



## Academic Quality Framework

### Chapter 2 Overview of Teaching & Learning

---

#### **2.1. THE HISTORY OF NEW COLLEGE OF THE HUMANITIES (NCH)**

The College was founded in 2011, by Professor A.C. Grayling CBE MA DPhil (Oxon) FRSL FRSA, Supernumerary Fellow of St Anne's College Oxford and, at the time of founding NCH, Professor of Philosophy at Birkbeck College, University of London. On foundation of the College, Professor Grayling became its first Master.

The founding conception was of a College dedicated to the study of the humanities, based on a combination of the best two great traditions of higher education, viz. the tutorial model encouraging forensic depth and intellectual acuity, and a modified version of the 'liberal arts' model providing breadth and context.

#### **2.2. COLLEGE MISSION AND STRATEGIC AIMS FOR QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION**

The College's **mission** is to be 'A world-class university-level college in the heart of London; New College of the Humanities combines a unique liberal arts curriculum with one-on-one teaching in an international community to ensure that every student prepared to work will achieve their full potential and leave fully equipped to face the challenges of our increasingly complex world.'

The College's aim therefore is to provide an outstanding university-level education in the Humanities, and to do so at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. The desired outcomes are a deep and insightful engagement with the subjects of study, and in the process acquisition of acuity of thought, reasoning power, knowledge of methods and sources, and learning, writing and discursive skills, all exportable into lifelong learning and applicable to the demands of work and life after graduation.

The mission also aims to place this in-depth academic study into a broadening framework of additional study that forges outward-looking connections from their specialist knowledge and skills. This is effected by the NCH Diploma, a non-degree, non-credit bearing programme which is nevertheless compulsory, and which earns the student the College's own self-validated Diploma to mark the richer content of the programme of study. It consists of the Core Curriculum and LAUNCH. For the

Core Curriculum, students study (a) Critical Reasoning, which focuses the students' attention on first-order logic, ways of thinking and arguing, methods of enquiry, reason and right reasoning, rhetoric, and the fallacies of both formal and informal logic; (b) Science Literacy, a programme providing overview for non-scientists of major areas of contemporary science – Cosmology, Particle Physics, Biology and Neuroscience. This course is enhanced by the lectures of distinguished Visiting Professors; and (c) Applied Ethics, raising and discussing the ethical dilemmas that face us as individuals and as a society in business matters, the environment, politics, conflict, and medicine. The LAUNCH programme prepares students for the world of work after graduation.

### **2.3. THE HUMANITIES**

College offers undergraduate degree programmes in major-minor combinations and in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE), Philosophy, Politics and History (PPH), and combinations of Literature, Creative Writing, History, Philosophy, Art History, Politics and International Relations, Law, and Economics. In their combinations, these subjects constitute 52 different undergraduate degree programmes. The College also offers an undergraduate single honours programme and the College offers postgraduate degree programmes in Philosophy, Global Politics, Economic Policy and Communication, and Historical Research and Public History. In total, the College offers 56 high quality higher education programmes.

The College's programmes are premised on the view that there are three great benefits in studying the humanities:

- The first benefit is the intrinsic fascination of what the Humanities teach us about the world, about human nature and the human condition, about ourselves individually, and about society. Understanding the hopes and endeavours of our forebears illuminates our present: that is the gift of history. Learning from the stories we tell one another about love and grief, aspiration, the experience and passions of others, life's complexities and promises: that is a gift of literature. Exploring, clarifying and evaluating our assumptions and beliefs, the ideas that shape our view of the world, and the systems of thought by which we live: that is the gift of philosophy. These and the other studies in the Humanities throw light on all these matters, giving those who examine and debate them both a wide horizon of view and a deeper and richer grasp of what matters in human experience.
- The second benefit is that these studies constitute an excellent training of the mind as one goes through the intellectual adventure itself. To think with clarity, acuity and versatility, to acquire understanding with wide scope, to combine a breadth of knowledge with an ability to be precise and penetrating – these are the outcomes of an advanced education in the Humanities, especially in the way that students and faculty at the College study them together, as colleagues in the

enterprise, with the one-to-one essay-based tutorial as the key element in sharpening and deepening the powers of intellect.

- The third benefit is the platform that the Humanities give for life. A study of the Humanities is a platform for setting out on successful careers in a wide range of fields, where the Humanities-fostered qualities of mind are in demand. But people are not just their careers: they are also friends and parents, lovers and travellers, voters, neighbours, holidaymakers, participants and contributors to much besides; and above all need to be life-long learners facing constantly changing challenges – and opportunities – in a constantly changing world. Studying the Humanities is a platform to be good at all these things in all these ways, and thereby to be a true citizen of the world and its future.

In this way the personal development, and the education for citizenship more generally, offered by a study of the Humanities is a highly worthwhile feature of advanced education in a mature and developed society, where maintaining and enhancing the values of civilisation require that such education should include the opportunity for these areas of thought to be studied at a high level. From the skills and insight acquired, there can be a good expectation of leadership, social and economic entrepreneurship, and valuable civic engagement resulting from study of the Humanities.

## **2.4. INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE**

### **2.4.1. NCHNL Board of Governors**

NCH at Northeastern Limited (NCHNL) Board is the statutory board of the legal entity that owns the brand 'New College of the Humanities' as well as its subsidiary New College of the Humanities Limited and through which the College operates, including its relationship with regulatory bodies and partner organisations. NCHNL Board is a limited liability company established under English and Welsh law.

NCHNL Board has oversight and management of the strategic, financial and operational areas of the College's activities and all other aspects of the College's existence save for responsibilities of Academic Board in respect of the regulating and directing of the academic work of the College, including teaching (undergraduate and postgraduate) and research.

### **2.4.2. College Boards Liaison Committee**

The College Boards Liaison Committee (CBLC) is the chief link between Academic Board and NCHNL Board. Academic Board is autonomous in terms of academic matters within the College and NCHNL Board is the decision-maker on financial and operational matters. CBLC oversees the coordination of the College's strategic plan, of overall institutional risk

management, ensures that there is an effective student engagement structure and that all policies and procedures are reviewed and monitored annually.

## **2.5. ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE**

### **2.5.1. Academic Board and its Sub-Committees**

Academic Board is the academic authority of the College and shall take such measure as shall best promote the academic and professional work of the College, safeguard standards and ensure that students receive a high quality academic experience while studying at the College. This academic authority is exercised within a budgetary and strategic framework set by NCHNL Board.

Academic Board is responsible for regulating and directing the academic work of the College, including the curriculum, teaching, assessment and research. It has oversight of the academic management and all aspects of quality and standards associated with the College, including academic related policies and procedures. It has the powers to make regulations and policies affecting academic practice.

In order to carry out its work in a timely and effective manner, Academic Board delegates specific areas of activity to the following key functional committees:

- Teaching, Learning and Enhancement Committee (TLEC) is responsible for enhancing teaching, learning and assessment for all programmes delivered at the College
- Policy and Compliance Committee (PCC - also reports to SMT as relevant) is responsible for managing the core academic and human resources documents. When policies and procedures are identified as requiring review, the relevant document author is informed and the revised document is submitted to the appropriate committee for approval. This committee also has the responsibility for monitoring the expectations of the College's external stakeholders, such as HEFCE, QAA and the validating Universities
- Destinations Committee is responsible for ensuring the provision of a first-class careers service for students
- Research Committee is responsible for developing research and scholarly activities within the College; supporting faculty to underpin their teaching with current research; engaging in collaborative research with external bodies; and disseminating research to a wider audience (specialist and non-specialist)
- Academic Promotion Panel determines promotions in accordance

with College guidelines. Academic Board records the outcomes of the Panel

- Assessment Board is responsible for the consideration of the results of assessment

### **2.5.2. Other Academic Committees**

Other primary academic committees involved in academic governance include:

- Each Faculty is responsible to TLEC for overseeing the enhancement and maintenance of the day-to-day academic quality and standards of all programmes delivered at the College which are specific to their subject, and for developing new courses. Each Faculty also ensures effective engagement with students on programme-related matters.
- NCH Diploma Team is responsible to TLEC for overseeing the management of the day-to-day academic quality and standards of Core Curriculum and LAUNCH courses, and also ensure effective engagement with students on programme-related matters.
- Student:Staff Liaison Committee reports to TLEC providing a forum for students to provide feedback and evaluation that will lead to enhancement of the student experience.
- Research Ethics Committee reports to the Research Committee on the implementation of the Research Strategy and ethical approval for student, academic or collaborative research. It has a lay external research subject specialist.

## **2.6. EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES**

Executive Committee (ExCo) is comprised of the executive managers of the College. Its role is to ensure that there is effective day-to-day operational leadership and management of all the activities undertaken by the College.

It is chaired by a governor of NCHNL Board. It provides a link between NCHNL Board, Academic Board (see section 2.5.1) and the Senior Management Team (SMT). It does this by ensuring that the priorities as outlined in the College's Strategic Plan and/or in NCHNL Board meetings are being implemented by Academic Board and its committees and through its committees, in particular SMT.

ExCo supplies NCHNL Board with updates, reports, draft budgets and accounts, key performance indicators, information on capital investments, and reports on risk management.

The Executive Committee comprised of members with the following responsibilities:

- A governor of NCHNL Board chairs the Executive Committee ensures

that the responsibilities devolved by NCHNL Board are carried out in an efficient, informed and compliant way. The governor of NCHNL Board also acts as a point of appeal in various procedures and provides an alternative channel of communication for staff and students outside the normal channels if that is needed by those stakeholders

- Master provides leadership on all academic aspects of the College; manages the academic staff, including the students and student and academic services team and the quality team; works with the rest of the executive team on the budgets and plans for the College
- Chief Operating Officer provides leadership on and responsible for the financial, operational and HR aspects of the College; leads on the budgets and plans for the College along with the rest of the executive team
- Executive Dean provides leadership on and responsible for the recruitment, admissions and marketing aspects of the College; works with the rest of the executive team on the budgets and plans for the College

The Executive Team ensures that there is an effective leadership, management and coordination of all the academic administrative services, marketing, recruitment and support activities undertaken by the College. The Executive Team is responsible for developing detailed operational plans and supporting strategies to deliver the NCH Strategic Plan.

The Executive Team devolved day-to-day operational management to the Senior Management Team (SMT). SMT is made up of the following positions:

- Chief Operating Officer
- Director of Marketing
- Executive Dean
- Financial Controller
- Head of Quality Assurance
- Human Resources and Operations Manager
- Registrar

## **2.7. ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

The College's academic management structure is the responsibility of the Master and he delegates roles and responsibilities to key senior faculty members and professional staff:

- The Registrar is responsible for the Student and Academic Services team and Quality Team. The Registrar is responsible for managing the production of the definitive record of students, programmes and

courses, as well as guiding and supporting the work of faculty, and managing professional staff, through regulations, student enrolment, assessment, timetabling, attendance monitoring, academic misconduct, complaints, discipline, and assessment. The Registrar is also responsible for the management of the student records kept in collaboration with the degree awarding bodies. The Registrar is the lead on the implementation and training of the new student information system. The Registrar is charged with overseeing the operation of Academic Board and its committees, as well as chairing TLEC

- The Head of Quality Assurance (HQA) is responsible for managing the quality assurance and enhancement of academic standards and learning opportunities on all programmes and is supported on an operational basis by the Quality Manager (QM). The HQA and the QM ensure the day-to-day management of, and compliance with, the relevant standards. Responsibilities include: managing validations (with control of the master copies of the core programme documentation), reviews, the annual monitoring process, and national and institutional student surveys. The HQA and the QM are also responsible for managing the student voice mechanisms, supporting the student representatives in their role, and the management, review and implementation of academic policies and procedures.
- Heads of Faculty are responsible for curriculum development and management of all programmes based in their Faculty. They represent their Faculty on Academic Board and relevant committees such as the Assessment Board, the Board of Examiners for the relevant degree awarding body, and the Academic Promotion Panel. In some faculties, the Head of Faculty sits on TLEC; this is because the number of staff in the faculty and the faculty's teaching commitments reduces their availability for participation in committees. As the faculties grow in numbers, the distribution of roles and activities are reviewed. Heads of Faculty also chair and manage Faculty Meetings and oversee recruitment and career development of all their faculty. They may also act as Course Leaders.
- The Dean of Careers leads the College's careers and employability activities for undergraduate and postgraduate students. The Dean of Careers has line management responsibility for the Careers Adviser and Visiting Fellows. The Dean of Careers is responsible for the management of the in-house careers programme, LAUNCH, and the Careers counselling activities.

## **2.8. EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE & ENHANCEMENT**

The College is committed to the highest academic standards and to continually enhancing the quality of its programmes and student experience. It has invested in

developing and establishing a culture of quality that underpins all areas of its work. The College engages with relevant external reference points to ensure that quality is maintained, monitored and enhanced where appropriate. The key external reference points are outlined below:

### **2.8.1. QAA Quality Code & Framework for Higher Education Qualifications**

- The *UK Quality Code* gives all higher education providers a starting point for setting, describing and assuring the academic standards, and the quality of the learning opportunities.
- The *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications* (FHEQ) is integrated in the UK Quality Code. It is used to ensure that the programmes at the College are comparable to other similar programmes in the UK and the level of achievement is clear to both internal and external stakeholders.

### **2.8.2. QAA Subject Benchmark Statements**

- The QAA subject benchmark statements are used to inform the curriculum design to ensure that students are achieving the academic level as stated in the subject benchmark statement. Each programme, major and minor, is mapped to their relevant subject benchmark statement, demonstrating that the programme has developed against the agreed standards within that subject arena. This mapping is part of the Programme Specification which is reviewed and evaluated at programme approval events.

### **2.8.3. Other External Reference Points**

- College academics and professional staff hold a number of external roles, including memberships to subject specific societies and/or associations, and external examiners at other higher education providers.
- Extensive use is made of the reports written by the External Examiners for the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

## **2.9. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE & ENHANCEMENT**

The College has specific aims and objectives for academic quality assurance and enhancement. These are articulated in the [Quality Assurance and Enhancement Strategy](#). The evolution of our quality and enhancement process has been informed by external reference points, including the FHEQ and UK Quality Code.

To ensure that the College meets its aims with respect to academic quality and standards, we have developed comprehensive academic policies and regulations as presented in this framework.

Further information about staff responsibilities for Quality Assurance and Enhancement can be found in [AQF3: Assurance and Enhancement of Academic Quality and Standards](#).

## **2.10. PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO & TEACHING & LEARNING PRACTICES**

The College is a higher education provider delivering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, each following the teaching and learning practices according to its validating body.

### Undergraduate Portfolio

- The College's undergraduate programmes were approved by Solent University in 2014, with the first cohort of students enrolling in September 2015. Initially, Economics, English, History and Philosophy were approved, with Politics & International Relationships (major and minor) along with Philosophy Politics and Economic, and Philosophy, Politics and History combined honours programmes being approved a year later. The portfolio has continued to grow with Art History (major and minor programmes) and Creative Writing (minor programmes) being approved August 2016, and Law (major, minor and single honours programmes) being approved May 2017. The College offers 52 undergraduate programmes.
- All undergraduate programmes are normally delivered over three years. Each academic year is divided into three terms, the first term, Michaelmas, and second term, Hilary, are 12 weeks in length. The third term, Trinity, is normally 8 weeks. The majority of the teaching is delivered in Michaelmas and Hilary. Revision sessions are offered either at the end of Hilary or at the start of Trinity, with the examinations normally occurring from about week 3 of Trinity.
- The undergraduate programmes are delivered using the one-to-one tutorial model, alongside lectures and small group seminars. Students are normally required to submit formative essays for the basis of their one-to-one tutorials, where they will receive personalised developmental feedback on their formative essay and academic progression.
- Students are expected to manage their own learning and become independent learners. Students are required to submit formative and summative pieces of coursework on time.

### Postgraduate Portfolio

- The College's postgraduate programme in Historical Research and Public History was approved February 2016, with Economics, Philosophy and Politics programmes being approved May 2017. The first cohort of postgraduate students enrolled on the MA Philosophy in September 2017.

- The postgraduate programmes have full- and part-time pathways. The full-time programmes are normally delivered over a year and part-time programmes are normally delivered over two years.
- The postgraduate programmes are delivered using a combination of the one-to-one tutorial model and small group seminars. Following the model for the undergraduate programmes, the one-to-one tutorials are essay based, providing students with the personalised developmental feedback.
- Students are expected to manage their own learning following formative essay submission deadlines, along with the summative coursework deadlines.

### **2.11. ACADEMIC RESOURCING**

The overarching approach that is taken by the College in the relations to resource allocations is:

- The College's resource allocation decisions will be informed by the College's mission statement and its strategic plan
- Resource allocation needs to take into account the financial sustainability of the College
- Resource allocation will always be informed by the need to uphold standards and quality provision, including the infrastructure of the College
- Resource decisions will be taken in such a way as to uphold the College policies on academic independence, fairness, equality and diversity
- The College will communicate openly and transparently on decisions about resources via the decisions and minutes of appropriate committees

The Resource Allocation Group (RAG) is the committee responsible for implementing the Resource Allocation Policy. RAG reports to the Senior Management Team, then onto the Executive Committee and ultimately NCHNL Board that sets the overall College budget. For further information, please refer to the [Resource Allocation Policy](#).

### **2.12. ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING: PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT**

Assessment describes any processes that appraise an individual's knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills. There are many forms of assessment, serving a variety of purposes. These include:

- Promoting student learning by providing the student with feedback to help improve their performance

- Evaluating the student knowledge, understanding, abilities or skills
- Enabling the public (including employers), and higher education providers, to know that that an individual has attained an appropriate level of achievement that reflects the academic standards by the awarding institution and agreed UK norms, including the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. This may include meeting other professional requirements

The way in which students are assessed fundamentally affects their learning. Good assessment practice is designed to be aligned with teaching and learning opportunities and to ensure that, in order to pass a course and the overall programme, students have to demonstrate they have achieved the learning outcomes.

### **2.13. STUDENT SUPPORT**

The College recognises the importance of supporting students with their learning. The one-to-one tutorial is the focus of support available to students for their academic development. The Faculties also conduct 'Collections' at the end of Trinity and Hilary. Collections are individual meetings which typically begins with tutors reading a short report from each of the Course Leaders who taught the student that term. Students are encouraged to reflect on the term that has passed and to consider the implications for the following term. This encourages the student to think about performance, hopes and expectations, and to consider ways in which they might improve. Student and faculty agree how to build on the term's performance, agreeing a strategy for vacation study. Faculty will also ask about broader goals and concerns, and help them to reflect on future studies, careers and timescales. After Collections, the reports from Course Leaders are emailed to the student for their records, and placed on the student's record.

Student welfare is led by the Student Wellbeing Coordinator (SWC), who is part of Student and Academic Services team (SAS). The SWC offers confidential and impartial advice on a range of wellbeing issues that may affect a student's time at the College. These include: mental health, disabilities (learning and physical), accommodation, and general financial guidance. The SWC is the first point of call for these areas and is available via email, telephone, and in person. The College operates an 'open door' culture, allowing students to drop-in and ask general queries.

Further detail on student support can be found in [AQF9: Student Guidance & Learner Support](#).

### **2.14. STUDENT VOICE**

All students are encouraged to have input into improving quality and standards at the College through giving their views and feedback, known as using their student voice. Student voice mechanisms include student representation and student

evaluation questionnaires.

All staff and the NCH Student Union are committed to encouraging the student body to engage and to ensuring that student input contributes to decision-making at the College. Student voice mechanisms are described in detail in [AQF10: Student Voice](#).

## **2.15. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION AND THE STUDENT RECORD**

### **2.15.1. Student Records**

Quercus is the student information system selected by the College. This software underpins the College's attendance management and assessment processes, and is able to produce management. It also provides all of the tools necessary to respond to the data requirements of external agencies such as OfS and HESA.

### **2.15.2. Data Protection**

Staff should be aware that the General Data Protection Regulation gives students the right to request access to personal data relating to them, including since 2005 data held in manual datasets which are not structured by reference to individuals. This could include examination scripts, sub-course marks and copies of references received (though not references given) regarding them.

If a member of staff receives a formal request from a student for disclosure of personal data held by the College on the student, the College should refer the request to the College's Data Protection Officer.

## **2.16. COMMUNICATION AT THE COLLEGE**

The College is committed to ensuring excellent communications. The College uses a variety of methods for communicating with staff, students and the public as appropriate.

### **2.16.1. The Website**

The site focuses predominantly on the requirements of potential students, as well as the needs of current students and faculty. It provides information relating to academic and non-academic programmes and services, faculty, news, events, educational and student blogs and films. It holds the NCH Academic Handbook, which contains all the College's academic policies and procedures, academic quality framework, strategies and student handbooks.

The website is subject to a process of continuous review and development, led by the Director of Marketing, regarding both its structure and content, aligned with the College's evolution, the changing needs of its target audiences, and best-practice and

regulatory recommendations, such as the Competition and Marketing Authority and QAA guidance. Factual information relating to degree programmes, courses, faculty and services is regularly updated throughout the year.

#### **2.16.2. The Email System**

The College uses Google mail and all students and staff are given a College email account.

Emails are the primary form of communication between, and with, students and staff. The primary communications are about the day-to-day organisation and information that is of immediate, or short-term, relevance.

The College sends staff announcement emails whenever there are changes in the faculty or professional staff. 'NCH in the News' is an e-newsletter used to communicate a range of news items relating to the College, including media coverage of the College, conference participation, and articles and new books written by faculty. Periodic announcement emails are sent regarding the launch of new programmes or services, enhancements to existing programmes or services.

#### **2.16.3. The Virtual Learning Environment – Moodle**

The College has used Moodle since July 2012 to support the students' learning. Faculty can upload PowerPoint Presentation, articles and hyperlinks for the students to view to support their learning. All coursework, summative and formative, is submitted through Moodle.

#### **2.16.4. Staff Training Day**

The College's annual Staff Training Day is an important annual event. It is held at the start of the academic year and addresses a range of topics relevant to that academic year, such as revised policies and procedures. There are a variety of presentations from professional staff, updating all staff on developments such as new tutorial rooms, that have occurred in preparation for the new academic year. The Master and Chair of NCHNL Board provide all staff with updates on the College, from an academic and business point of view. Faculty who have been on research leave, present their research activities to the whole forum.

Title	AQF2 Overview of Teaching and Learning	Author	Head of Quality Assurance
Location	NCH Academic Handbook	Approved by	Academic Board
Version	1.1	Last updated	
Publication date	June 2018	Review date	June 2019
Referenced Policies and AQF Chapters	AQF3 Assurance and Enhancement of Academic Quality and Standards; AQF9 Student Guidance and Learner Support; AQF10 Student Voice; NCH Strategic Plan; Resource Allocation Policy; Quality Assurance and Enhancement Strategy		
External Reference Point (s)	UK Quality Code		