ▪ Submission of formal appeal or complaint: 30 days from the event/decision which is disputed ▪ Outcome of the investigation notified to applicant: 30 days (unless panel established) ▪ Where Panel established: 14 days' notice to the applicant of the date/time of the panel ▪ Where Panel held, outcome of panel hearing: 5 days

D1 – chapter IV: Supervision

Purpose of the Chapter	This chapter governs the appointment and responsibilities of the Supervisory Team established to formally supervise research degree candidates at each stage of their research from induction through to examination.
Scope	It applies to MPhil and PhD by research. The chapter distinguishes the role and responsibilities of the Primary Supervisor and of other members of the Supervisory Team.
Cross-references	Code on Reasonable Adjustments (QH:E4)
Things to watch out for	**Role of Primary Supervisors** Primary Supervisors have a number of responsibilities designed to ensure that the candidate is properly advised and supported both in relation to their rights and responsibilities and in relation to the progress of their research and the formal stages of progress and review (set out in Chapter V). For candidates admitted to the MPhil, this includes advising them about the process of, and requirements for, applying for a transfer of registration to the PhD (which is part of the process of Confirmation of Candidature).

Key concepts and definitions	**Supervisory Team** Each research degree candidate is entitled to the appointment of a Supervisory Team, including one appointee designated as the Primary Supervisor. Appointments are the responsibility of RRDC. Given the size of the University the Chapter provides broad criteria for who is eligible for appointment. **Supervisor Training** At least one member of the Supervisory Team must have attended one of the University's Supervisor Training Programmes (or equivalent) or undertaken recent relevant continuing professional development.
External reference points	**UKQC 2014 - Chapter B11 – Indicator 9** 'Higher education providers appoint supervisors with the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support and encourage research students, and to monitor their progress effectively.' **Indicator 10** 'Each research student has a supervisory team containing a main supervisor who is the clearly identified point of contact.' **Indicator 11** 'Each research student has a supervisory team containing a main supervisor who is the clearly identified point of contact.' **Indicator 12** 'Higher education providers ensure that individual supervisors have sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities effectively.' **UKQC 2018 – Advice and Guidance: Research Degrees** **Guiding Principle 3** 'Supervisors are appropriately skilled and supported.'
Time limits	None (but Supervisors must be aware of the time limits applicable to each stage of progress and review set out in Chapter V).

D1 – chapter V: Progress and review

Purpose of the Chapter	The MPhil/PhD by research is designed around a series of progression points, the purpose of which is to enable the University to monitor each candidate's progress, and to intervene where progress is unsatisfactory. This approach is designed to prevent a candidate either running out of time without completing the thesis

	or reaching the submission of thesis stage without a realistic chance of success.
Scope	MPhil/PhD by research. The chapter covers the following formal progression points: ▪ approval of the Formal Research Proposal (including approval of the Formal Research Ethics) ▪ completion of the mandatory requirements of the Research Training Programme ▪ annual progress reviews ▪ Confirmation of Candidature (including application for transfer to the PhD where applicable) The chapter also covers the writing-up stage (which is optional but subject to specified criteria).
Cross-references	D1 – Chapter X
Things to watch out for	**Confidentiality** A candidate who, exceptionally, wishes the thesis to remain confidential for a period of time after completion must apply to RRDC. Normally any approval will be for a period not exceeding two years. **Exception to Annual Progress Review requirement** A formal review is required each year (see further below) except in the year in which Confirmation of Candidature is applied for (as this constitutes a very specific form of progress review).
Key concepts and definitions	**Formal Research Proposal** Candidates must apply for approval for their research proposal within nine months of registration (full-time, 18 months part-time). Where approval is not granted at the first attempt the candidate will be granted a further period in which to resubmit. Further non approval will result in either downgrading to MPhil (for PhD candidates) or termination of the programme. Where the final submission will involve material in a language other than English and/or material presented in a format other than textual (e.g. artefacts or any form of creative work), this must be highlighted in the Formal Research Proposal.

	Research Training Programme Candidates are required to complete five elements of the programme in their first year of registration. The primary purpose of the programme is to support students throughout their research but in particular to help them in preparing the Formal Research Proposal. **Research Development Plan** Candidates are required to maintain a Research Development Plan, including recording their research training and related activities, and recording their discussions with their Supervisory Team. The Plan must be submitted as part of the documentation for their annual progress review. **Annual progress review** Annual progress review is a formal process through which each candidate must demonstrate that satisfactory progress is being made with the research, and that all related requirements are being met (such as research training, above). The review is conducted by the Supervisory Team but is subject to the endorsement of RRDC, which may request additional evidence if it considers this necessary to make a judgement. It may also establish a panel to meet with the candidate to assist it in making a decision. **Confirmation of Candidature** Confirmation of Candidature is a specific formal progression point through which the candidate must demonstrate that the work is on track for completion on time and that the work will be able to meet the standards for the award. Confirmation of Candidature is determined by RRDC on the recommendation of a panel established to meet with the candidate, hear the candidate's presentation and conduct a discussion about the research. **Application for transfer to PhD** For a candidate registered for the MPhil, the Confirmation of Candidature can also include an application for transfer to the PhD. In this case a Transfer Report must be submitted alongside the other evidence required. The process is the same as above but the panel is empowered to make appropriate recommendations to RRDC regarding the candidate's suitability for transfer. **Writing-up** A candidate who considers that they have completed sufficient research to enable the thesis to be completed without further full supervision, research training or access to more than basic research facilities can apply to the Director of Academic Programmes and Research to enter the writing-up stage. Reduced fees are charged

	for this period. The application must be supported by the candidate's Supervisory Team and the formal stages of progression (above) must have been satisfied.
External reference points	**UKQC 2014 – B11** **Indicator 13** 'Higher education providers put in place clearly defined mechanisms for monitoring and supporting research student progress, including formal and explicit reviews of progress at different stages. Research students, supervisors and other relevant staff are made aware of progress monitoring mechanisms, including the importance of keeping appropriate records of the outcomes of meetings and related activities.' **Indicator 14** 'Research students have appropriate opportunities for developing research, personal and professional skills. Each research student's development needs are identified and agreed jointly by the student and appropriate staff at the start of the degree; these are regularly reviewed and updated as appropriate.' **UKQC 2018 – Advice and Guidance: Research Degrees** **Guiding Principle 4** 'Research students are afforded opportunities for professional development.' **Guiding Principle 5** 'Progression monitoring is clearly defined and operated.'
Time limits	**Formal Research Proposal** ▪ application within 9 months of registration for candidates registered full-time and within 18 months of registration for candidates registered part-time. ▪ candidate informed within 20 working days of the decision of RRDC. ▪ resubmission (where required) within three months (full-time) and six months (part-time) **Annual progress review** ▪ required no later than each anniversary of first registration (except the 12-month period in which Confirmation of Candidature is applied for). **Confirmation of Candidature (all candidates)** ▪ application no later than: ▪ 18 months after initial registration for MPhil candidates, 36 months part-time ▪ 24 months for PhD, 48 months if part-time

	▪ Candidate informed of Panel recommendations (to RRDC) within 10 days of the panel meeting; informed of RRDC final decision within 5 days of the RRDC meeting **Writing-up stage** ▪ Submission of thesis within 12 months (full-time) and 24 months (part-time) of permission being granted.

D1 – chapter VI: Submission of the thesis

Purpose of the Chapter	Sets out the requirements and deadlines for submission of the final thesis (dissertation in the case of the MPhil) for examination. (All references to 'thesis' are to be taken as references to the 'dissertation' for MPhil's unless expressly indicated otherwise).
Scope	All research degrees
Cross-references	Code on Reasonable Adjustments (QH:E4)
Things to watch out for	**Agreement of Primary Supervisor** The candidate is expected to obtain the agreement of the Primary Supervisor before submitting the thesis. However, exceptionally and following attempts at mediation, the candidate may submit in the absence of such agreement. In all cases the opinion of the Primary Supervisor about whether the thesis is likely to pass is not a guarantee and is not binding on the examiners.
Key concepts and definitions	**Notice of intention to submit** Part of the purpose of the candidate being required to give no less than three months' notice is to enable the examiners to be appointed. At that point if the candidate does not have in place reasonable adjustments appropriate for the examination they must inform the Student Experience Office so that suitable arrangements can be discussed and agreed with them and the Director of Academic Programmes and Research. **Format of the thesis** The Chapter prescribes the maximum word length (which takes account of the discipline in which the research is based, the nature of the content and sets different limits for PhD theses and MPhil dissertations). It also prescribes the manner of presentation of the work, including the need for a declaration form, abstract and references. Theses must be submitted for examination in a form of

	temporary binding, to be replaced by permanent binding after the award of the degree has been approved.
External reference points	(No explicit references)
Time limits	**Submission of the thesis** Within the maximum period of registration for the degree unless an extension has been granted by RRDC.

D1 – chapter VII: Research Misconduct

Purpose of the Chapter	This Chapter sets out the University's commitment to the effective but fair investigation of allegations of research misconduct. It reflects the University's firm belief that the interests of the vast majority of students who do not cheat in any way must be protected, and in turn the integrity of the University's awards and reputation must be protected. The University expects all research candidates to possess a clear understanding of academic integrity and the skills of good academic practice appropriate to the discipline in which their research will be based. Therefore the penalty will normally be termination of the candidate's degree registration. The Chapter defines the process for investigating and determining allegations of research misconduct, whether plagiarism or other misconduct, and sets out the penalties which can be imposed where misconduct is proven.
Scope	Research degrees (academic misconduct in relation to taught programmes is addressed in Code on Academic Misconduct (QH:C7)).
Cross-references	Code on Academic Misconduct (QH:C7) Code on Reasonable Adjustments (QH:E4) D1 – Chapter X relating to appeals
Things to watch out for	**Extending the investigation** A case to answer (see below) may also result in the Director of Academic Programmes and Research directing that other work by the candidate be investigated where there is reason to believe that other work might also be plagiarised or be the result of some other form of research misconduct.

	Mitigating circumstances Mitigating circumstances normally do not provide justification for plagiarism or other forms of cheating. They will be considered, either following initial consideration of an offence or on appeal, only where they are considered to be very exceptional. **Applications following termination of programme** The University will not consider an application from a prospective student for any short course, professional certificate or (HE) programme where that student has previously had their programme terminated for academic misconduct.
Key concepts and definitions	**Research misconduct** Any conduct by a candidate which may give that candidate an illegitimate or unfair advantage or benefit for themselves or another or which may create a disadvantage or loss for another. The Table in the Chapter sets out more detailed definitions of each type of misconduct (though the table is not exhaustive). **Plagiarism** Presenting the work of others (e.g., thoughts, ideas, writing, images, artefacts) as one's own without proper acknowledgement. **Turnitin** All candidates are expected to produce a Turnitin report on their Formal Research Proposal, chapter submissions for Confirmation of Candidature, their thesis and resubmitted thesis (where resubmission is required). **Case to answer** The Director of Academic Programmes and Research is responsible for determining if there is 'clear evidence' of research misconduct and therefore a case to answer. If there is no case to answer the matter is closed. **Research Misconduct Panels** Panels are responsible for determining allegations, for ensuring a fair process, and if the Panel judges the allegation proven, for determining the penalty in accordance with the published requirements. As the penalty will normally be termination the penalty is also subject to confirmation by Academic Board. **Retrospective investigation** Progression through a research degree or even award or conferment are not bars to an allegation being investigated and, if proven, penalised. The University is empowered to revoke a

	qualification in specified circumstances; the decision to revoke rests with the Academic Board
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Guideline to Standard 1.1** 'Quality assurance policies are most effective when they reflect the relationship between research and learning & teaching and take account of both the national context in which the institution operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach. Such a policy supports: -- academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B6, Indicator 14** 'Higher education providers operate processes for preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to unacceptable academic practice.' **UKQC 2018 –Advice and Guidance: Assessment** **Guiding Principle 10** 'Assessment encourages academic integrity.'
Time limits	▪ Referral of an allegation to the Director of Academic Programmes and Research: without delay ▪ Determination of a case to answer: 20 working days ▪ Informing the student of case/no case to answer: without delay ▪ Submission of response by student to case to answer: 15 working days ▪ Notification of the date, time and location of an AM Panel: no fewer than 10 working days ▪ Student's explanation of the misconduct accepted and case closed: without delay ▪ Notification of the outcome of the Panel: 48 hours ▪ Notification of consideration of fresh evidence: without delay ▪ Submission of an appeal: 20 working days of being notified of the outcome of the Panel decision

D1 – chapter VIII: Examination of the thesis

Purpose of the Chapter	This Chapter governs the examination of the thesis submitted in accordance with Chapter VI above. It addresses the appointment of the examiners (internal and external), the appointment of an independent chair for the viva voce, the criteria to be used by the

	examiners, and the recommendations which the examiners are permitted to make.
Scope	Applies to both the MPhil/PhD by research and by publication. (All references to 'thesis' are to be taken as references to the 'dissertation' for MPhil's unless expressly indicated otherwise).
Cross-references	Chapter X: Appeals
Things to watch out for	**Dispensing with the viva voce** Where all the examiners are independently of the opinion that the thesis is so unsatisfactory that no useful purpose would be served by conducting a viva voce, they may recommend in their preliminary reports that the RRDC dispense with the viva voce and refer the thesis for further work. In such cases the examiners must provide the RRDC with written guidance for the candidate concerning the deficiencies of the thesis. The examiners are not permitted to recommend that a candidate fail outright without holding a viva voce. Where the candidate has been permitted to resubmit the thesis following first examination, the examiners conducting the re-examination may also dispense with a second viva voce where they consider the revisions are either satisfactory or unsatisfactory but the criteria for the award have been met. **Role of the Supervisory Team at the viva voce** Members of the Supervisory Team attend solely as observers and must not attempt to contribute to the examination unless (and exceptionally) they are specifically invited to do so by the Chair. Where such an invitation is made the fact of, and reason for, must be recorded by the Chair. **Minor amendments** Where the examiners recommend the award of the degree, subject to minor amendments, RRDC cannot recommend the award to Academic Board until the minor amendments have been completed by the candidate to the satisfaction of the internal examiner.
Key concepts and definitions	**Examiners** The thesis must be examined by one internal examiner and two external examiners (unless the candidate is also a member of staff of the University, in which case the internal examiner is replaced by a third external examiner). The Chapter defines the criteria for both internal and external examiners. Appointment of all examiners is a

	matter for Academic Board on the recommendation of the Chair of the Research and Research Degrees Committee **External examiners** External examiners for research degrees play a fundamentally different role compared with those for taught programmes in that for research degrees they are directly involved in reading the thesis, conducting the viva voce and determining the outcomes for the individual candidate. **Chair of the viva voce** The University has adopted the practice in the UK of requiring that the viva voce is chaired by a member of staff who is independent in the sense of not having had any direct involvement in the supervision or assessment of the candidate. The responsibilities of the chair are primarily to ensure that the viva voce is conducted in a fair and rigorous manner and in accordance with the University's procedures (as set out in this Academic Regulations: Research Degrees). **Examination outcomes** The Chapter defines the outcomes which the examiners are permitted to recommend following their consideration of the thesis and the conducting of the viva voce. The examiners are required to submit a joint report and recommendation to the RRDC. The recommendation is subject to the final approval of Academic Board where it involves the recommendation for the award of the degree. Where the examiners cannot agree on their recommendation they must submit separate reports, with RRDC responsible for deciding how to proceed. **Examiners' report for the candidate** Where the outcome of the viva voce examination is other than the award of the degree for which the candidate was registered, the candidate must be provided within 10 working days of the meeting of RRDC with a joint statement of the examiners which sets out the reasons for the decision, and makes explicit the ways in which the thesis does not satisfy the standards required for the degree, and makes explicit requirements for further work.
External reference points	**UKQC 2014 - Chapter B11** **Indicator 16** 'Higher education providers that are research degree awarding bodies use criteria for assessing research degrees that enable them to define their academic standards and the achievements of their

	graduates. The criteria used to assess research degrees are clear and readily available to research students, staff and examiners.' **Indicator 17** 'Research degree final assessment procedures are clear and are operated rigorously, fairly, and consistently. They include input from an external examiner and are carried out to a reasonable timescale. Assessment procedures are communicated clearly to research students, supervisors and examiners.' **UKQC 2018 – Advice and Guidance: Research Degrees** **Guiding Principle 6** 'Higher education providers offer clear guidance and processes on assessment for research degrees.'
Time limits	**Preliminary Assessment of the Thesis** ▪ provision of the thesis to each examiner no less than one month prior to the date of the viva voce ▪ provision of independent preliminary report on the thesis by each examiner to the chair of RRDC no later than 10 days before the viva voce **Conducting the viva voce** ▪ not less than one month and not more than three months of the date of receipt of the thesis by the examiners **Examination outcomes** ▪ the examiners must submit a joint report and recommendation to the Chair of RRDC within 10 working days of the viva voce ▪ where the examiners cannot agree they must submit separate reports and recommendations to the RRDC within five working days of the viva voce ▪ the candidate must be informed of RRDC's decision, and the reasons for it, within five working days ▪ where the award of the degree is not recommended the examiners must provide their joint statement to the candidate within 10 days **Resubmission** ▪ minor amendments: resubmission within six months ▪ Resubmission for re-examination: 12 months ▪ Resubmission for the MPhil following re-examination: three months

D1 – chapter IX: Award and conferment

Purpose of the Chapter	The chapter sets out the arrangements and requirements for the award and conferment of research degrees, including the power to revoke degrees. It also covers the award of Aegrotat awards, including those made posthumously.
Scope	All research degrees
Cross-references	D1 – chapter I
Things to watch out for	**Students in debt** A student will not be provided with an Official Transcript, be awarded a qualification or be permitted to participate in a degree or other ceremony to recognise an award where they are in debt to the University for the payment of tuition fees, provided the sum involved is greater than £50.
Key concepts and definitions	**Aegrotat awards** A research degree can be awarded as an Aegrotat in exceptional circumstances where a candidate is unable to complete their studies for compelling reasons (including death or serious illness). The premise of the award is that the candidate would have successfully completed but for the exceptional circumstances. Awards can be made posthumously. The final decision rests with Academic Board. The award certificate never mentions that it is an Aegrotat award. In the case of research degrees, Aegrotats may be more important compared with taught programmes because of the absence of a credit accumulation process enabling Exit awards to be made as an alternative. **Award and conferment** Qualifications are first awarded and then conferred. Award occurs when Academic Board (as the senior academic authority) approves the results sent to it by RRDC. Conferment takes place at a ceremony (although some students may choose to graduate *in absentia*) and is evidenced through a Certificate which bears the date of the ceremony. Research degree candidates will also be provided with an Official Transcript to evidence their research training programme achievements. **Revocation** The University (though Academic Board) can revoke a qualification or credit on one of three grounds: administrative error, academic or

	research misconduct, misrepresentation of entry qualifications/experience.
External reference points	(no explicit reference – but see chapter I)
Time limits	None

D1 – chapter X: Student engagement, complaints and academic appeals

Purpose of the Chapter	This chapter sets out the arrangements for: ▪ opportunities for research degrees candidates to engage in a partnership with the University (by cross-referencing to the Code on Students as Partners (QH:F1)) ▪ research candidates to make a complaint where they are dissatisfied with an action or lack of action by the University, or with the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University (this cross-refers to Code on Complaints by Students (QH:G1)) ▪ research candidates to lodge an academic appeal against a decision relating to their status or progress as a research candidate and regarding the examination of their thesis.
Scope	The Chapter applies to students on research degrees. Appeals by applicants relating to the decision whether to admit them to a research degree are addressed in the Chapter III.
Cross-references	Code on Students as Partners (QH:F1) Code on Complaints by Students (QH:G1)
Things to watch out for	**Local resolution** Candidates are encouraged to try and resolve the matter informally. This might involve seeking confirmation that the decision has been properly made in accordance with University's requirements (primarily these Academic Regulations: Research Degrees). This is termed 'verification.' An appeal cannot be resolved informally if that involves revising an examination decision. If the University identifies that an error has been made it can however refer the matter back to the relevant decision-making body for it to revise the decision. **Graduates cannot appeal** Graduating (whether involving attendance at the degree ceremony or having the award conferred *in absentia*) constitutes acceptance

	of the award and all examination decisions which led to the award. An appeal cannot therefore be pursued if the student graduates before the appeal has been resolved. Complaints (see G1) are not subject to this limitation. **Right to be accompanied** A candidate has the right to be accompanied at an appeal hearing by a person of their choosing. This is not restricted to a member of staff or another student. However, the person in question is not the advocate of the student and cannot speak to the Appeal Panel unless invited to do so by the Chair of the Panel. As the process is intended to be appropriate for an internal matter of the University, neither the appellant or the University can be legally represented at the hearing. **Consequences of a successful appeal** If an Appeal Panel upholds the appeal the decision which is the subject of the appeal is immediately rendered void and therefore invalid. The Panel can then make one or more directions, for example requiring the original decision-maker to reconsider its decision unaffected by the factors which justified the appeal. The Appeal Panel cannot award or change the award of any qualification (and cannot, for example, upgrade a candidate to PhD from MPhil).
Key concepts and definitions	**Definition of academic appeal** An academic appeal is a challenge to an academic decision such as the recommendation of the examiners as to whether the thesis meets the standards for the award, or decisions relating to applications for mitigating circumstances, or extensions. The appeal seeks a change to that decision. (See under G1 for Complaints). **Malicious, frivolous or vexatious** The University will not consider appeals which are judged to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious. This includes appeals which are harassing, repetitive, abusive or seeking unreasonable or unrealistic outcomes. **Appeals Panel** Where there appear to be valid grounds for appeal Research and Research Degrees Committee will establish an Appeals Panel to meet with the candidate and relevant staff, hear the evidence and determine the outcome of the appeal.

	Grounds for appeal An appeal can be lodged on three grounds relating to procedural irregularity, mitigating circumstances, and bias or prejudice on the part of the decision makers. **Academic judgement** An appeal cannot be lodged against academic judgement, such as the judgement of the examiners as to the merit of the thesis, or the decision as to whether a valid claim for an extension has been made. **Review** A candidate whose appeal is rejected by an Appeal Panel or who is otherwise dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal may seek a review of the appeal by writing to the Vice-Chancellor (VC). If the VC considers there are grounds the matter may be remitted to an ad hoc panel involving staff not so far involved in the appeal in any way. **Completion of University Procedures** A student has the right to take the matter to the Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman where they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of their appeal. The University will include in the notification of the outcome of their appeal set wording advising them of this right and how to access the Ombudsman service.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.3** The Standards do not make explicit reference to appeals but they are addressed in the Guidelines under Standard 1.3: 'A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B9 Expectation** 'Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B11** **Indicator 15** 'Higher education providers put in place mechanisms to collect, review and respond as appropriate to evaluations from those concerned with research degrees, including individual research students and groups of research students or their representatives. Evaluations are considered openly and constructively and the results are communicated appropriately.'

	Indicator 18 'Higher education providers put in place and promote independent and formal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals that are fair, clear to all concerned, robust, and applied consistently. The acceptable grounds for complaints and appeals are clearly defined.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice (Quality)** 'The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.'
Time limits	▪ submission of formal appeal to the Registrar: within 20 working days of the date of notification of the decision to which the appeal relates ▪ acknowledgement of receipt of the appeal by the Registrar: 5 working days ▪ meeting of appeals panel where required: within 30 working days of the date of receipt of the notice of appeal. ▪ informing student of the outcome of the appeal hearing: within 10 working days of the hearing. ▪ request for a review of an appeal: within 10 working days of notification of the Appeal Panel's decision.

Section E – Information, Advice, Guidance and Support (all provision)

Section E contains five Codes which relate to information for students - including setting out students' rights, code of conduct- and arrangements for providing advice and support to students.

E1 Information, Advice and Student Support

Purpose of the Code	This Code sets out the ways in which the University will ensure that the information it makes available about its higher education provision is fit-for-purpose, accessible and trustworthy. It also sets out the arrangements for providing advice, guidance and support to students at each stage of their studies. Providing information to current students underpins the University's commitment to working with students as partners, enabling them to contribute to the management of higher education provision on an informed basis. Information for the wider public is part of the University's broader responsibility for being transparent and accountable for its actions. Providing advice, guidance and support to students is designed to enable all students, irrespective of their individual circumstances, to

	take full advantage of the opportunities provided by their programme.
Scope	Chapter I applies to information which is intended for prospective, current, and former students and for the wider public. Chapter II is primarily concerned with current students from the point at which they are entitled to enrol on a programme and throughout their studies. (For prospective students reference should also be made to the Code on Recruitment, Selection and Admission (QH:C3) relating to the process of applying to the University for taught programmes and D1 – chapter II for research degrees.)
Cross-references	Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) Code on Programme Approval (QH:C2) Code on Recruitment, Selection and Admission (QH:C3) Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2) Code on Student Protection (QH:E3) Code on Students as Partners (QH:F1)
Things to watch out for	**Student handbooks** Students must be informed when handbooks are available and be informed if changes are made to a handbook in-year, including providing a summary of the changes and the reasons for those changes. **Rights and responsibilities** The University has obligations to ensure that prospective and current students are properly informed about their rights and responsibilities as part of the legally binding relationship with the University. These are highlighted in the Code and in the formal document setting out the Terms and Conditions of the contract, which is sent to applicants when they are made an offer. See Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2). **Partnership** The Code reiterates the idea of working in partnership with students both in relation to the management of quality (see Code on Students as Partners (QH:F1)) and in their learning, teaching and assessment. This includes the idea that students can be expected to take an increasing responsibility for their learning as they move through their programme.

Key concepts and definitions	**Fit-for-purpose, accessible and trustworthy** The University interprets these terms to mean that information meets the needs of diverse audiences, can be readily located and understood and can be relied upon as the basis for making informed decisions. **Managing information** Chapter I defines how the University meets its obligations through: ▪ ensuring that information is provided by those persons best qualified to provide it ▪ assigning clear responsibilities for managing information in all its forms ▪ the systematic monitoring and updating of information taking into account feedback from internal (and where applicable) external stakeholders. **Responsibilities** The Code includes a table which identifies which University staff or committees are responsible for developing the content and format of information and for approving that content and format. **Definitive record of programmes** This is the record maintained by the Registrar of the final approved version of each programme and of previous versions (when applicable). See further Code on Programme Approval (QH:C2), chapter V. **Academic Partnerships and Collaborative Provision register** This is the publicly available record of the University's formal arrangements with other organisations (universities, employers) to provide higher education whether leading to the University's awards or those of another degree-awarding body. **Official Transcript** This is the formal document which (for taught programmes) records each student's academic achievements at module and overall programme level. For research students it records any research training modules. See further Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) and Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1). Students in debt for tuition fees will not be provided with their Transcript until the debt has been cleared. **Holistic approach** Chapter II is designed to take a holistic approach in that it seeks to enable students to develop the skills that will help their development, skills both to manage their academic development (including opportunities such as placement learning) and to help

	their transition from their programme to employment or further study.
External reference points	**Information** **ESG 2015 – Standard 1.8** 'Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.' **UKQC 2014 – Part C Expectation** 'Higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the learning opportunities they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.' In the UK higher education students are regarded in law as consumers and therefore consumer protection legislation applies to the relationship between universities and their students. This obligation is reflected in the University's approach in this and related Codes. **Advice, Guidance and Support** **ESG 2015 – Standard 1.6** 'Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.' **UKQC 2014 – B4 Expectation** 'Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.' **UKQC 2018 – Expectation** 'From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice (Quality)** 'The provider has sufficient and appropriate … student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.' 'The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.'
Time limits	These will depend on the stage of the programme, for example ensuring that students have the right information to enable them to enrol.

E2 Student Contract – Terms and Conditions

Purpose of the Code	This document sets out the legally binding Terms and Conditions which form part of every contract between a student admitted to a University programme and the University. Applicants for a programme must be provided with a copy of this document when they are offered a place as at that point they are deciding whether to contract with the University on the Terms and Conditions set out in the offer. Prior to enrolment they must be given a further opportunity to review the document to ensure they are clear about the obligations involved. The document is set out and approved by the University as a Code within the Quality Handbook but it is also designed to be a free-standing document which will be sent to applicants in a 'durable medium' (that is a pdf which cannot be altered in that form) as well as being easily accessible on the University's website. The Code is therefore written in the style of talking directly to applicants and students.
Scope	The Code applies to all of the University's provision which leads to the award of a higher education qualification.
Cross-references	Code on Recruitment, Selection and Admission (QH:C3) Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) Code on Student Protection (QH:E3)
Things to watch out for	**Additional study costs** For some programmes students may incur additional study costs (not necessarily payable to the University). Applicants must be informed at the time of the offer what these costs will be for and the anticipated amounts so that their decision to take up a place on the programme is properly informed about all costs involved in addition to the tuition fees. The Code also makes clear that in certain circumstances the University has the right to levy penalties for non-payment of fees and fines.
Key concepts and definitions	**Significant or unusual Terms** A prospective student without experience of higher education might not anticipate some of the powers that a University typically has in relation to students and some of the limitations that apply in progressing through a programme. The Code therefore seeks to

	make such matters clear, for example the power to exclude a student or terminate their programme or to revoke an award. **Right to cancel** The Code applies the principle that there should be a right to cancel where the student changes their mind within 14 days of accepting the offer. No reason needs to be given for cancellation. **Responsibilities of the University** The Code summarises the responsibilities of the University in providing the learning and teaching, facilities and services and other opportunities which make up a higher education experience at the University. These include handling complaints and appeals properly and in accordance with the applicable Codes. **Responsibilities of students** The Code also sets out the main obligations of students including complying with the conditions of enrolment, with published procedures, and any additional requirements arising from (for example) undertaking a placement. **Applicable Codes and regulations** To assist students in understanding the range of codes and regulations that apply to them as part of the contract and which are necessary for the good governance and effective operation of the University, the Code provides a table highlighting the Codes, their purpose and how to access them (through weblinks).
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.8** 'Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.' **UKQC 2014 – Part C Expectation** 'Higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the learning opportunities they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.' In the UK higher education students are regarded in law as consumers and therefore consumer protection legislation applies to the relationship between universities and their students. This obligation is reflected in the University's approach in this and related Codes.
Time limits	Applicants must be provided with a copy of the Terms and Conditions with their offer of a place.

E3 Code on Student Protection

Purpose of the Code	This Code sets out the University's approach to the closure of any aspect of its facilities or academic provision which could have an adverse effect on the interests of current or prospective students. It is designed to ensure that their interests are protected. It also sets out the approach in the event that the University is unable to deliver a material component of a programme which could have an adverse effect on the interests of current or prospective students. The Code is part of the Terms and Conditions of the contract between the University and each student.
Scope	The Code applies to all provision which leads to the award of the University's higher education qualifications. The majority of provisions apply equally to taught programmes and research degrees. Where there are differences this is made explicit in the text.
Cross-references	Code on Programme Approval (QH:C2) Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2) Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1)
Things to watch out for	**Changes to programmes** Major amendments to programmes (see material changes below) cannot be made to a programme where they are to be applied to current students unless the written agreement of students is obtained.
Key concepts and definitions	**Planned and unplanned events** The Code addresses both planned and unplanned events. The former are those where the University makes a positive decision to act for example closing a campus, building, or programme. Unplanned events are those which are not readily foreseeable or which lie outside the control of the University. The Code includes some of the reasons why the University would plan certain events and possible causes of unplanned events. **Prospective students** This means those to whom an offer of a place has been made which has either been accepted or been deferred. The Code applies

	equally to such students and to current students (which includes those who are on placement or have interrupted their studies). **Material changes** This means 'major amendments' to a programme as defined in the Code on Programme Approval (QH:C2) for taught programmes. A material change is one which fundamentally changes the terms of the contract with each student and for that reason if the change is to apply to a current student (including prospective as defined above) the written agreement of the student must be obtained before approval can be granted. **Teaching out** Whenever possible the University will teach out a programme before withdrawing it; that is enabling current students to complete the programme. Where that is not possible (for example because of an unplanned event) the University will apply the Code and discuss with affected students options which might include transferring students to another programme or another University, or making a refund and/or compensation.
External reference points	The Code is based on practice in England, primarily driven by the regulatory body, the Office for Students.
Time limits	Where an unplanned event occurs, or seems reasonably likely to occur, the University will immediately inform all students likely to be affected

E4 Reasonable Adjustments

Purpose of the Code	This Code sets out the University's arrangements for providing reasonable adjustments and alternative assessment arrangements for students with disabilities, long-term or mental health conditions.
Scope	The Code applies to any aspect of the student learning experience, including all learning, teaching and assessment in taught programmes and to all forms of research and assessment in research degrees. The focus is on ensuring that the needs of individual students can be met to minimise barriers to equality of opportunity for all students. While the focus of the Code is on disability (see below), support will also be provided to students who are pregnant, have recently had a baby or who are a carer; arrangements will be made for students

	unable to comply fully with the published assessment requirements for reasons of religious observance
Cross-references	Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) Code on Programme Approval (QH:C2) Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1)
Things to watch out for	**Academic standards** Making reasonable adjustments are designed to meet individual needs but do not involve making changes to the academic standards of the award, and therefore do not involve changes to the intended learning outcomes (taught programmes) or standards and criteria (research degrees). **Mitigating circumstances** A student who has a SORA (see below) in place can still use the mitigating circumstances procedure where additional short term assistance is required, typically where they experience a short term change in their condition, or where a new condition develops which is not covered by the existing SORA.
Key concepts and definitions	**Disability** Although not applicable in Gibraltar, the University is using the definition set out in the UK's Equality Act (2010) namely a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities. The phrase 'long-term' generally means a condition which has lasted, or is likely to last, 12 months or more. **Inclusive Design** The idea of designing programmes (including teaching and assessment) which takes account of the likely needs of all students to reduce the extent to which adjustments need to be made for individual students. (See further Code on Programme Approval (QH:C2).) **Statement of Reasonable Adjustments (SORA)** The SORA is developed with the student, Programme Coordinator/Supervisory Team and where appropriate is based on expert advice. It sets out the reasonable adjustments that are needed covering all aspects of their learning, teaching and assessment.

	Alternative Assessment arrangements Exceptionally reasonable adjustments may not be sufficient to remove barriers for an individual student, in which case changes to the assessment process may be required.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.6** No specific reference in the Standards but the Guidelines for Standard 1.6 include: The needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities), … are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources and student support. **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B4 Expectation** 'Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.' Indicator 3 provides: 'A commitment to equity guides higher education providers in enabling student development and achievement.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B6 Expectation** 'Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.' Indicator 10 provides: 'Through inclusive design wherever possible, and through individual reasonable adjustments wherever required, assessment tasks provide every student with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice** 'The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.' Advice and Guidance on Assessment includes the following Guiding Principle: 'Assessment is inclusive and equitable'. And see further the Advice and Guidance on Enabling Student Achievement, Guiding Principles 2 and 5: 'Clear, accessible and inclusive policies and procedures to enable students and staff to identify when support mechanisms may be required for academic and personal progression.'

	'Equality of opportunity for all students to develop academic and professional skills.'
Time limits	Students are encouraged to disclose their needs during the application process but can also do so at any time during their programme. Timing of the disclosure may have an impact on the University's ability to put in place adjustments depending on their complexity, for example prior to the next assessment.

E5 – Student Code of Conduct: Disciplinary Procedures

Purpose of the Code	In addition to setting out conduct which is deemed unacceptable the Code sets out the disciplinary procedure which will be used when it is believed that a student has engaged in misconduct. It therefore sets out the rights of the student alleged to have engaged in misconduct, and the rights of those who are alleged victims of such conduct, especially their right to report an allegation. It also emphasises the importance of, and right to, support throughout the process for both an accused and an alleged victim. The role of the officer is referred to throughout this code. The officer will typically be the Registrar and other officer will be the Chief Financial & Operations Officer (CFOO). Should the Registrar or CFOO be unable to deal with the situation, another member of the University Executive Team will be appointed. Appeals will be escalated to the Vice-Chancellor (or appointed deputy).
Scope	The University's authority for setting out a Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure applicable to students is based on the formal legal contract which students enter into when they accept the offer of a place on a University course or programme (of whatever level or duration). This Code and Disciplinary Procedure therefore forms part of the Terms and Conditions set out in the Student Contract Terms and Conditions (Code E2).
Cross-references	Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) Student Contract Terms and Conditions (QH:E2) Code on Complaints by Students (QH:G1)

Things to watch out for	All allegations of misconduct will be investigated and, if proven, penalised in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Where an allegation of misconduct is made by one student against another, the University will endeavour to ensure that both parties receive appropriate information and support, including about the investigatory process that will be followed and the possible outcomes, and each student's entitlement to access specialist support services (whether internal or external to the University). Staff will also determine whether any modifications should be made to existing study arrangements, for example if the two students concerned are on the same programme. Particular attention will also be paid to the potential impact on each student's performances and ability to undertake assessments: for example, action under the absence with good cause procedures may be appropriate to allow deferral of assessments. It will endeavour to do this to support both students and will not make or indicate any presumption about the validity of the allegation until the matter has been investigated and determined by a Student Disciplinary Panel or the legal authorities (where the matter is also reported to the police). Powers to take precautionary action are set out in paras 46-51. Where the officer or another member of staff has reason to believe that the alleged misconduct is the result of or significantly influenced by the mental health, illness or disability of the student in question, the officer must seek independent, appropriate advice before determining whether to proceed with an investigation under this Code and Disciplinary Procedure and/or whether to recommend alternative action such as the suspension of the student's studies under paras 46-51. They may also require the student to seek independent advice such as a medical report. **Malicious, frivolous or vexatious complaints** The University will not process allegations that are deemed to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious in that they are obsessive, harassing, exaggerating or repetitive, abusive in tone or language, insistent on pursuing unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes, designed to cause disruption or annoyance, or demanding disproportionate redress. The University reserves the right to terminate the allegation process at any time where a complaint is judged malicious, frivolous or vexatious. The determination of whether the allegations are deemed to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious will typically be made by the Officer or other Officer.

	A student who submits an allegation which is malicious, frivolous or vexatious may be subject to disciplinary action under this Code and Disciplinary Procedure. **Precautionary action** A student who is alleged to have committed misconduct under this Code and Disciplinary Procedure may be subject to precautionary action for a defined period of time where the officer, in consultation with the other officer, considers that this is necessary.
Penalties and types of misconduct	Penalties are set out for: • Aggravated misconduct • Non aggravated misconduct
Grounds for appeal	An appeal may be submitted only on one or more of the following grounds: (a) where there is evidence that there has been a significant procedural irregularity in the conduct of the Panel of a kind that would have made a material difference to the outcome (b) that based on the evidence available to the Panel, the outcome is unreasonable (including that the penalty is disproportionate to the misconduct in question) (c) that there is new evidence which was not available at the time of the Panel hearing for legitimate reasons and which would have made a material difference to the outcome.

Section F – Students as partners (all provision)

Section F contains one Code which is focused on student engagement.

F1 – Students as Partners

Purpose of the Code	This Code sets out the University's commitment to working with students as partners in monitoring and enhancing their learning experience, through providing opportunities for students to express their views and ideas individually and collectively. Part of this commitment involves seeking to establish a culture and environment in which students feel confident to give their views knowing that they will be listened to and that either the University will take action or will explain the reasons for not taking action. Partnership is based on providing students with information so that they can make informed contributions and through two way dialogue through which students are consulted on the University's

	ideas and proposals for improvements as well as being able to give their own ideas.
Scope	The Code applies to all provision - taught programmes and research degrees - which leads to the award of the University's higher education qualifications. (Some aspects of the Code will appear taught programme-focused as they relate to processes which only apply to taught programmes but the principles clearly apply to all higher education provision.) Chapter I sets out arrangements for student representation through Student-Staff Liaison Committees, and as members on University committees and panels. Chapter II sets out arrangements for obtaining the views and ideas of all students, primarily through student surveys conducted institution-wide (by the Student Experience Office) at key points of the student journey, and through programme and module surveys (and see further the appendices).
Cross-references	Code on Programme Approval (QH:C2) Code on Programme Monitoring and Review (QH:C12) Code on Periodic Review (QH:C13) Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) Code on Complaints by Students (QH:G1)
Things to watch out for	**Training and support** Providing training for students to support their engagement with staff is recognised in the UK and elsewhere as sound practice. Opportunities should be appropriate to the role in question and proportionate given the size of the University but should ensure that students are clear about their role (whether on the SSLC or a University panel) and any procedures and limitations which apply to that role. Training should be developed with students, for example using existing student representatives to contribute to the design and delivery of the training drawing on their first-hand experience. **Independence** Members of programme approval and complaints panels have to be independent of the matters under consideration. For example, in the case of programme approval, not being a student on the programme. For a small organisation this can make selection of panel members more difficult. (See further pool of students, below).
Key concepts and definitions	**Working in partnership with students** The University believes in developing an effective partnership with students based on a positive culture and an environment in which

	students feel confident to participate. The Code identifies a number of approaches which help achieve that environment including: ▪ sharing of information with students ▪ a two-way dialogue ▪ providing reasons for decisions ▪ a commitment by students to give their time, ideas and opinions ▪ a commitment by the University to develop and support students in representative roles and provide recognition of their contributions. **Student-Staff Liaison Committees** A SSLC is required for each programme as a key mechanism for engaging with student representatives who are elected by all students on each programme. **Student representative role description** Having a role description helps potential representatives to understand the commitments they would be entering into if elected, and also helps the University in providing recognition of students' contributions by making reference to the specifics of the role. **Standing Items** The Code identifies a number of standing items for SSLC meetings (either for every meeting or once a year) designed to ensure the effective operation of the committees (e.g. approving minutes of the previous meeting) or designed to ensure effective engagement (such as discussion of enhancement plans and activities or of the external examiner's report for the programme). (Some of the standing items are only applicable to taught programmes.) **Limitations** SSLCs must not discuss individual students or staff or personal complaints or grievances. **SSLC annual reports** Chairs and secretaries of each SSLC are encouraged to produce a report towards the end of the academic year which summarises the work of the committee and evaluates the effectiveness of the committee (including any lessons learned or good practice identified). This approach is now used in a number of institutions in the UK and helps the University evaluate the effectiveness of the SSLC system and helps incoming student representatives to understand what has happened in previous years.

	Recognition Developing ways to recognise the contributions of students is important both in developing a culture of encouraging students to participate and in supporting them for example when applying for employment. Many universities have some form of annual conference for student representatives and provide for certification to confirm the nature and extent of each student's contribution. In the case of membership of specific panels (chapter III) the Code indicates that students will also be a paid a fee for their work. **Membership of University panels: pool of students** The Code proposes the establishment of a pool of students willing and considered suitable to sit on the specified University panels. Having a pool of students therefore makes it easier to establish a panel as and when required for programme approval or complaints, including ensuring (in the latter case) that there are students who are independent of the complaint in question. **Monitoring and review** Academic Quality and Standards Committee is responsible for monitoring the Code and the effectiveness of its implementation.
External reference points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.1** Not explicitly covered but referenced in the supporting Guidelines such as: 'Quality assurance policies are most effective when they reflect the relationship between research and learning & teaching and take account of both the national context in which the institution operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach. Such a policy supports departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units as well as those of institutional leadership, individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance.' **Guideline to Standard 1.9** 'Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B5 Expectation** 'Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.'

	UKQC 2018 – Core Practice (Quality) 'The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.'
Time limits	Elections for Student-Staff Liaison Committees should take place early in the academic year to ensure that training can take place and the committees can begin their work SSLC members must be given a minimum of 14 days' notice of meetings.

Section G – Complaints by students (all provision)

Section G contains one Code setting out the arrangements for students making complaints.

G1 – Complaints by Students

Purpose of the Code	This document sets out the University's arrangements for investigating and seeking to resolve complaints made by students. It describes a three stage process: informal resolution, formal resolution, review. It is designed to ensure that complaints are handled transparently and fairly, and that an environment is created in which students feel confident that they can make a complaint and that it will be taken seriously.
Scope	Students who are enrolled on a higher education programme including those on placement and including those who have graduated/otherwise left the University. The Code applies to students on taught programmes and those on research degrees. Complaints by applicants are governed by Code on Recruitment, Selection and Admission (QH:C3) (taught programmes) and Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) (research degrees).
Cross-references	Academic appeals are governed by: Taught programmes – the Code on Academic Appeals (QH:C11) Research degrees – Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1)
Things to watch out for	**Right to be accompanied** A student has the right to be accompanied at a complaints panel by a person of their choosing. This is not restricted to a member of staff or another student. However, the person in question is not the advocate of the student and cannot speak to the Panel unless

	invited to do so by the Chair of the Panel. As the process is intended to be appropriate for an internal matter of the University, neither the appellant or the University can be legally represented at the hearing. **Anonymous complaints** Anonymous complaints will not be accepted because there may be a need to obtain further information and in fairness to all parties, there will be a need to test the validity of the claims set out in the statement.
Key concepts and definitions	**Definition of a complaint** A complaint is 'an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a university's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University.' **Local level resolution** In line with recognised sound practice the University encourages students to seek to resolve matters informally and directly with the member of staff best placed to help, such as a tutor, Programme Coordinator or Supervisor. However, the student retains the right to make the complaint formal in which case the matter will normally be referred to a Complaints Panel. **Malicious, frivolous or vexatious** As with appeals, the University will not consider complaints which are judged to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious. This includes complaints which are harassing, repetitive, abusive or seeking unreasonable or unrealistic outcomes. **Complaints Panel** Provided a formal complaint is considered valid, it will be considered and be determined by a Complaints Panel comprising staff (and where practicable, a student) not otherwise involved in the matter. The Chair will be a member of one of the senior university committees (Academic Board, AQSC or RRDC). **Review** A student who is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint investigation process following a complaints panel can request a further review of the complaint to the Vice-Chancellor. The review will only consider whether there were procedural irregularities in the handling of the complaint. A student has the right to take the matter to the Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman where they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the review of their complaint. The University will include in the notification of the outcome of their

	review set wording advising them of this right and how to access the Ombudsman service. **Monitoring** Academic Board and the Board of Governors will receive an annual report of complaints made by students.
External Reference Points	**ESG 2015 – Standard 1.3** The Standards do not make explicit reference to complaints but they are addressed in the Guidelines under Standard 1.3: 'The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching … has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.' **UKQC 2014 - Chapter B9 Expectation** 'Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.' **UKQC 2018 – Core Practice** 'The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.'
Time limits	▪ A complaint must be made within three months of the event or action which is the subject of the complaint ▪ Response by member of staff to complaint being raised informally: 5 working days ▪ Response by complainant regarding satisfaction with informal resolution: 5 working days ▪ Formal level – submission of complaint following informal response: 10 working days ▪ Acknowledgement of complaint by Registrar: 10 working days ▪ Notice of Panel hearing: no fewer than 10 working days' notice ▪ Written confirmation of outcome of panel hearing: 5 working days ▪ Notification by student of request for review to Vice-Chancellor – 5 working days of panel decision being notified ▪ Convening review panel: 10 working days of VC decision that panel needed ▪ Review panel findings notified to VC: 5 working days ▪ Notification of final outcome: 5 working days

Section H – Academic Partnerships and Collaborative Provision

Section H contains one Code s addressing academic partnerships and collaborative provision.

H- Academic Partnerships and Collaborative Provision

Scope	This Code applies to 'Academic Partnerships' and the activities carried out through those partnerships. An Academic Partnership is a formal written agreement between the University and another institution (whether based in Gibraltar, the UK or elsewhere) for the purpose of providing learning opportunities for students or the progression to such opportunities, where those opportunities lead to an award of the University of Gibraltar. Such learning opportunities may involve provision classified as 'taught' and that classified as 'research' in this Quality Handbook. This Code does not apply to: (a) activities concerned with the engagement with other institutions for the purposes of research, staff mobility, knowledge exchange or similar, (b) arrangements classified as 'placement learning' which are governed entirely by the Code on Placement Learning (QH:C5). (c) arrangements classified as Memoranda of Understanding, Co-operation, or Agreement which reflect a commitment to work together for a general or a specific purpose versus an 'activity'. These are governed by the University Contracts & Agreements Committee.
Things to watch out for	• Serial arrangements • Language of tuition • The University's Visual Identity (Brand Guidelines) • Informing Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies • Certificates and Official Transcripts
Levels of Academic Partnerships	This Code sets out the following levels of partnership according to the nature of the activities to be undertaken through the partnership and defines where authority lies for approving the partnership. **Level 1** (a) Matriculation Agreements (b) Progression Agreements (c) Incoming Study Abroad Partnerships (incoming students only) **Level 2** (d) Exchange Partnerships (e) Outgoing Study Abroad Partnerships (involving outgoing students)

	Level 3 (f) Delivery of taught programmes/modules (leading to University of Gibraltar credits/qualifications) **Level 4** (g) Dual awards **Level 5** (h) Joint awards
The Legal Agreement	All Academic Partnerships approved under this Code must be effected through a formal written legal agreement, signed by the Vice-Chancellor and by a person designated by the partner institution, who has the authority to act on behalf of the partner institution. One of the signed copies will be held in the University's 'Deed Store', as designated by the University Contracts & Agreements Committee.

ANNEXE 1 EXTERNAL REFERENCE POINTS: FURTHER INFORMATION AND EXTRACTS

This annexe provides information about the external reference points which have influenced the way in which the Quality Handbook has been developed. It is designed to supplement the summary provided in the Introduction to the Quality Handbook (Part I) and the extracts provided for each Code in Part II of the Introduction. It provides a quick guide to the two most significant external reference points, including their key concepts or elements and relevant extracts:

- UK Quality Code for Higher Education (both its 2014 and 2018 versions)
- The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

Note that in the UK there are other regulatory bodies and organisations that significantly influence the practice of higher education providers in relation to academic standards and quality, and that the position is further complicated by differences between the four countries of the UK (as higher education is a devolved responsibility in both Scotland and Wales). Examples of regulatory bodies (relevant to academic standards and quality) include:

The Office for Students (OfS) in England

- established under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017; all HE providers in England are required to register with the OfS and to comply with its 'Conditions of Registration'
- OfS incorporated what was the Higher Education Funding Council for England.
- see further https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/#ministerial and specifically: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

- the OIA is the body responsible for reviewing student complaints in the UK, established under the Higher Education Act 2004
- it is empowered to review universities and colleges' handling of academic appeals and student complaints
- students can ask the OIA to review but only after the internal procedures of the relevant university/college have been exhausted
- it is not technically a regulatory body (it has no direct powers over universities) but it will 'name and shame' if a university decides not to comply with the OIA's recommendations
- it also develops guidance, including a good practice framework, to encourage better complaints handling in the HE sector.
- see further: http://www.oiahe.org.uk/about-us.aspx and especially http://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers-and-good-practice/good-practice-framework.aspx
- note that while the OIA operates UK-wide, Scottish universities are also subject to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), established under the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002; it also provides a process of independent review. (Unlike the OIA, the SPSO covers all public services in Scotland.) Universities are under a statutory requirement to comply with the

Model Complaints Handling Procedures published by the SPSO. See further https://www.spso.org.uk/.

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)

- https://www.hefcw.ac.uk/
- the regulatory body for higher education in Wales, which is funded by, and accountable to, the Welsh Government
- established by the Further and Higher Education Act 1992
- it distributes funds and promotes learning and teaching development, particularly the quality of the learning experience
- it currently contracts QAA to carry out reviews of universities in Wales (called Quality Enhancement Review: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/quality-enhancement-review).

Scottish Funding Council (SFC)

- http://www.sfc.ac.uk/
- a similar body to HEFCW including providing funding to Scottish universities
- it is a non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government
- SFC also engages QAA to carry out reviews of Scottish universities (called Enhancement-Led Institutional Review: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/en/reviewing-higher-education-in-scotland/enhancement-led-institutional-review).

UK Quality Code (2014)

https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/UK-Quality-Code-for-Higher-Education-2013-18

The Quality Code was developed comprising the following elements:

- Expectations
- Indicators of Sound Practice
- Explanatory text.

It was published in three parts (plus a General Introduction explaining the purpose of the Code and how it was designed to work):

Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards (containing three chapters)
Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality (containing 11 chapters)
Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision (a single chapter).

Terminology

The following quotes and definitions are from the General Introduction:

Expectations

'Expectations express key principles that the higher education community has identified as essential for the assurance of academic standards and quality. They make clear what UK higher education providers are required to do, what they expect of themselves and each other, and what students and the general public can therefore expect of them. Individual providers are required to demonstrate they are meeting the Expectations effectively, through their own management and organisational processes, taking account of organisational needs, traditions, culture and decision-making.'

Expectations were designed as the mandatory element of the Code and provided the basis for cyclical external reviews of each higher education provider conducted by the QAA. Such reviews led to a published report for each provider. Since the 2014 version was established arrangements for external review have changed significantly, primarily in England; see further regarding the Office for Students (above).

Indicators of sound practice

'Indicators describe activities which higher education providers have agreed reflect sound practice, and through which higher education providers can demonstrate that they are meeting the relevant Expectation. Indicators are not designed to be used as a checklist; they are intended to help providers reflect on and develop their regulations, procedures and practices to demonstrate that the Expectations in the Quality Code are being met. The Indicators are grouped into clusters under a heading.'

Explanatory notes

'Expectations and Indicators are supported by explanatory notes that give more information, together with examples of how the Expectation or Indicator may be interpreted in practice. The application of any examples given will depend on the circumstances of a particular provider. The examples are best viewed as a stimulus to reflection and further development rather than as models for imitation.'

The Expectations

The following provides the Expectations in full.

Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards

Chapter A1 - UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards

In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:
a) ensure that the requirements of The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland/The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland are met by:

- positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications
- ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications
- naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications
- awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics
c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework
d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

Chapter A2 - Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards - Expectation A2.1

In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

Definitive records of individual programmes and qualifications - Expectation A2.2

Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

Chapter A3 - Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards
Expectation A3.1

Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

Assessment of learning outcomes - Expectation A3.2

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment
- both the UK threshold standards and the academic standards of the relevant degree-awarding body have been satisfied.

Monitoring and review of alignment with UK threshold academic standards and degree-awarding bodies' own
Standards Expectation A3.3

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

Externality - Expectation A3.4

In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved
- the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.

Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality

B1 – Programme Design, Development and Approval

Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes.

B2 - Recruitment, Selection and Admission

Recruitment, selection, and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

B3 – Learning and Teaching

Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

B4 - Enabling Student Development and Achievement

Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

B5 – Student Engagement

Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning

Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Chapter B7: External Examining

Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review

Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints

Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others

Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.

Chapter B11: Research Degrees

Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students high-quality opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the learning opportunities they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

UK Quality Code (2018)

https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

The 2014 version of the Quality Code was revised by QAA again in partnership with higher education providers, representative bodies, students and other stakeholders. The 'top level' elements – the Expectations and Core Practices – were published in May 2018, followed by publication of 12 chapters of 'Advice and Guidance' and the official launch in November 2018. The way in which the Code is going to be applied will differ between the four countries of the UK, reflecting differences in the regulatory arrangements in each case. However, from a University of Gibraltar perspective the Code provides valuable further guidance and a means for benchmarking its approach.

The 2018 version contains the following hierarchy of elements:

- Expectations (two each for academic standards and quality)
- Core practices (four for standards, eight for quality)
- Common practices (one for standards, three for quality)
- Advice and Guidance (12 themes)
- Guiding Principles (a number of Principles in each piece of Advice and Guidance).

NB: the 2018 version does not use any form of numbering for Expectations, Core or Common Practices or for the 12 Advice and Guidance themes. The revised Code also does not have a specific section or separate focus on Information in contrast with the 2014 version.

Terminology

Expectations

These 'express the outcomes providers should achieve in setting and maintaining the standards of their awards, and for managing the quality of their provision. They are mandatory requirements for all UK providers.'

Core practices

These 'represent effective ways of working that underpin the delivery of the Expectations and result in positive outcomes for students. They are mandatory requirements for all UK providers.'

Common practices

These 'focus on enhancement. They are mandatory requirements for all providers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England, providers may wish to work towards these, but are not required to do so as they are not regulatory requirements and will not be assessed as part of the OfS's regulatory framework.'

Advice and guidance

'Made up of sector-developed themes, designed to support providers in developing and maintaining effective quality assurance practices. This is not mandatory for providers, but illustrative of a range of possible approaches.'

Guiding Principles

'The guiding principles … are not mandatory for any provider. They are a concise expression of the fundamental practices of the higher education sector, based on the experience of a wide range of providers. They are intended as a framework for providers to consider when establishing new or looking at existing higher education provision. They are not exhaustive and there will be other ways for providers to meet their requirements.'

Expectations and Practices: Standards

Expectations

The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.
The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualifications and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.

Core Practices

The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.
The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.
Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how programmes are delivered or who delivers them.
The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.

Common Practices

The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

Expectations and Practices: Quality

Expectations

Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

Core Practices

The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.
The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality programmes.
The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.
The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.
Where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments.
Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how programmes are delivered and who delivers them.
The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

Common Practices

The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.
The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.
The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

Advice and guidance

This is divided into the following 12 themes:

- Admissions, recruitment and widening access
- Assessment
- Concerns, complaints and appeals
- Course design and development
- Enabling student achievement

- External expertise
- Learning and teaching
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Partnerships
- Research degrees
- Student engagement
- Work-based learning.

European Standards and Guidelines (2015)

https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) were first adopted by Ministers in the European Higher Education Area in 2005, with the most recent version adopted at the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan in 2015. The document defines the purposes of the ESG as follows:

'-- They set a common framework for quality assurance systems for learning and teaching at European, national and institutional level;
-- They enable the assurance and improvement of quality of higher education in the European higher education area;
-- They support mutual trust, thus facilitating recognition and mobility within and across national borders;
-- They provide information on quality assurance in the EHEA.'
The ESG are divided into three parts:

Part I: Internal quality assurance
Part II: External quality assurance
Part III: Quality assurance agencies.
Note the full title is: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

Terminology

Standards

'The standards set out agreed and accepted practice for quality assurance in higher education in the EHEA and should, therefore, be taken account of and adhered to by those concerned, in all types of higher education provision.'

Guidelines

'The guidelines explain why the standard is important and describe how standards might be implemented. They set out good practice in the relevant area for consideration by the actors involved in quality assurance. Implementation will vary depending on different contexts.'

The Standards

The following sets out the Standards applicable to internal quality assurance (Part I of the ESG)

ESG Standard 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance

Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

ESG Standard 1.2 Design and approval of programmes

Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

ESG Standard 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

ESG Standard 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

ESG Standard 1.5 Teaching staff

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

ESG Standard 1.6 Learning resources and student support

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

ESG Standard 1.7 Information management

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

ESG Standard 1.8 Public information

Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

ESG Standard 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

ESG Standard 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

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