



Academic Quality Framework

Chapter 1 Welcome and Introduction

1.1. WELCOME TO THE ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK

New College of the Humanities (the College) is committed to the highest academic standards and to continual enhancement of the quality of its programmes. It has invested in developing and establishing a culture of quality that underpins all areas of its work.

The evolution of the quality and enhancement processes has been informed by the *UK Quality Code*. The College also draws upon the quality standards and processes from both degree awarding bodies it has relationships with.

The Academic Quality Framework (AQF) is aimed at students, staff and external readers. Section 1.2 of this chapter, is focused on supporting students' use of this framework and their experience at the College.

1.2. WELCOME TO STUDENT READERS

The College is committed to ensuring that your experience as a student is the best the College can provide, and that where further enhancements can be made, they happen.

Students' opinions are integral to the monitoring of standards and enhancement of the College's provision. You have a variety of options to provide feedback to the College and engagement is strongly encouraged. Your role is critical, and this is why it is important for you to have access to this framework and understand the various chapters.

The College uses a variety of approaches for you to provide feedback, identifying areas that are working well for you and areas that you feel could be reviewed and developed. These are described in more detail in AQF10 Student Voice, but as a summary:

Student Satisfaction Survey

Student Representation/Committee Membership

Working Groups and Focus Groups

Programme/Course Review, Modification and Approval
Annual Open Forum

1.3. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK

We make every effort to inform you about what actions we take as a result of your feedback. The main delivery of feedback is through your Student Representatives sitting on committees and updating you, where possible, on College activities. There are also posters in student areas informing you of enhancements that have been made. The College understands that 'closing the loop' is vital in encouraging students to provide feedback.

The College also welcomes receiving feedback that identifies areas that work for you. It might be something that can be shared across the College to enhance the provision of other aspects of the College.

We hope that the AQF provides you with useful information about the operations that underpin the management and governance of the College, and how you can be involved in this.

If you have any comments or questions about the AQF or any of the activities described within the chapters, please contact: Rebecca Morrison, Head of Quality Assurance: rebecca.morrison@nchlondon.ac.uk

The AQF defines the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the College. The College's mission is to be 'A world-class university-level college in the heart of London'. Central to this is a commitment to the highest academic standards and continual enhancement of the quality of the programmes.

The AQF is informed by key external reference points provided by the *UK Quality Code*. It refers to procedures, policies, regulations, and other core documentation relating to all activities associated with managing and maintaining quality in teaching, learning and assessment. Although this can be bureaucratic, it is necessary to ensure the transparent, smooth and effective running of the College.

The AQF contains the following chapters:

- AQF1 Welcome and Introduction
- AQF2 Overview of Teaching and Learning
- AQF3 Assurance and Enhancement of Academic Quality and Standards
- AQF4 Programme and Course Approval and Modification
- AQF5 Annual Monitoring and Reporting
- AQF6 Periodic Review
- AQF7 Academic Regulations*

AQF8 Student Recruitment and Admissions

AQF9 Student Guidance and Learner Support

AQF10 Student Voice

AQF11 External Examining*

AQF12 Assessment Board*

AQF13 Staff Recruitment

AQF12 Academic Policies and Procedures

AQF15 Glossary of Terms

* These AQF chapters are written in preparation for the College gaining taught degree awarding powers, as the current degree awarding bodies have oversight of these activities.

1.4. HOW TO USE THE ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK

The AQF, in its entirety, is made available to prospective students, students, staff and external regulatory bodies through the College's website, in the [Academic Handbook](#). This enables easy access to all stakeholders for reference and support with their activities relating to the College.

The College recognises that not all readers will need to read all the chapters but believes that access to all chapters should be made available to all stakeholders.

The AQF is reviewed and approved by Academic Board to ensure that the information contained is accurate and amended when required.

All readers are advised to access the chapters published on the website to ensure that they are accessing the most update to date version. At the end of each chapter there is a version control box which provides details such as author and date of publication.

1.5. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS

Academic Board has overall responsibility for the academic standards and quality at the College, and its work is informed by annual monitoring reports and the work of its sub-committees.

The College's academic governance structure places responsibility for quality and standards on individuals: as Chair of Academic Board, Master of the College (Master) is responsible for the coordination between the academic and non-academic components of the institution; the Registrar is responsible for the management of student records and is charged with overseeing the management of Academic Board and chairs its subcommittee, Teaching, Learning and Enhancement Committee (TLEC); the Head of Quality Assurance (HQA) is responsible for managing quality

assurance and enhancement of academic standards and learning opportunities on all programmes.

1.6. THE ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK AND EXTERNAL BENCHMARKS

The College's approach to quality recognises the opportunity for continuing and continuous improvement and is informed by the College's mission (see [NCH Strategic Plan](#)).

The College takes pride in its high academic standards and student experience and is committed to quality assurance and enhancement, as stated in the College's [Strategic Plan](#). The evolution of the quality and enhancement process has been informed by the *UK Quality Code*. The College also draws upon the quality standards and processes of both degree awarding bodies, Solent University and Swansea University.

The College maps its policies and procedures to the *UK Quality Code* and other external benchmarks, such as the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's *Good Practice Framework*, when relevant. Programmes are designed using the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications* contained within the *UK Quality Code* and are mapped to the *Subject Benchmark Statements* when they are available.

The continual monitoring of external developments and the impact on the College's policies and procedures is the responsibility of the Policy and Compliance Committee.

1.7. TERMINOLOGY

Key terminology regarding quality in Higher Education:

Academic Standards: Threshold academic standards are the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student must demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Academic standards should be at a similar level across the UK.

Academic Quality: Academic quality is concerned with how well the learning opportunities made available to students enable them to achieve their award. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for them.

Quality Assurance: Quality assurance refers to a range of review procedures designed to safeguard academic standards and promote learning opportunities for students of acceptable quality.

Quality Enhancement: Quality enhancement refers to taking deliberate steps to bring about continual improvements in the effectiveness of the learning experience of students.

1.8. RELATIONSHIP TO EXTERNAL BODIES AND QUALITY MECHANISMS

The regulatory landscape is changing in Higher Education. **The Office for Students** (OfS) is the new regulator for English higher education. It will adopt a student-focused, risk-based approach to regulation. Its primary aim is to ensure that English higher education is delivering positive outcomes for students – past, present, and future. The OfS will seek to ensure that students, from all backgrounds (particularly the most disadvantaged), can access, succeed in, and progress from higher education.

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is the Designated Quality Body (DQB) for the OfS. OfS will have oversight of the DQB, and will work with the DQB to assess the quality of, and standards applied to, the higher education of providers seeking to register.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) is an independent body set up to review student complaints. The OIA deals with student complaints against higher education providers. The OfS will use OIA data as part of their risk-assessment of higher education providers.

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) is the Designated Data Body (DDB) for the OfS. HESA collects, processes and publishes data about higher education in the UK. OfS will work with, and have oversight of, HESA to coordinate, collect and disseminate information for students, to help them make the best possible choices.

Title	AQF1 Welcome and Introduction	Author	Head of Quality Assurance
Location	NCH Academic Handbook	Approved by	Academic Board
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