

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies¹
Guidance on policy and procedures

1. INTRODUCTION

The University engages with PSRBs through accreditation² of particular programmes and/or departments/Schools. This accreditation enhances opportunities for graduates to gain employment in specific professional/vocational areas.

PSRBs which accredit Lancaster programmes will influence the design of the programmes and will have their own arrangements for monitoring and review; however the University is responsible for the academic standards of the programmes and the quality of the learning opportunities they afford. These programmes are therefore subject to the University's standard quality assurance and enhancement processes as used for other programmes.

Engagement with PSRBs is threaded through the following core processes, through which the University maintains institutional oversight of PSRB-related matters:

- Programme design and approval
- Student assessment
- Monitoring and review

Information on the University's PSRB policy and procedures associated with these processes is provided in this guidance document and departments are expected to follow these for those programmes with which a PSRB is involved.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

Departments are responsible for:

- (a) managing all PSRB-related programmes in their subject areas and ensuring that they continue to meet PSRB requirements;
- (b) liaising directly with PSRBs on the submission for accreditation/re-accreditation and on any interim amendments to accredited programmes and responding to any PSRB requirements/recommendations arising out of these processes;
- (c) liaising with the Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct (AQSC) unit over any institutional requirements arising out of PSRB procedures or requirements, including institutional sign-off for submissions and consultation on any PSRB requirements/ recommendations which create a potential conflict with the University's regulations;
- (d) submitting reports to PSRBs and arranging visits in accordance with PSRB requirements and deadlines;
- (e) providing copies of PSRB reports (including any headline letters, interim reports or statements) to the faculty and AQSC directly these are received.

¹ PSRBs are organisations which approve or recognise specific programmes in the context of the requirements for professional qualification or licence to practice. Some PSRBs have a prescribed statutory or regulatory responsibility to approve or recognise programmes and/or to determine the academic standards and professional or vocational components of such programmes.

² 'Accreditation' is used here to refer collectively to the varying forms of PSRB accreditation, recognition or approval of a programme of study and/or a department/School.

(f) reporting on PSRB visits or departmental reports/returns to the PSRB in the PSRB report.

Faculties are responsible for:

- (a) ensuring that departments' proposals for new or amended programmes and modules which incorporate PSRB accreditation adhere to the University's approval procedures;
- (b) reviewing PSRB accreditation/re-accreditation reports made to departments over the course of the year and departments' reports on PSRB activity in their University PSRB reports;
- (c) providing a summary account to Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) of PSRB activity in the faculty over the course of the year as part of the faculty Annual Programme review (APR) report.

AQSC are responsible for:

- (a) ensuring that all applications for new accreditations and re-accreditations are signed off at the appropriate level in the institution before they are submitted to the PSRB;
- (b) providing advice and guidance to staff in departments and faculties on the University's procedures in relation to PSRBs;
- (c) keeping and maintaining the central register of PSRB-related provision and retaining copies of the most up-to-date PSRB reports;
- (d) ensuring the information on PSRB accreditation held in the LUSI Course Handbook is accurate.

The **Academic Standards and Quality Committee** has a monitoring and oversight role for PSRB engagement across the institution and is responsible for ensuring that any difficulties or concerns of institutional significance relating to PSRB accreditation are addressed at the appropriate level. The Committee will receive annual reports on PSRB activity via the faculty APR reports. It will also receive a copy of the updated register on an annual basis.

3. PROCEDURES

3.1 PROGRAMME DESIGN AND APPROVAL

When new programmes of study are being developed or major amendments to existing programmes are being considered, departments and faculties must take into consideration, where applicable, the accreditation status of the programme. Approval by the University of a new or amended programme of study that carries PSRB accreditation is a separate process to the PSRB procedure although many of the information requirements will be the same, and University approval must follow the standard approval procedures for new or amended programmes and modules as well as those of the PSRB.

All submissions to a PSRB for a **new** accreditation must be formally signed off at University level, administered through AQSC.

The relevant PSRB(s) must be clearly indicated on the University's programme proposal template (CAIT – Course Approval and Information Tool) and details provided in the rationale of the nature of PSRB accreditation and the external reference points used. The proposal must also include details of any particular PSRB requirements in relation to assessment which differ from the University's standard regulations, e.g. a different pass mark to the University's or particular modules which must be passed. Where there is a potential conflict between the PSRB requirements/recommendations and the University's regulations, the department must consult with AQSC over this in advance.

PSRB accreditation of new programmes must be reported on by the department in its University PSRB report for the year (see 3.10 below). In addition, the PSRB's accreditation report must be forwarded to the faculty for consideration at the next meeting of the faculty teaching committee(s). The faculty must forward the PSRB report to AQSC.

3.2 STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Any PSRB requirements for the assessment of students which are additional to or different from the University's standard assessment regulations must be detailed in the programme proposal and approved as part of this process. Where it has been agreed they can differ, a record of this is made in the respective appendices to the Undergraduate Assessment Regulations and the Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations (*Additional Requirements for Professional Awards*). This record is maintained by AQSC as part of the procedure for updating the Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures (MARP).

A programme of study accredited by a PSRB may necessitate the appointment of an external examiner who is qualified to assess the professional/practice components of the programme in accordance with the requirements of the accreditation. The University's regulations for the appointment of external examiners make provision for this.

3.3 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Departments must fulfil the PSRB requirements for the monitoring and review of programmes and the provision of reports and/or data returns.

Review of PSRB modules and programmes is also undertaken as part of the University's standard procedures for monitoring and review: module evaluation, APR, programme reapproval and Strategic Teaching and Learning Review (STLR).

PSRB Report

PSRB accreditation/re-accreditation of an existing programme must be reported on by the department in its PSRB report to the University for the year, including a note on any requirements/recommendations of the PSRB and actions to be taken and the date of the next visit/inspection. In addition, the PSRB's accreditation/re-accreditation report must be forwarded to the faculty for consideration at the next meeting of the faculty teaching committee(s). The faculty must forward the PSRB report to AQSC.

Any PSRB activity that does not fall into the category of formal re-accreditation must also be reported on in the PSRB Report (e.g. annual reports/data returns or interim/inspection visits).

The faculty must ensure that any issues or concerns identified in the report from the PSRB and in departments' PSRB report to the University which impact on the quality or standards of Lancaster programmes are being addressed at the appropriate level or are referred on as appropriate. The faculty APR report to ASQC must:

- (a) summarise the PSRB activity for departments which has taken place over the year;
- (b) include details of any issues or concerns identified in PSRB reports and/or departments' PSRB reports and the actions being taken to address these;
- (c) refer on any issues or concerns relating to PSRB-accredited provision which are considered to be of institutional significance;

- (d) for those departments which have undergone an accreditation or re-accreditation visit over the course of the year, list the date of the next visit.
- (e) for those departments which are due to undergo accreditation/re-accreditation in the next academic year, list the visit date;
- (f) forward on to AQSC a copy of any PSRB accreditation/re-accreditation report.

Notwithstanding the APR reporting schedule, if the faculty considers there are any issues or concerns which are of such importance that they require discussion by ASQC outside of this reporting schedule (for example the withdrawal of PSRB accreditation), such matters should be referred to the next meeting of ASQC.

Programme Re-approval

As part of a department's Programme Re-approval process, the panel will consider the latest PSRB report for the programme(s) as part of the evidence used to judge whether or not the modules and programme(s) continue to meet the quality and standards set. (Where the panel makes the judgement that this is the case, this constitutes institutional re-approval of the modules and programme(s).)

Should a PSRB accreditation visit be scheduled in the same year as the department's Programme Re-approval the department should discuss with the panel secretary in ASQ whether there are any arrangements that could be put in place to minimise duplication of effort and expenditure of resources. This may include, for example, the re-use of existing documentation or arrangements for PSRB representation at the Programme Re-approval event.

4. COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

Accreditation of programmes which are part of a collaborative partnership arrangement may be provided by a UK or overseas PSRB, or one which operates at a transnational level.

Whilst there may be variation in the standard procedures agreed with an individual partner, the principles and processes which underpin the University's arrangements for the oversight of PSRB-accredited programmes will apply.

5. STUDENT INFORMATION

Full information regarding the accreditation status of a programme must be available to both prospective and current students. Responsibility for the accuracy of this information lies as follows:

- Communications and Marketing – Prospectus information
- Academic Standards and Quality – Online Courses Handbook
- Faculty offices – Programme Specifications
- Academic departments – department web pages, student handbooks and Moodle sites
- Planning and Analytics Unit – HESA Return

Where PSRB accreditation is withdrawn from a programme the department **must** communicate with the faculty and AQSC on the implications for students currently on course and, following this, ensure that the students affected are fully informed. The department is also responsible for informing the administrative departments listed above.

6. RECORDS

The relevant PSRB is indicated against the programme of study in the University's student information system at the point of University approval of the programme and the programme specification will include this information. Any changes to the record on PSRB accreditation must be processed by AQSC.

AQSC will maintain the University's central register of PSRB-related provision. This will include details of the nature of the accreditation attached to each programme, the date of the last and next PSRB re-accreditation visit and the nature of any regular reporting/data returns if annual reports/returns are required to be made to the PSRB. This will be updated on an annual basis and circulated to departments to check the accuracy of the information and provided to ASQC for information on an annual basis.

AQSC will keep copies of the latest PSRB reports including any headline letters, interim reports or statements.