



ACADEMIC QUALITY POLICY & PRACTICE 2024 V1.6

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1.1	26.09.18	AQD	Incorporating amendments agreed by APPC on 12 September 2018
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1.3	06.09.20	AQD	Incorporating amendments agreed by APPC on 16 September 2020 Chapter 7 – Additional clarification is provided to highlight the difference between a minimal programme change outwith the 5 year review cycle and a programme refresh as part of the 5 year programme review cycle. Chapter 8 – there was a mismatch in information between the AQPP policy and the guidance notes around major and minor updates to current modules. This has been rectified and updates to syllabus information has been clarified as a major change.

			Addition of link into AQPP to significant programme change template
1.4	26/11/21	QAE	Incorporating amendments to reflect the Departmental Changes from AQ and CQA to Dept of QAE, and the new Strategy 2030.
1.5	29/09/23	QAE	Incorporating updates to reflect the Change of Academic Policy and Practice Committee to Education Committee; update reference to Student Partnership Forums; update with Senate approved principles for delivery of a GCU programme in a foreign language; ensure all references and weblinks to external drivers and policies reflect revisions; ensure all GCU weblinks are current.
1.6	05.06.24	QAE	General updates to hyperlinks and terminology and Incorporating amendments agreed by UEG and Senate to Section 5: New Programme Approval Section 7: Programme Review, Annual Portfolio Review Process

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1 FOREWORD

GCU Academic Quality Policy and Practice has been designed around the following major policy drivers.

- GCU Strategy 2030;
- GCU Academic Pillars for Learning, Teaching and Quality (2016);
- The QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education;
- Student Partnership Agreement;
- Common Good Curriculum Attributes;
- QAA Enhancement Themes;
- SFC Outcome Agreement;
- GCU Values and Behaviours;
- Going Digital Framework;
- UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law (2015, 2023)
- SFC Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model (effective from 1st August 2024);

Student engagement continues as a key principle and as a fundamental dimension of GCU Academic Quality Policy and Practice, and reflecting the SFC shift from encouraging Institutions with regard to student engagement to setting out expectations of the type and nature of that engagement.

2. QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND ASSURANCE STRATEGY

2.1 Context

GCU assurance and enhancement strategies support [Strategy 2030](#) priorities and the [Common Good Mission and Vision](#). We foster effective partnership working in an environment that is sensitive to the diverse population on campus. Partnership in this sense reflects the UK QAA Quality Code concept of joint working, based on a mature relationship and mutual respect. We promote an inclusive approach to learning by embedding the [principles of equality and diversity](#) throughout the institution, valuing individuals regardless of background or groups to which they belong. Every member of staff contributes to the creation of an excellent student experience for all students and all members of academic and professional support staff ensure that the highest academic standards are adhered to.

The [QAA Quality Code for Higher Education](#), the definitive reference point for all UK higher education providers, makes clear what higher education providers are required to do and articulates and makes transparent the standards students, staff and the general public can expect of the University. GCU adheres to the overarching values of the Code and is committed to demonstrate that in line with [GCU Values and Behaviours](#) :

- every student is treated fairly and with dignity, courtesy and respect
- every student has the opportunity to contribute to the shaping of their learning experience
- every student is properly and actively informed at appropriate times of matters relevant to their programmes of study
- all policies and processes relating to study and programmes are clear and transparent
- strategic oversight of academic standards and academic quality is at the highest levels of governance of the University
- all policies and processes are regularly and effectively monitored, reviewed, and enhanced
- sufficient and appropriate external involvement is in place for the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities
- all staff are supported, enabling them to support student learning.

2.2 Quality Enhancement

Quality Enhancement is defined by the QAA as; *'taking deliberate steps to bring about continuous improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experience of students'*. GCU commits to providing opportunities for academic and professional staff and students to engage in meaningful professional dialogue through active participation in University (Senate, Education Committee, Learning Enhancement Sub-Committee) and School (School Board, Programme Board) Committees and Working Groups, and in the activities around the [Quality Enhancement Framework](#) (QEF); Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR), Enhancement Led Internal Subject Review (ELISR), Student engagement and the Enhancement Themes.

[Student engagement](#) achievement and success involves academic, professional, and support staff across the University. The University's [Strategy 2030](#) seek to develop students, as a body and individually, to be *the best that they can be*. These strategies take account of, and respond

to, the collective and individual student life stages of learning by enabling and supporting students to take responsibility for their own learning through a commitment to an engaged relationship with the University, achieved through institutional dialogue and [partnership working](#).

Taking into account key messages from these key internal and external drivers, the following enhancement statements link to and promote reflection and evaluation at University, School, Department and Programme level and provide an internal and external articulation of quality enhancement and assurance processes, evidencing process in practice.

At GCU we:

- articulate and implement our strategic approach to learning and teaching, and promote a shared understanding of this approach to staff, students and external stakeholders, including the general public
- apply the strategic aims of key policies to the everyday practice of learning and teaching through targeted action plans
- maintain the physical, virtual and social learning environments, ensuring that these are safe, accessible and reliable for every student, promoting dignity in learning and respect in their use
- shape our learning and teaching and assessment activities and associated resources to provide every student with an equal and effective opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Allied to this, take deliberate steps to assist students to engage with the opportunities that the University provides to shape their learning experience
- enable students to self-monitor and further their academic progress through opportunities to reflect on feedback and take advantage of our comprehensive approach to [personal tutoring](#)
- ensure our learning and teaching practices are informed by reflection, deliberate and engineered evaluation of the professional practice of teaching, and discipline-led programmes of educational scholarships.
- collect and analyse appropriate information to ensure the continued effectiveness of our strategic and discipline-specific approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities and teaching practice
- work in partnership with students in quality enhancement and assurance processes, resulting in the improvement of their educational experience
- create an integrated environment in which students, academic, professional, and support staff can engage in professional discussions to bring about demonstrable and sustainable enhancement of the educational experience

- put arrangements in place to ensure that we promote the collective student voice at all levels of the University
- demonstrate the value we place on teaching that aims to be inspirational
- support staff to gain professional recognition and enhance their own and the University's reputation through CPD

The following features are highlighted as a key part of the Enhancement Strategy:

- GCU conducts subject review on a five-year cycle by academic department or other appropriate grouping
- Scope of subject reviews encompasses all taught provision, research-student supervision and CPD activity, consultancy and knowledge transfer, and the connection between research and industry and curriculum development
- Achieving student engagement with enhancement and quality processes.
- Subject review process is aligned, wherever possible, with the programme approval/review process and with professional/ statutory/regulatory body reviews.
- Colleagues from the [Quality Assurance and Enhancement](#) and other central departments will work with Programme Development Teams to provide bespoke input into the quality assurance and academic development of new programmes including advice and information on curriculum design and digital delivery.
- School based Senior Academic Staff act as Panel Chairs for Programme Approvals and Reviews and other members of academic staff and students act as Panel Members.

2.3 Quality Assurance

At GCU the process of assuring quality is the day to day responsibility of all academic and professional staff. Together we seek to:

- safeguard the academic standards of the University
- assure the quality of the learning opportunities that GCU offers to students
- promote continuous and systematic improvement in GCU education provision

To ensure the University complies with and adheres to consumer law ([CRA/CMA](#)) the content of the programme, the modules offered and the approach to learning and teaching must adhere to and comply, in practice, with all detail included in the Programme Specification. Failure to do so contravenes University policy and exposes the University to the risk of being non-compliant with consumer law ([CRA/CMA](#)).

The University recognises the valuable contribution that key programme and department staff make to the learning, teaching and quality process, including Department Heads, Programme

leads, Module Leads and professional support staff. **The Department Head is operationally responsible for the overall quality and academic integrity of all academic programmes and associated modules within the Department.**

Working with the Programme Team, the Programme Leader is responsible for the quality and integrity of the Programme, including Programme Approval/Re-approval. The Programme Board is the hub of programme activity and monitoring, and under the leadership of the Programme Leader is responsible for generating the [Annual Programme Analysis and Monitoring Report](#).

2.4 The Common Good

As part of the implementation of GCU's [Strategy 2030](#) the University has developed a model which will support, recognise and embed the Common Good within the curriculum and the wider student experience as part of its core mission. The learning experience at GCU will prepare students to develop six [Common Good attributes](#):

- Active and global citizenship,
- Entrepreneurial mind-set,
- Systems thinking,
- Responsible leadership,
- Resilience, compassion and empathy
- Confidence

GCU students will develop the [Common Good attributes](#) through their formal taught curriculum. The [Common Good Curriculum](#) will also provide opportunities for students to enhance and develop these attributes further through engaging in co- and extra-curricular activities aligned to the Common Good – for example, social innovation, community engagement and volunteering. These attributes are reflected within all Programme Approval and Review Documentation. Additionally the [GCU Values and Behaviours](#) (Integrity; Creativity, Responsibility and Confidence) act as guiding principles for all aspects of Programme and University QEA activity and associated behaviours.

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement

The roles and responsibilities of the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement at Glasgow Caledonian University in relation to academic quality, enhancement and assurance are summarised below:

- development and review of policy and procedures assuring the quality of the experience offered to students, supporting student engagement, and ensuring external referencing is used to ensure the integrity of awards and the quality of provision in compliance with the [QAA Quality Code for Higher Education](#)
- monitoring and review of academic quality and standards and providing advice and guidance to staff, both academic and administrative, on all aspects of the University quality enhancement and assurance procedures
- preparation for and organisation of QAA Enhancement-Led Institutional Review
- the organisation and facilitation of Enhancement-Led Internal Subject Review and the monitoring of the implementation of the action plans derived from the reviews
- management and co-ordination of approval of new programmes and the review of existing programmes
- providing advice on the development, enhancement, and approval of modules
- management and institutional oversight of the approval and appointment of External Examiners for taught programmes and learning contracts, and the consideration of External Examiners' annual reports
- provision of guidance, advice and support in the development, approval, and monitoring of partnership arrangements
- maintain the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement website, including programme specifications, regulations, etc. and the publicly available information provided to the QAA
- management of the thematic review process
- the collation of information on quality enhancement and assurance matters and annual summary reports for consideration of Senate and Senate Standing Committees and Court
- ensuring that Senate, Senate Standing Committees, and Programme Award and Progression Boards act in accordance with the University's Assessment Regulations
- providing advice to Progression and Award Boards on the Assessment Regulations
- business process owner for programme and module approval and review

3.2 Schools

3.2.1 School-level Responsibilities: Programmes

Schools are responsible to Senate, through the Education Committee, for ensuring the effective implementation of the processes and procedures to review, monitor, and enhance the quality and standards of their academic provision and for the implementation of the University's [Strategy 2030](#).

The specific responsibilities of Schools are summarised below, with respect to programmes:

- the implementation of University processes and procedures to monitor, review, and enhance the quality and standards of all of their academic provision, principally at programme level, in accordance with University policy
- to be responsible to Senate, through Education Committee, for the development, approval, review, and maintenance of all programmes, suites of programmes, and frameworks offered by the School
- to take full cognisance of the requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency/Scottish Funding Council in providing robust evidence on the quality and standards of all academic provision, principally at programme level, embraced by the School
- to ensure where relevant the involvement, as far as possible, of appropriate professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies in associated quality enhancement and assurance activities
- to provide sufficient resources, human and physical, to ensure the maintenance of standards within all programmes and modules
- to ensure an adequate infrastructure for the support of School programmes is provided, and to draw the attention of the University to any shortfall in this support
- the appropriate consideration of the academic and financial implications of all proposed partnership arrangements
- to review research and staff development strategies within the Schools for the purpose of ensuring that all programmes and modules are underpinned by relevant scholarly and professional activity.

N.B. For programmes administered out with a School, these responsibilities will be undertaken by the relevant directorate/unit.

Quality assurance and enhancement in a modular framework requires regular and effective communications between Programme Boards and Schools involved in delivering the programme. The relationship between these bodies must ensure high levels of mutual understanding and a firm commitment to act co-operatively.

In the event of tensions emerging amongst Schools, Programme Boards, and Programme Development Boards, the matter will be referred to the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will attempt to resolve the issue. If this is not possible, then matters of quality enhancement and assurance will be referred to Education Committee; matters of resourcing will be referred to the PVC Learning and Teaching.

3.2.2 School-level Responsibilities: Modules

Schools are responsible for the development, maintenance, and monitoring of all modules within their subject-area remit.

The specific responsibilities of Schools are noted below, with respect to modules:

- developing all new and existing modules within the relevant discipline areas of the School, including the determination of appropriate standards in relation to the level

of the module and subsequent updating of the student information management system

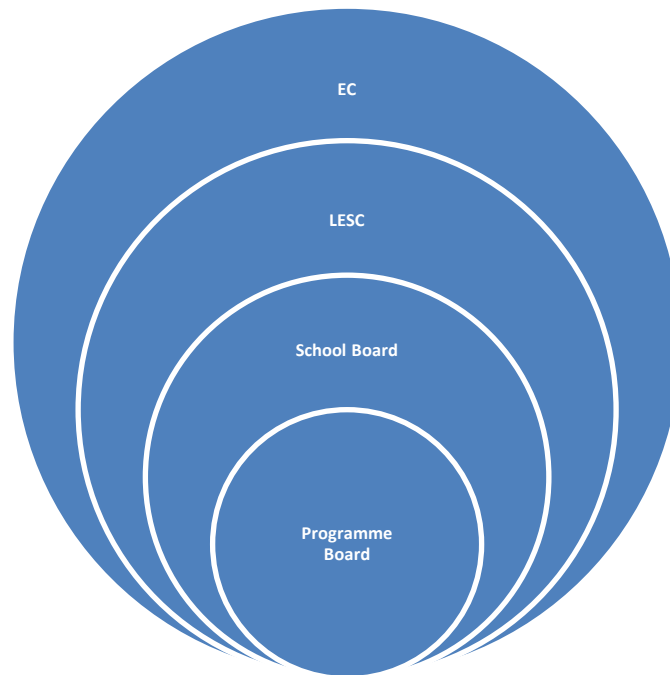
- developing appropriate learning, teaching, and assessment strategies for each module, consistent with the learning objectives of the programme(s) on which the modules are delivered
- for modules within their remit, identifying the continuing professional development and training needs for staff involved in the development and delivery of learning outcomes and instruments of assessment
- monitoring the delivery and enabling the enhancement of the quality and standards of the modules within their remit
- the annual module monitoring process
- ensuring the academic health of all modules for which the unit has responsibility
- ensuring all proposed updates to modules are fully discussed with appropriate Programme Boards and due regard is given to their view prior to approval
- ensure (via the PL) that each module within their remit has a suitably qualified Module Leader and that each is allocated to an appropriate External Examiner
- considering timeously the External Examiners' reports insofar as they affect their modules and provision of an appropriate response
- implementing the objectives of the strategies for learning for which the Schools are responsible and to encourage the adoption of high-quality teaching, learning, and assessment strategies for modules within their remit
- where appropriate, to work with Programme Boards to ensure that quality enhancement and assurance and academic standards activities pursued at the subject level are informed by the requirements of professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies
- the monitoring of research and scholarly activities designed to underpin the programmes to which their modules contribute
- ensuring the appropriateness of the human and physical resources underpinning the quality and standards of the academic provision within their constituent disciplines
- ensuring that the provision which Schools develop and offer is consistent with the academic policy and programme strategy of the School and University.
- oversee the implementation of the University process for module evaluation.
- consider any problems raised by Module Leaders at the host Programme Board and disseminate instances of good practice within the Department and to the School

Each Head of Department is accountable for ensuring that the above School level responsibilities are discharged for all programmes and modules within their Department.

3.3 Programme Leader

A Programme Leader (PL), situated within an Academic School/Department is the cornerstone of Programme and Module Approval and Review and holds overall responsibility for the academic leadership and integrity of the programme and all associated modules.

The trajectory of programme approval and review is shown below.



The Programme Leader provides academic leadership to the Programme Board¹ and is responsible, with the programme team, for defining the philosophy, rationale, and objectives of the programme, as well as defining the content; structure; and teaching, learning, and assessment strategies.

Working with the Head of Department and the Programme Module Leaders, the Programme Leader ensures that programmes provide a coherent professional, academic, and intellectual experience appropriate to the defined philosophy and objectives of the discipline and the School.

The Programme Leader works closely with the Programme Coordinator (or equivalent) to ensure continuity and consistency of administrative and academic processes underpinning the design and delivery of academic provision.

¹ Programme Boards are ultimately responsible to the School which hosts the programme for all aspects of quality enhancement and assurance related to the programmes or suite of programmes under their jurisdiction.

The academic authority of a Programme Leader is recognised by the University and validated by School and Programme Boards. The Programme Leader holds responsibility for the Programme in its entirety (expressed operationally through Programme Board) and directs the activity and contribution of the Module Leaders attached to the Programme.

3.3.1 Role of the Programme Leader

Working closely with the Module Leaders and Programme Coordinator (or equivalent), the roles of the Programme Leader is to deliver the programme and ensure that appropriate academic quality standards and processes are in place.

This includes, among other things, to:

- produce the Annual Programme Analysis and Monitoring Report, supported by the Programme Coordinator (or equivalent), including Programme Enhancement Plan, as appropriate, for consideration by the Programme Board
- ensure that student/staff consultation takes place on a regular basis and close the feedback loop by ensuring a specific action against any issues requiring attention and reporting back to the students - either that the action has been taken (and the nature if the action) or giving the reason for why action cannot be taken
- ensure that the Programme Specification is reviewed and uploaded annually
- in liaison with professional support staff, ensure that electronic versions of Programmes and Modules are accurate and up to date in the University's Student Information System and the online module and programme catalogues
- lead the Programme Review process
- ensure that annually-updated Programme Handbooks are available to students
- ensure, with the programme team, the continuous development of the programme to maintain relevance of content and the enhancement of the student learning experience including addressing issues in relation to students with a disability
- provide information and advice to the Head of Department on resource issues arising from the delivery of the programme
- monitor admissions, progression, and completion rates in accordance with the University and external requirements (PSRBs) and discuss at Programme Board
- ensure, in liaison with appropriate staff, that programme admission, registration, and student induction operates effectively, including the maintenance of University policy with regard to Equality and Diversity
- have oversight of Attendance monitoring, being aware of attendance issues
- have oversight of Module monitoring – review module feedback and work with the module leader to address any areas of enhancement and to share good practice.
- monitor and address any issues arising from operation of the student/ [Personal Tutor](#) relationship for the duration of their studies (see section 3.6
- ensure that the loading and timing of assessments are appropriate on an ongoing basis (following approval/review events)
- ensure that the Progression and Award Board has been provided with the necessary data to allow it to discharge its remit as defined in the GCU Assessment Regulations and Terms of Reference and Standard Operations of Progression and Award Boards and associated activities

- liaise as appropriate with the External Examiners to ensure effective External monitoring of the programme and associated modules
- liaison with professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies

3.4 Module Leader

3.4.1 Role of Module Leader

The role of a Module Leader is to support the Programme Leader and work closely with other programme Module Leaders to ensure a coherent academic experience for all Programmes accessing the module.

The module Leader will be responsible for the planning, delivery, review, monitoring, standards and academic development of module(s) and for ensuring that such modules are accurate and up to date; resulting in a Module Enhancement Plan, as appropriate, including:

- working closely with module tutors to ensure the quality of the student experience
- day-to-day administration of the module, including coordination of the module team if more than one individual is involved in delivery
- preparing a [Module Handbook](#)
- Module Evaluation
- liaising as appropriate with the External Examiners to ensure effective external monitoring of the module
- developing appropriate learning, teaching, and assessment strategies for each module, consistent with the learning objectives of the programme(s) to which the modules are delivered
- monitoring student progress and liaising with the Programme Leaders or other appropriate individuals with regard to the individual problems and academic support needs of the students, including students with disabilities
- providing academic advice including feedback on assessment in relation to students' progress through the module
- reporting to Programme Boards on matters concerning the delivery of the module

N.B. The Programme Board, in turn, will ensure that any issues/concerns are remitted to the appropriate Progression and Award Board meetings with regard to the individual performance of students, and matters related to the assessment of the module.

In relation to assessment, the module leader also has overall operational responsibility for the module.

3.5 Programme Coordinator (or equivalent)

3.5.1 Role of Programme Coordinator (or equivalent)

The Programme Coordinator (or equivalent) works closely with the Programme and Module Leaders, and as a core member of the Programme Team.

The role of the Programme Coordinator (or equivalent) is to:

- Work as a member of the Programme Team and; working closely in partnership with the Programme Leader, be responsible for the day-to-day administrative management and coordination of the programme
- Act as the primary point of contact for students and staff, to ensure the provision of an excellent student experience
- Clerk Programme and Progression and Award Boards, working closely with Chairs and Programme Leaders.
- Work closely with and liaising with a wide range of stakeholders both within and outside of the University including other University departments and campuses, external examiners, professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and alumni to ensure a consistent and high level of professional support is provided to the administration of programmes
- Ensure that all appropriate student records and profiles are maintained, reviewed and necessary action taken, in accordance with University processes & procedures and adhere to GCU and external information governance and other legal requirements.

3.6 Personal Tutor

Overall [Personal Tutoring](#) arrangements for individual programmes remain the responsibility of the Programme Leader in liaison with the Head of Department; ensuring that all students are assigned a Personal Tutor and that all Personal Tutors in their programme receive appropriate guidance; are kept informed of changes to University Policies; and have the opportunity to further develop their Tutoring skills through CPD. In addition, Programme Leaders should provide support and advice to Personal Tutors for situations that are unfamiliar or less straightforward.

Programme leaders should monitor the operational effectiveness of Personal Tutoring in their Programme, e.g. to ensure that Personal Tutors are meeting regularly with their Tutees. The overall effectiveness of Personal Tutoring should be reported at the Programme Board.

3.6.1 Role of the Personal Tutor

Personal Tutors have primary responsibility for developing and maintaining regular contact with all their allocated Tutees to provide support and guidance on academic and non-academic matters at Programme level, as well as the student's personal development. The role includes:

- Becoming familiar with all Tutees assigned to them.
- Posting and keeping to regular weekly office hours/when available for Personal Tutoring.
- Supporting Tutees in becoming independent learners by encouraging student reflection on their academic progress; skills development and career aspirations.
- Discussing assessment feedback and providing guidance on how to improve assessment performance and where to get further support (such as the Learning Development Centre; Library Services and any individualised support schemes running in Departments/Schools).

- Referring students experiencing difficulty with the subject-specific content of a particular module to the appropriate module leader for academic guidance.
- Offering advice and guidance on the expectations of the University and Programme and demystifying University processes.
- Offering advice on and signposting to sources of academic support such as the Learning Development Centre; Library Services; and on-line learning resources.
- Raising student awareness of development opportunities available to them such as those in the Students Association; Work Experience Hub; Student Mentors; Student Ambassadors; Sports Clubs; Volunteering; Placements; and Student Leaders Programme.
- Referring Tutees experiencing welfare/personal difficulties to the Student Wellbeing Team; Students Association or Campus Life, as appropriate.
- Seeking advice from the Programme Leader when dealing with complex issues or in clarifying process.
- Engaging with the Fit to Sit processes, if necessary, to provide advice and guidance on these processes to Tutees.
- Encouraging Tutees to make use of Personal Development Plans (PDP).
- Supporting Tutees with career development and encouraging their regular engagement with the Careers Service.
- Keeping meeting records using the Personal Tutoring Meeting Record template.
- Writing references for Tutees if appropriate.

3.7 Programme Boards

Programme Boards (PB) are responsible to the School which hosts the programme for all aspects of quality enhancement and assurance related to the programmes or suite of programmes under their jurisdiction. A PB shall be established for each programme or suite of programmes. The PB shall comprise: programme officers; nominated representatives, normally from each subject area contributing to the programme; and student representatives from the programme. Where appropriate, representatives from industry, commerce, or the appropriate professions may be invited to be members of the PB. Alternatively, PBs may make other arrangements, which will be documented, to ensure that the views of industry, commerce, professions etc. are considered by the PB and have an appropriate impact on the programme.

The specific responsibilities of Programme Boards, in liaison with appropriate Schools, as necessary, are:

- the monitoring and maintenance of academic standards within their programme area
- the quality of the student experience within their programme area
- the academic coherence and development of their programme
- the creation and maintenance of Programme Specifications
- the timeous consideration of External Examiners' reports and communication of the associated responses to the Externals
- the establishment of Student Partnership Forums under the terms of the guidelines agreed by Senate

- where appropriate, the maintenance of effective relationships with professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies within their programme area to ensure that quality enhancement and assurance and academic standards activities at the programme level are informed by the requirements of these bodies
- the [Annual Programme Monitoring process](#).

3.7.1. Composition and Meetings of a Programme Board

For every approved programme there is a corresponding Programme Board. Each Programme Board, which may represent a single programme or a suite of programmes, is responsible to the appropriate School Board for implementing the policies of Senate.

Composition

- Programme Leader [*Ex Officio*]
- an appropriate number (as determined by the Programme Board) of representatives of each subject area with modules under its remit which are part of the programme(s). Each subject area must normally have at least one representative.
- one registered student, to be elected by, and from, the registered students on *each level of each programme* or suite of programmes, save that in the case of one-year programmes two such students shall be so elected
- the election and method of appointment of student(s) will be in accordance with such regulations made by the Court on the recommendation of the Students' Association
- the representative(s) in this category will normally be members of the appropriate Student Partnership Forum
- the composition of the Programme Board must normally include external members (see Section 3.7.1 above).

Other *Ex Officio* members of Programme Board:

- Principal or nominee, normally the PVC Learning and Teaching.
- Dean of the School (or nominee) in which the host programme is located
- ADLTQ of the School in which the host programme is located
- Dean(s) of the School(s) administratively responsible for the programme(s) or one person nominated by each Dean of School appointed under this category
- The Academic Liaison Librarian.

N.B. The HoD (or nominated representative) is responsible for Chairing all Programme Boards in the Department.

Meetings

Programme Boards must meet at least once per trimester and a minimum of three times per academic year. To facilitate more effective student involvement, student-related issues should be considered at the beginning of Programme Board agendas.

N.B. Quorum for Programme Boards: 50% of the membership. (Principal and PVC Education are excluded from the quorum).

4. ENHANCEMENT-LED INTERNAL SUBJECT REVIEW

4.1 Introduction

Enhancement-led Internal Subject Review (ELISR) is a key element of the Quality Enhancement Framework which provides public assurance about the security of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities at Scottish HEIs.

The ELISR process meets the expectations of the [QAA Quality Code for Institution-led Review](#) and the [Scottish Funding Council guidance on Quality in Scotland's universities](#).

Reviews follow a five-year cycle, will normally take place at subject level and will subsume programme approval/review activity.

The Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will be responsible for the organisation and facilitation of the review process.

4.2 Characteristics

Reviews will:

- encourage dialogue on areas which can be enhanced and in which quality might be improved, identify excellence in practice, and promote evaluation and critical reflection on practice
- take full account of student feedback and report on partnership working
- articulate the student voice
- provide a mechanism for professional dialogue around the practice of teaching and learning
- provide an objective review of provision, based on an understanding of national and international good practice
- take full account of [Subject Benchmark Statements](#) and the [QAA Quality code](#) and, where appropriate, the requirements of professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies
- take full account of [Strategy 2030](#) and alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals
- take full account of the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(SCQF\)](#)
- reflect on the effectiveness of annual monitoring arrangements and follow-up actions

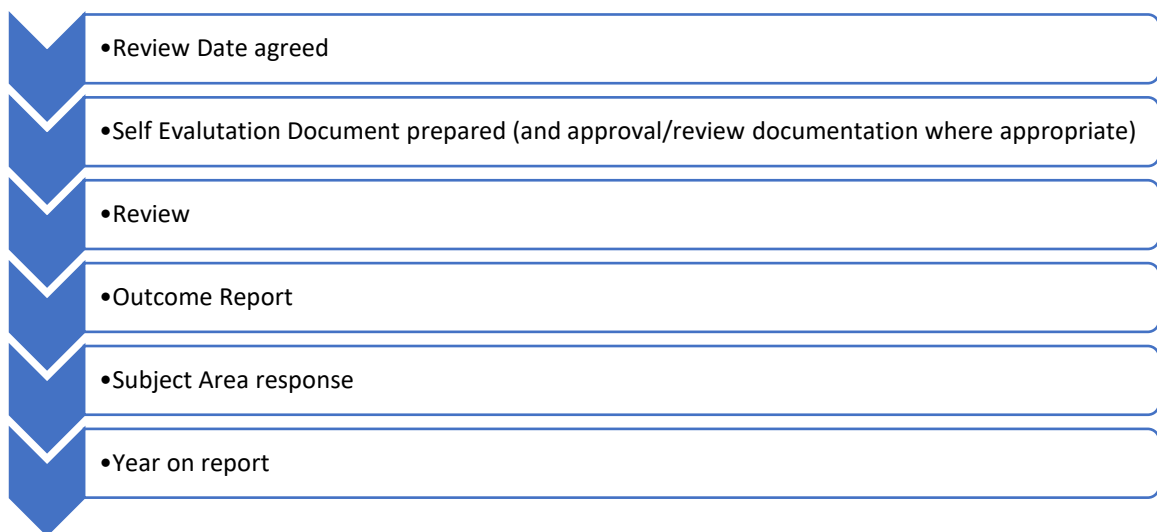
4.3 Scope

The scope of the review will encompass:

- the student experience and quality of student engagement
- teaching, learning and assessment
- analysis and reporting on performance data such as admission, retention, progression and achievement, completion statistics, RPL, articulation, NSS, ISB
- QAA Enhancement Themes

- CPD activity resulting in enhanced professional reputation such as Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) qualification of staff including Advance HE recognition at Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow, and Principal Fellow levels
- research-student supervision
- the extent to which research/scholarly/professional activity informs the curriculum
- collaborative provision with internal and external stakeholders including PSRBs (professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies)
- impact of central and school-based student support
- impact of professional services
- international students on and off campus
- any other provision leading to the award of credit.

4.4 ELISR Process



4.5 Format

4.5.1 Timeline

The Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement maintains the University's forward programme of ELISR activity and provides a detailed timeline for each review.

The date of each ELISR will be agreed, in consultation with the subject area, before the end of the academic year preceding the Review. The review period will be determined by the extent of the provision being reviewed and will normally be conducted via a series of online meetings and correspondence.

4.5.2 Composition of ELISR Panel

The Review will be chaired by an appropriate senior academic from GCU and, as a minimum, will include student representation, cross-Department/School representation, appropriate academic and professional external peers and other appropriate stakeholders (e.g. student services)

Panel composition will ensure that a sufficient number of externals with the appropriate breadth of experience are appointed to adequately cover the subject provision in the timeframe available.

Further guidance is provided in [Guidance on the Appointment of Panel Members](#).

4.5.3 Review Documentation

The subject area will prepare a self-evaluation document which demonstrates that the subject discipline has undertaken robust self-evaluation in a constructively self-critical manner. The self-evaluation process should promote dialogue on areas for enhancement, identify good practice for dissemination across the institution and should encourage and support critical reflection on practice.

Self-evaluation should discuss both the strengths of the provision and areas where enhancement and improvement are necessary, as perceived by the staff and students of the School. The document is an opportunity for the School, through the process of evaluation, to demonstrate how the strengths of the provision identified in previous subject reviews or accreditation events have been built upon, and how any areas for enhancement and improvement identified have been addressed. **Where areas for enhancement remain, plans for addressing these via an enhancement plan should be summarised.**

Reference points for the evaluation will include benchmark statements, [QAA Quality code](#), the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework](#) and the requirements of professional, statutory bodies and regulatory bodies. Further guidelines on the content of the self-evaluation documentation are given in the [ELISR Guidance Document](#).

4.6 Outcome Report

The ELISR process will culminate in an outcome report highlighting strengths and achievements and including recommendations for change that are aimed at strengthening provision and enhancing the student experience.

The subject areas are required to produce a response in the form of an enhancement plan which will, following initial approval by the Panel Chair, be submitted together with the outcome report to the Learning Enhancement Sub-committee (LESC) for consideration and approval on behalf of the Education Committee (EC) and Senate.

Any actions requiring University level consideration will be considered by EC. In the event of any serious issues arising from the report, EC will draw these issues to the attention of Senate.

The conclusions of the report and the action plan must be made available to the students within the subject provision reviewed via GCU Learn

4.7 Follow-up Action

A year-on update will be prepared by the subject area documenting progress on the approved enhancement plan. This will be reviewed by the Chair of the Panel, a representative from the

Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, the Head of Department, and the Dean of School.

LESC will be informed at that stage if there are any either difficulties in securing the year-on report from the subject area under review or alternatively problems with action plan implementation.

Thereafter (two years and onwards) the progress of the action plan will be monitored through the annual monitoring and school planning processes.

5. NEW PROGRAMME APPROVAL

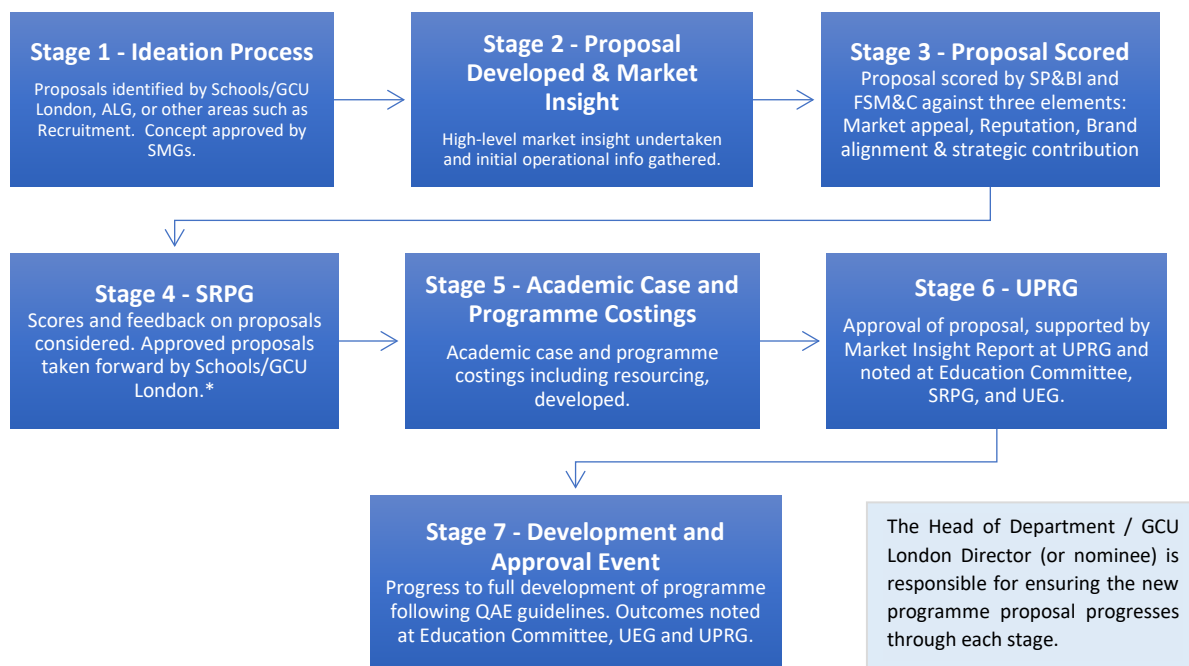
5.1 Introduction

This section applies to the approval of new programmes only. New programmes are defined as those where the provision is not currently part of the existing School/Department Portfolio. Review of current programmes is detailed in Programme Review in [Section 7](#).

The process for developing and approving new programme proposals aligns with the [QAA Quality Code for Higher Education](#)

5.2 Development of New Programme Proposals

New programme proposals must be aligned to the University's Strategy and our Vision, which focuses on access, excellence and impact and reflect our [Values](#). Programme developments will follow the undernoted process:



**Following completion of this stage, the proposal should be forwarded to UEG for the Schools / GCU London to confirm the proposed programme start date and allow marketing to commence.*

Details of the timelines for completion of each of the above processes is contained in the [Guidelines for Programme Approval](#).

5.3 Concept Proposal

As part of Stage 1, the [Concept Proposal Proforma](#) will be completed and submitted online in accordance with the Guidelines for Programme Approval and will outline consideration of the following:

- Proposed Programme Details (Title, level, delivery location and mode)
- Rationale for development
- Alignment with University / School / Department strategic priorities
- External links, accreditation and benchmarks
- Anticipated target student market
- Anticipated Graduate destinations and employability
- Anticipated investment and resource requirements

Once submitted, further operational information and market insight will be gathered (Stage 2) and scored (Stage 3) prior to further consideration and approval (Stage 4).

5.4 Academic Case and Programme Costings

Schools will undertake development of the Academic Case and work with Finance colleagues to produce the Programme Costings (Stage 5) in accordance with the [Guidelines for Programme Approval](#). Following consideration and approval by the School Senior Management Group and endorsement by School Board, the proposals will progress to Stage 6 for approval. The Academic Case will build on the Concept Proposal Proforma and will additionally incorporate:

- SFC Funding Eligibility (and Price Group where appropriate)
- Membership of the Programme Development Team (including internal and external stakeholders)
- Consultation undertaken to date and proposed as part of full Programme development (internal and external)
- Outline Programme Content

5.5 Full Programme Development and Approval Event

Following approval of the Academic Case and Programme Costings the School, in collaboration with the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE), will agree an appropriate timeline and Programme Approval Submission Documentation set and an Approval Event will be scheduled. Throughout this process QAE will work with the Programme Development Team to provide support and guidance.

QAE will facilitate arrangements for the formal approval of the fully developed proposal and assemble an appropriate Panel in accordance with the [Guidelines for Programme Approval](#).

5.6 Accreditation by Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies

Where appropriate, the accreditation of programmes will form an integral part of the approval process with representatives of relevant Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Body (PSRB) as members of Programme Approval Panels. The aim will be to allow the quality enhancement and assurance requirements of the University and PSRB to be satisfied by a single event.

In cases where separate accreditation visits are required, the process will be supported by Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will also ensure that the PSRB report for these

separate visits will be submitted to the Learning Enhancement Sub-Committee for consideration.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement can also provide administrative support to Departments with an accreditation process.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement actively engage with Academic Departments/Units, to maintain an institutional register of accreditation activity.

5.7 Programme Handbooks

Following formal approval of the Programme the Programme Board will be responsible for ensuring the preparation and provision of a Programme Handbook to each student at enrolment or, if there is no enrolment, through a mechanism designed by the Programme Board to ensure that each student receives their copy of the Handbook prior to the commencement of the programme.

The Programme Leader will be responsible for maintaining and annually updating the Programme Handbook. Where possible the information will be provided by electronic means (with associated web links) utilising the [University's Programme Handbook template](#) and [Programme Handbook Notes of Guidance](#).

6. PROGRAMME MONITORING

6.1 Introduction

Programme monitoring and review is the process by which the University:

- discharges its responsibility for setting and maintaining academic standards
- assures and enhances the quality of learning opportunities within the University
- provides a mechanism for the dissemination of good practice internally and, where appropriate, across the sector.

GCU adheres to the principles of the [QAA Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and:

- maintains strategic oversight of the processes for, and outcomes of, programme monitoring and review to ensure that processes are applied systematically and operated consistently
- takes deliberate steps to use the outcomes of programme monitoring and review for enhancement purposes
- operates a process to protect the academic interests of students on programme closure or as the result of portfolio review
- defines the processes for programme monitoring and review and communicates them clearly to all internal staff and external bodies involved
- evaluates the process for programme monitoring and review
- involves external stakeholders and draws widely on internal and external expertise
- involves students in all aspects of programme monitoring and review
- enables staff, students and external participants to contribute effectively by putting in place arrangements for support and development.

The process is undertaken annually. Programme Boards evaluate and reflect on their academic provision and highlight where the student learning experience can be enhanced and identify areas of good practice. This is a core activity and whilst all staff collectively have a responsibility to uphold standards some staff have specific roles in the Annual Monitoring process.

Annual Programme Monitoring is a continuous enhancement process carried out 'in-year', formally commencing at the beginning of each new academic session and following the flow of the academic year as data, such as admission statistics, first diet examination results and NSS results etc are released by Strategy, Planning & Business Intelligence.

6.2 The Monitoring Process

In accordance with [University guidance](#), Programme Boards will complete an [Annual Programme Analysis and Monitoring Report](#) which considers the following key performance indicators (KPIs):

- review of the previous year's Enhancements, including areas identified for development in the new academic year

- trends in admission, progression and awards statistics, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and articulation policies and honours classification*
- trends in graduate employment, including the most recently available graduate employment statistics*
- the minutes of the Student Partnership Forum and an evaluation of the GCU student experience priorities related to the programme
- External Examiner comments (at Progression and Award Boards) and final report(s), and the Programme Board's response to the Examiner(s)
- where appropriate, an analysis of evidence of interaction with any academic units contributing modules to the programme
- equality and diversity
- a review of the programme teaching and learning strategy in relation to the demonstration and application of the [GCU Strategy 2030](#), and [Common Good Curriculum](#)
- collaborative and professional/statutory/regulatory body activity
- the requirements or recommendations of approval/review events or visits from professional/statutory/regulatory bodies.

* based on comparison of data from no more than three previous years

Where monitoring covers a suite of programmes, such as within a framework, the statistical information will, where possible, be collated and held separately for each programme within the suite.

For audit purposes, evidence of consideration of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be provided within the minutes of the Programme Board and the Board should retain the complete evidence-base on which the considerations were founded. Any proposals for programme change arising from annual monitoring will comply with the relevant GCU policy and procedure.

The [Annual Programme Monitoring Process flowchart](#) details the sequence and timing of consideration of the relevant KPI and Departmental, School and University consideration of the outputs from programme monitoring.

The review should be completed substantially by June of each year for undergraduate programmes and updated with second diet assessment results as they become available. Timelines for postgraduate programmes and programmes which commence in Trimester B are detailed on the [Annual Programme Monitoring Process flowchart](#).

The monitoring process must identify and highlight any updates to the programme since approval/last review that may affect the programme's compliance with UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) regulations for International Student Visa Holders in force at that time.

6.3 Process Outcomes

The outcome of the monitoring process will be:

- the production/updating of an Enhancement Plan for the programme. The Plan will include 'SMART' targets and will specifically address issues arising from the process, including but not limited to where:
 - students have shown dissatisfaction with a programme (or associated modules)
 - progression rates after the second diet are lower than agreed School benchmarks
 - an External Examiner has expressed concern in relation to the quality and/or standards of a programme.
- confirmed Programme Specification or proposals for change to the programme structure (these must be approved via the relevant GCU policy and procedure). The programme specification is part of University public information set and part of the material information set for programmes.
- the identification of wider issues for consideration by the Department, School and/or University.

6.4 Departmental, School and University Consideration of the Programme Monitoring Process

The outputs from programme monitoring and review will be considered at Departmental, School and University level.

As indicated in the [Annual Programme Monitoring Process flowchart](#) each Head of Department, based on analysis of the APAs, will submit a summary [Departmental Annual Monitoring Report Template](#) to the ADLTQ who will prepare a [School Annual Monitoring Report Template](#) for consideration by the School Board.

Once approved by the School Board, this report will be submitted to Learning Enhancement Sub-committee (LESC) which will report on any cross-University trends or issues for consideration by this and/or other University committees as appropriate.

7. PROGRAMME REVIEW

7.1 Introduction

The University is committed to the ongoing enhancement of its programmes, taking account of developments in the disciplines, pedagogic practice and being responsive to feedback and monitoring.

7.2 Annual Portfolio Review

As part of planning activity, Schools (and other academic units) should review their academic portfolio of programme provision to ensure it remains relevant and sustainable. This process should be undertaken on an annual basis as documented in the [Annual Portfolio Review Process](#).

Programmes currently within their period of approval may be subject to temporary suspension as part of the annual portfolio review process and/or in the case of low student recruitment. Suspension permits the School to consider factors impacting on the student experience on the programme and/or underlying causes of low recruitment and the action it wishes to take to address these. In some instances, the evaluation of the programme may lead to the conclusion that it is no longer 'fit for purpose' and should be withdrawn from the University's portfolio.

7.3 Periodic Review

GCU complies with the [SFC Guidance to colleges and universities on quality AY 2022-23 and AY 2023-24 \(refreshed August 2023\)](#) which states that 'All aspects of provision are expected to be reviewed systematically and rigorously on a cycle of not more than six years to demonstrate that institutions meet the expectations set out in the [QAA Quality Code for Higher Education](#), and the standards set out in the European Standards and Guidelines (part 1)'.

Schools are responsible for the ongoing monitoring, review and enhancement of the programmes within their portfolio as part of the Annual Monitoring process. Further scrutiny and refresh of programmes takes place at least once every 5 years to ensure that programmes remain viable, continue to fit with the School/University mission and strategy and continue to deliver a high quality student experience. Programme Review will normally take place as part of the Enhancement-Led Internal Subject Review (ELISR).

To ensure the University complies with and adheres to consumer law ([CRA/CMA](#)) any programme and/or module amendments must be conducted in a timely manner, with due consideration given to the impact on current and potential students. [The Programme Specification Proforma](#) (PSP) published on the website must be the most up-to-date version. The content of the programme, the modules offered and the approach to learning and teaching must be as stated in the PSP. Altering a programme without taking cognisance of the University Quality Enhancement and Assurance processes and updating the PSP could potentially result in the Programme being in breach of University policy and the University not meeting its obligations under consumer law.

7.4 Approaches to Programme Review

Normally, Programme Review (and Approval) will be subsumed within Enhancement Led Internal Subject Review (ELISR) following which programmes will be placed in indefinite approval subject to periodic monitoring over a five-year cycle. Exceptionally, a programme may require to be reviewed or modified out with the ELISR process and/or within the five-year cycle.

In all circumstances the University aims to take a proportionate approach to Programme Review and modification dependent upon the nature and extent of any proposed change. Advice should be sought from the School's Quality Assurance and Enhancement contact to confirm approaches.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to ensure that the appropriate approach for the review of programmes in their Department has been formally agreed with the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

The key factor in determining the approach to be adopted is the potential degree of impact on the students' learning experience. Consideration needs to be given to the implications of the proposed change on the structure and balance of the programme, its educational aims, learning outcomes and content, and/or the wider practical implications for the student learning experience.

Each approach within the review process will be designed to ensure all programmes have adequate scrutiny and opportunity to demonstrate enhanced provision.

All decisions of Programme Review Panels concerning programme review are reported to the Learning Enhancement Sub-Committee (LESC) of the Education Committee (EC) on behalf of Senate.

7.5 Timelines for Programme Review

Timelines for the completion of the review process will be confirmed in consultation with the Department of Quality Enhancement and Assurance with all activity normally completed by the end of Trimester A. This deadline has been agreed primarily to ensure that timely and clear information can be made available to students and applicants, to inform their academic choices and to help Departments, both academic and professional, plan work accordingly.

Where units or programmes being reviewed are delivered outside the standard trimester pattern e.g. Trimester B starts, advice on timescales for proposed updates should be sought from the School's Quality Assurance and Enhancement contact. The key consideration will be the completion of the review and approval process (including consultation) sufficiently far in advance of the start date to communicate with applicants/current students in good time about approved updates.

7.6 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

Where possible, Programme Review will be undertaken in partnership with professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies (PSRBs). If a PSRB visit takes place independently, responsibility for supporting the event lies with Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

In cases where separate accreditation visits are required, the process will be supported by Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will also ensure that the PSRB report for these separate visits will be submitted to the Learning Enhancement Sub-Committee (LESC) for consideration.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement can also provide administrative support to Departments with an accreditation process.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement actively engage with academic Departments/units, to maintain an institutional register of accreditation activity.

7.7 Consultation

The University has a legal responsibility to provide clear and accurate information to students and applicants about their programme of study. “Material information” about a programme is that information which enables prospective and current students to make informed choices. An offer of a place and its acceptance – which establishes a contractual relationship between the University and the applicant – is based on “material information”. It is therefore necessary to take account of whether any proposed unit or programme updates would affect material information provided about the programme(s).

“Material information” includes information about, inter alia, the programme title; core units of the programme; the range of optional units offered; overall methods of assessment (such as the overall balance of examinations, coursework and practicals); the location of teaching; the balance of contact time and independent study; the length of the course; professional accreditation; and the final award.

If proposed updates to units and programmes would affect “material information”, it will normally be necessary to seek, and take into consideration, the views of affected students on the programme(s). In the case of major updates, normally the consent of affected students will be required to implement the change. It is therefore advisable to introduce major updates to the programme for future cohorts only.

Where the proposed change would not affect current students (for example, in the case of most updates to one-year taught postgraduate programmes or the first year of undergraduate programmes), it is good practice to consult current students as part of the review process.

Applicants and students must be informed of updates to “material information” at the earliest opportunity. Major updates to undergraduate programmes will normally be approved by the start of the UCAS application cycle. This is in order to avoid informing applicants of substantial updates to programmes at the time of making an offer, or after an offer has been made. Major

updates to postgraduate programmes will normally be approved and communicated no later than six weeks prior to the commencement of the programme.

7.8 Extension to Period of Approval (Deferment of Review)

As indicated above, Schools must scrutinise their programmes at least once every **five** years and the mechanism for this is the [programme review process](#). The Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement hold the University timetable for this process and will liaise with the relevant School staff at the beginning of each academic year to schedule events.

In certain circumstances, a School may seek an extension to the period of approval and thus defer the scheduled review of a programme. While not an exhaustive list, such circumstances may be as a result of: the bedding-in of strategic restructuring and changes in the School/subject area having an impact on the programme to be reviewed; portfolio review activity; the impact and timing of changes external to the University from professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies, for example, cognisance and integration of new standards and the preference for this to be simultaneously considered within the review process; or other external and/or internal policy changes.

The extension will normally be granted for one academic session only and will be agreed between the School and the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

8. MODULE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND ASSURANCE

8.1 Introduction

This section constitutes the University policy relating to the Quality Enhancement and Assurance of modules, including their initial approval and continued development. The process of module development and approval adheres to the principles of the [QAA Quality Code for Higher Education](#)

Regardless of the mode of delivery, GCU is a Programme centred institution. All modules, regardless of whether they are accessed by a single or multiple academic units belong to a host programme.

To ensure consistency, transparency and fairness, all module assessment results are considered at the host Assessment Board and the ratified results reported to the associated academic unit Assessment Boards. In a similar way any proposed module updates should be deliberated and discussed with the other academic units at the host Programme Board (PB) and any module updates mediated via the host PB and approved by the Head of Department.

All module updates should be processed by 30th June of each academic year for delivery in the following Academic Year.

8.2 Responsibilities for Module Quality Enhancement and Assurance

In accordance with the principle that responsibility for quality enhancement and assurance should rest as closely as possible with those at the point of delivery, each module is strategically the overall responsibility of the host Programme Board/Department (via the Programme Leader and Head of Department), but the operational development is the responsibility of the Module Leader.

With respect to the coherence of the academic content of the module with programme learning outcomes the Module Leader reports, in the first instance, to the Programme Leader and thereafter to the host Programme and Progression and Awards Board. The host Programme and Progression and Awards Board includes representation from all programmes accessing the module. Decisions about module updates and the reporting and confirmation of module marks are the responsibility of the host Programme and Progression and Awards Board.

Any unresolved disputes regarding the primary location of modules (i.e. ownership and delineation of the host Programme Board) should be referred to the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement via the School's Quality Assurance and Enhancement contact in the first instance.

8.3 Responsibilities of Module Leaders

Operational responsibility for an individual module lies with the Module Leader (identified within the module descriptor). Module Leaders, in collaboration with the Programme Leader and guided by the Head of Department, are responsible for the planning, delivery, monitoring,

standards, and academic development of their modules, and for ensuring that the module descriptor is accurate and up-to-date (see Role of Module Leader in section 3).

8.4 Development and Approval of New Modules and Updates to Current Modules

The processes for the approval of new modules and amendment of existing modules in the student management information system are detailed in the [module creation and change manual](#).

8.4.1 New modules

New modules can be approved either:

- as part of the approval/review process
- out with the approval/review process.

Where new modules are created as part of the formal approval/review event School-level approval, external scrutiny and final approval are an integral part of the process.

New modules created independent from these processes require to:

- evidence scrutiny and approval by an external expert
- evidence approval by the Department/School
- submit a new module proposal through the Student Information Management System (SIMS) along with associated evidence for approval by the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

Where appropriate, evidence of the student consultation undertaken as part of the development of new modules should also be provided.

For guidance, staff may wish to use the [Module Approval Proforma](#) as a tool and guide to all the information required prior to entry into SIMS.

The Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement confirm that due process has been followed and approve the module(s) thereafter.

Please note that the addition of a new module to a programme structure may require completion of the programme modification process. Guidance should be sought from the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

8.4.2 Current Modules

Current modules can be amended either:

- as part of the approval/review process
- out with the approval/review process.

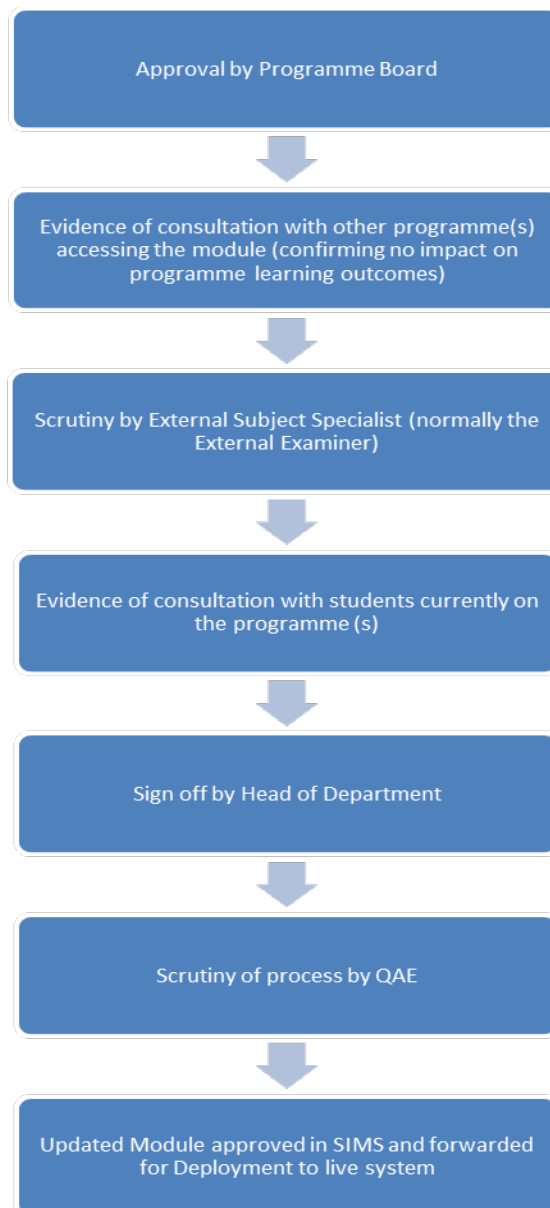
Where modules are amended as part of the of the formal approval/review event, School-level approval, external scrutiny and final approval are an integral part of the process and Programme teams must clearly identify such modules in submission documents.

Where updates to current modules are approved out with the approval/review process the process identified in the flow diagram shown on the next page should be followed.

For guidance on whether the amendments being made are significant enough to warrant a new Module Code, staff should consult the [Do I Need a New Module Code?](#) guidance. Staff may also wish to use the [Module Change Proforma](#) as a tool and guide to all the information required prior to entry into SIMS.

The Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement confirm that due process has been followed and approve the module(s) thereafter.

Module Change/Modification Process:



N.B. Where multiple module updates are being proposed the Programme Review process may apply. Please refer to Section 7, Programme Review and contact your named representative in the Dept of Quality Assurance and Enhancement for further advice

8.5 Monitoring and Enhancement of Existing Modules

It is recognised that the monitoring of modules is an inherent part of programme review and module delivery. All modules, however, must be formally monitored and reviewed via the **host Programme Board** every year utilising the [University's module monitoring process](#) and [guidance notes](#). The Module Leader is responsible for monitoring the module in accordance with University policy and procedures. **The Module Leader reports the outcomes to the Programme Leader(s) via the host Programme Board**

The School must ensure that monitoring has taken place and that, where appropriate, an enhancement plan is in place. The enhancement plan should clearly state the locus of responsibility for the actions contained within the plan. Progress will be monitored by the Programme Board following approval by the Head of the Department in which the module is located, and reported on through the Annual Programme Monitoring process.

8.6 Withdrawal of Existing Modules

Schools are responsible for making decisions to withdraw existing modules. Such decisions must be documented so as to confirm that all interested parties, particularly Programme Boards, have been consulted, and that any concerns have been dealt with sensitively. Assurances must have been received that the achievement of the learning outcomes of impacted programmes is not threatened by the proposed updates. Where issues have arisen that the School(s) have been unable to resolve this should be referred to the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

Please note that the removal of a module from a programme structure may require completion of the programme modification process. Guidance should be sought from the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

8.7 Module Handbooks

All modules must have an associated [Module Handbook](#). Students must be provided with the Module Handbook at the beginning of the trimester in which the module is being delivered.

The content of a Module Handbook must comply with [University policy and guidance](#)

9. STUDENT EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

This section covers feedback from students on their experience of programmes, modules and University processes. For information on assessment feedback to students please see the [Student Performance Feedback Policy](#), an associated policy to the GCU Assessment Regulations.

The University, in partnership with GCU Students' Association, encourages students to become actively involved in providing constructive feedback about all aspects of University life. Student representation is a key element of student engagement and partnership working. The University has worked with GCU Students' Association to produce a [Guide to Student Representation at GCU](#) that is fully aligned with our [Student Partnership Agreement](#).

GCU has an academic representation structure that is created by GCU Students' Association and the University to facilitate the collection and dissemination of students' views on the quality of their learning experience at all levels across the institution, and to provide students with feedback on the actions taken by the University to enhance their student experience. Academic representation and student feedback are critical elements of GCU Quality Assurance and Enhancement processes; students are partners in the formulation, operation and evaluation of the University's approach to enhancement. The academic representation structure is managed between GCU Students' Association, the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and the academic Schools/units.

Academic representatives are elected or recruited as Class Reps, Department Reps, Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Reps and Postgraduate Research (PGR) Reps. Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring the recruitment of Class Reps, normally through an election process, and providing details to GCU Students' Association. GCU Students' Association is responsible for working with the academic schools to appoint Department, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Reps. The role description for each academic representative can be accessed at <https://www.gcustudents.co.uk/academicrepresentation>.

9.1 Student Partnership Forums

Student Partnership Forums are one of the principal mechanisms used within the University to receive feedback and evaluate the student experience on programmes, and to communicate to students details of actions resulting from the evaluation.

The purpose of the Student Partnership Forum is:

- to provide a space for students and staff to work in partnership to enhance the academic and wider student experience for students on the programme
- to act as an effective and representative forum in which students and staff meet to discuss matters of mutual interest arising from the content, teaching and development of the programme, and aspects of the wider student experience at the University

- to provide an opportunity to obtain views representative of students on all levels and modes of the programme, and to take these into account in contributing to programme monitoring and review processes
- to provide feedback to students on how the programme team, or the University more widely, has responded to issues raised and utilised positive comments to inform future enhancements

Details of the operation of the Student Partnership Forum can be found in the [Guidelines on the Operation of Student Partnership Forums](#).

9.2 Module Feedback

In addition to the Student Partnership Forum, toward the end of each trimester students are invited to provide feedback on their module experience via the online Student Module Surveys. These are administered centrally, with students able to access them via their email invitations as well as via GCU Learn. Module leaders are asked to allow some time during a lecture or seminar to encourage students to complete them. Following the close of the module evaluations, results are shared with the Schools, and module leaders are invited to provide written feedback on the results via the online [Closing the Feedback Loop](#) process.

9.3 Student Surveys

In addition to the internal Student Module Surveys, the University regularly participates in a number of sector surveys. These currently include the International Student Barometer (ISB); the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES); and the National Student Survey (NSS), a mandatory UK-wide survey of final year undergraduate students.

9.4 Reporting

The University's Learning Enhancement Sub-Committee and Education Committee will each receive reports from Schools and the relevant professional services on the actions taken in response to these surveys. In addition, the Education Committee will consider University-wide implications of the survey results.

10. EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

10.1 Introduction

GCU adheres to the [QAA Quality Code for Higher Education](#) expectations and the national criteria for the appointment of External Examiners. External Examiners are appointed to provide the University with impartial and independent advice, as well as informative comment on standards and student achievement in relation to these standards. The role of the External Examiner is outlined in appendix 3 of the [process and criteria for the appointment, resignation and termination of External Examiners](#).

10.2 Appointment of External Examiners

The procedures for the appointment of External Examiners are outlined in the [process and criteria for the appointment, resignation and termination of External Examiners](#). The Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement is responsible for the administration and management of this process. Senate appoints External Examiners via the External Examiners' Approval Panel, chaired by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, on the basis of nominations from Schools.

Each award bearing degree programme will normally have two External Examiners which. In exceptional cases a School may wish to appoint only a single External Examiner in the case of smaller programmes, or more than two External Examiners in the case of larger programmes or suites of programmes. Where the appointment of a single External Examiner is made, consideration should be given to potential risk of the External Examiner being unable to fulfil their duties for any reason. Whilst External Examiners will most commonly be appointed to Programmes with an allocation of modules within the programme, External Examiners may also be appointed only to modules within their specialism. All modules at all levels will have an associated External Examiner.

A proportion of External Examiners will be appointed from industry, business, and the professions because of their unique expertise. The University, through the External Examiners' Approval Panel, ensures a balance of professional and academic expertise and experience within the External Examining team on each programme.

Where External Examiners are appointed without previous external examining experience or having no experience within the last five years, the programme team should identify another External Examiner to provide mentoring to support the new Examiner in the first year of their tenure.

All Programme Boards will adhere to the [process and criteria for the appointment, resignation and termination of External Examiners](#). and associated timelines.

10.3 Period of Tenure

External Examiner appointments will normally be for a period of four years. However, in some instances, an exceptional extension of one year may be granted at the discretion of the External Examiners' Approval Panel.

Also, in exceptional circumstances an External Examiner may be re-appointed but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.

10.4 Resignation of External Examiners

The resignation of any External Examiner prior to the completion of their approved term of office must be reported to the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement in all instances. If the resignation is over a matter of principle, the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will follow the procedure in the [process and criteria for the appointment, resignation and termination of External Examiners](#).

10.5 Termination of an External Examiner's contract

Where an external examiner has either consistently failed to fulfil the [responsibilities of the role](#) as defined in Appendix 3 of the process and criteria for the appointment, resignation and termination of External Examiners, or if the programme and/or modules to which the External has been assigned have been withdrawn from the University's portfolio the contract can be terminated prematurely. The procedure for this is outlined in the [process and criteria for the appointment, resignation and termination of External Examiners](#).

10.6 External Examiners' Annual Reports

In accordance with the [responsibilities of the External Examiners](#), each External Examiner is required to produce an annual report on the standards attained by students on the programme and any other matters which may seem appropriate to report.

Reports should be submitted to the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement no later than *31st July* in each year of the Examiner's appointment for Examiners with responsibility for undergraduate programmes, and *31st October* for Examiners with responsibility for postgraduate programmes².

10.6.1 Consideration of External Examiners Reports

All reports will be considered by the relevant Programme Board as part of the Annual Monitoring process. In their strategic report on the Annual Monitoring process, Schools will be required to confirm to the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement that:

- an adequate and timely report has been received from all External Examiner(s)
- each report has received sufficient consideration by the Programme Board, and any resultant actions have been incorporated into enhancement plans at programme and/or module level.
- good practice identified within reports has been disseminated
- an appropriate formal, written response has been made to each External Examiner by the Programme Leader and/or Dean of School, as appropriate
- the minute of the relevant Assessment Board meetings have been sent to each External Examiner

² Where programmes or modules do not follow the standard academic calendar alternative dates may be set

In addition, all reports will be initially scrutinised by the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and any concerns brought to the attention of the ADLTQ (for action) copied to the Dean.

The Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement reserves the right to request sight of a response where:

- The issue has been raised in a previous report and does not appear to have been addressed, or
- There is a concern that accumulation of issues raised may potentially impact on standards although this has not been specifically highlighted by the External Examiner

If, however, the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement considers the report to be of a serious nature concerning the comparability or standards of the award one of the following will apply:

- the School formulates the response to the External Examiner and submits it to the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement who will approve it in terms of sufficiency prior to the response being sent.
- The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, in conjunction with the School, will formulate a response which (s)he will send to the External Examiner on behalf of the University.

Irrespective of the option applied the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement require confirmation that the External Examiner is satisfied with the response.

In all such instances the PVC Learning and Teaching and the relevant Dean will be advised.

10.6.2 Escalation of Matters of Serious Concern

Examiners have the right to raise any matter of serious concern with the Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University, if necessary by means of a separate confidential written report. When this happens, the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, in consultation with the relevant School, will provide the Examiner with a considered and timely response, outlining what action the University has taken, or intend to take as a result.

10.7 University Overview of External Examiner Reports

The Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement is responsible for providing the Learning Enhancement Subcommittee with an overview report on External Examiner activity, encompassing issues raised, actions undertaken, elements of good practice and recommendations for enhancement.

10.8 Availability of Reports

Reflecting the principles of engaging students in quality management processes as outlined in the [QAA Quality Code for Higher Education](#), reports will be made available to students, with

the sole exception of any confidential report which will be made directly and separately to the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

It is understood that reports will be redacted where

- the individual Examiner has identified and named an individual
- the individual Examiner has included something to cause harm or bring the institution into disrepute

11. TNE and ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP

11.1 Purpose

Glasgow Caledonian University is involved in a wide range of arrangements and opportunities for delivering learning and teaching, supervision and support at all academic levels, both within the UK and internationally.

The University recognises partnership activity as a key enabler to support its strategic goal to engage on a local, national and global level; a key element of our [Strategy 2030](#).

The purpose of this policy is to provide an outline of the quality assurance framework for academic partnership development and approval, monitoring and review. The policy applies to all instances where the University is involved in the provision of Higher Education (HE) in partnership with others and where the achievements of the learning outcomes for the programme or module, including research degrees, are dependent on a partnership arrangement with another organisation. **This policy is aligned with the UK Quality Code's Advice and Guidance for Partnerships.**

11.2 Scope

The policy applies to all those involved in the approval and management of academic partnerships.

This policy applies to all learning opportunities leading or contributing to the award of Glasgow Caledonian University, or to specific credit, of the University delivered and/or supported and or/assessed through a formal arrangement with a partner institution.

This policy does not apply to non-credit bearing CPD, non-credit bearing student exchanges, work-based learning (WBL) or placement learning, distance learning, consultancy or commercial activities coordinated by the Department of Research, Innovation and Enterprise (RIE). The approval of placements and WBL within programmes is covered by the University's Programme Approval process (Section 5).

For Partnerships where a GCU programme is to be delivered in a language other than English, the University's approved, 'Principles for Programme Delivery in a Foreign Language' will apply. Of critical importance in such instances is the English language proficiency of partner staff and the translation – and back translation – of academic materials. See Appendix 2, for full details of GCU's approved principles.

11.3 Principles

The guiding principles underpinning the TNE and Academic Partnerships Policy and the development of partnerships will normally be expected to promote the following:

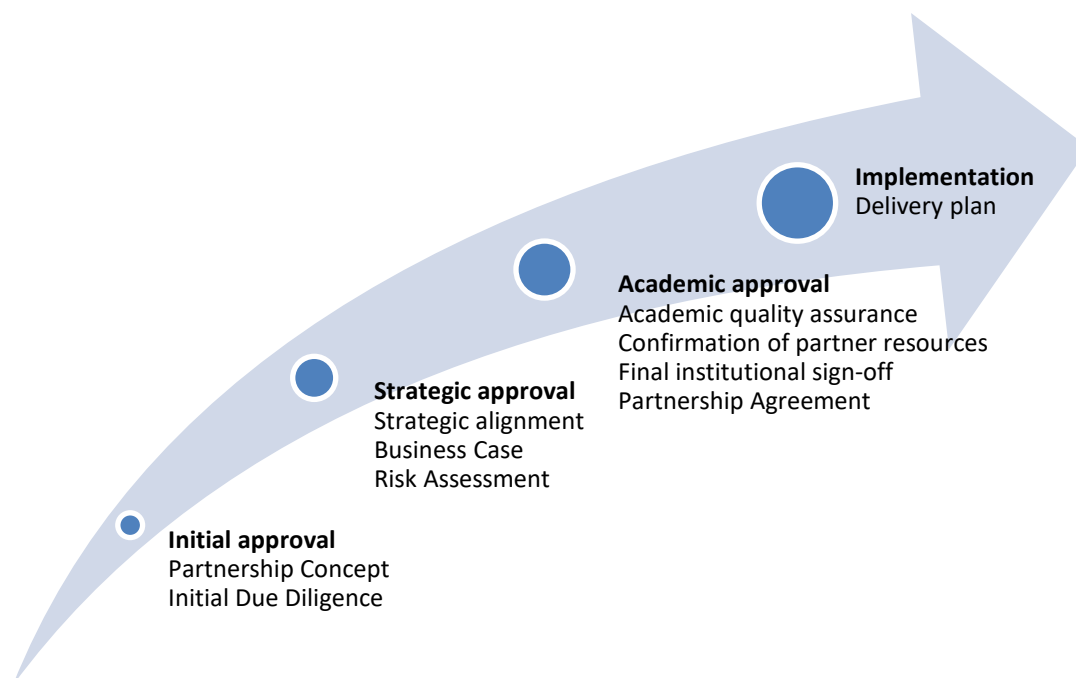
- To be **strategic in its intention**.
 - The provision of HE with others should be consistent with the overall mission, vision and values of the University and its [strategic plan](#) clearly

- contribute to the strategic development of School and Departmental plans and have congruence with the University's academic portfolio.
 - The University Executive Group has institutional oversight of the strategic and business cases of all proposed partnership activity to ensure alignment with GCU strategy.
 - The University Senate and its standing committees have institutional oversight for all matters related to the academic standards and quality assurance of any academic partnership provision.
- To be **financially viable and sustainable**.
 - At a minimum, arrangements should cover their direct costs and where this is the case they should be able to demonstrate significant other benefits.
 - Wherever possible they should generate a financial surplus.
 - The benefits brought by the proposed partnership should seek to outweigh the resources required to establish and maintain it.
- To support the [GCU Strategy](#) and the development our [Common Good Attributes](#), as an integral part of GCU's approach to Learner Agency.
- **Compliant with the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)**.
 - Glasgow Caledonian University is ultimately responsible for the academic standards of the awards made in its name, and the enhancement of the student's learning experience that lead to those awards, regardless of where these opportunities are delivered and who is delivering them.
 - The academic standards of an award delivered in partnership should be equivalent to comparable awards and/or credit of the University.
- **Compliant with the University's standard policies and procedures** including those for anti-bribery, anti-corruption, data protection and information security.
- **Compliant with UK Government policies**, in particular, UKVI and Consumer Rights Act (and associated Consumer Markets Authority (CMA) guidance).
- **Assessed using a risk-based approach**.
 - The approach, systems and processes should be proportionate to the level of risk, nature, and complexity of the proposed arrangement.
- The potential to be **multi-layered**, expressed by the total number of provision arrangements that the University has with a single partner.
- **Widening participation** and access to the University's programmes.
- **Strengthening** the University's position in the **recruitment and selection** of students.
- **Contributing to the research** activities of the University or enhancing the scholarship of the University's staff and in the context of developing a portfolio of institutional level Joint PhD arrangements.

The **exchange** (with or without the conferment of joint/dual awards) **of students and staff** for the purposes of teaching and supervision.

11.4 Development and Approval

The development and approval of partnership arrangements is generally split into four main stages:



Stage	Description	Approvals
Initial approval	Identification of new partner and development of initial partnership concept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School • Deans' Group
Strategic approval	Confirmation of strategic alignment, due diligence and financials (Business Case).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School • Finance • University Executive Group
Academic approval	Quality assurance process to include confirmation of partner academic environment and resources, programme development and approval (dependent on partnership) and institutional sign-off.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPC (Taught Provision) • RDC (Research Degrees) • Partnership Approval Panel • LESC • Senate
Implementation	Development of action plan to support partnership delivery implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School • Head of Department

At each stage of the process, the proposing partnership lead will be guided through a series of forms and templates which will capture the essential and mandatory information and responses required for the key elements of the development and approval stages.

11.5 Identifying a new partner

Proposals for academic partnership arrangements may come forward through various routes, through academic schools, the Institute for University to Business Education, GCU London or GCNYC by an approach from another institution or the University Executive Group directly to help further the University's strategic objectives. A typology of the various types

of partnership arrangements that the University will consider to engage in is included in appendix one.

It is recommended that once a representative of the University has been approached regarding a possible partner relationship with a new organisation, the representative should notify the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement at the earliest opportunity. This notification should take place following initial School level discussion and if there is a positive intention to progress further dialogue with the prospective partner.

At the early development stages of a new partnership, consultation must also take place with the key professional support services across the University to ensure their input to the academic development, administrative and operational management of the proposed partnership arrangement. Due consideration should be given at this stage to library/license resources and their applicability across international boundaries.

It is essential for the partnership approval process to allow a reasonable lead-in time to be built in for the development and approval of proposed new partnerships. Whilst every effort is made to expedite matters, and where there is a significant business case, recommended to and endorsed by University Executive Group for doing so, prospective partners should be aware that, depending on the nature of the arrangement and the approval process (and associated meeting schedules), it can take time to undertake due diligence activity and complete the approval process. Due attention should also focus on any in-country approval processes, which may need to be met.

No partnership arrangement should commence until the approval process has been completed and the underpinning legal agreement has been signed by authorised signatories of all parties.

11.6 Site Visits

As part of the initial and strategic approval stages and due diligence consideration, an initial site visit will be required, particularly for proposed partners if they are deemed to be of a higher risk and for new entities.

The site visit will take the form of a preliminary appraisal of the proposed partner and is intended to ensure that the proposed partner is aligned with the University's Vision, Mission and Values. The visit will also include an early assessment of the overall academic capacity and environment and that appropriate learning resources, student support and appropriate quality assurance systems are in place. A template for preliminary appraisal by appropriately informed academic staff is included at Appendix 3.

11.7 Programme Approval

After the strategic approval stage and approval to proceed, the proposing School will be responsible for presenting the provision covered under the partnership proposal for the approval in accordance with the University's New [Programme Approval](#) process. This element will include formal confirmation of the partner academic environment and resources, and where relevant, the consideration and approval of any programme or module to be covered under the specific partnership arrangement.

An Academic Partnership Approval Panel will be established and will involve external expertise as standard. This may be the current external examiner appointed to the existing and comparable programme at the University or a new external (academic) advisor.

The Approval Panel will consider the proposal, in line with normal programme approval protocols, and where approved, will inform the Learning Enhancement Sub-Committee of the Education Committee of the event outcomes, the date of commencement and any other salient points.

11.8 Contractual Agreements

All partnership arrangements will be supported by a written agreement setting out the objectives and activities of the arrangement, the respective rights and responsibilities of the parties and standard contractual terms.

After strategic approval of the partnership has been obtained, the relevant School staff will work with the partner institution to develop the programme implementation in detail. Staff from the School, Quality Enhancement and Assurance, and the Department of Governance and Legal Compliance will together produce a draft of the formal Legal Agreement to be negotiated with the partner institution(s).

The content of the agreement will vary depending on the nature of the partnership arrangement. Discussion and negotiation with the partner will be required in order to formulate a successful partnership agreement. Not until this is finalised and signed by the authorised signatories can activity within the scope of the agreement commence.

The agreement will be subject to regular monitoring and review as defined and agreed by parties and as stated in the agreement clauses.

A partnership arrangement is normally established for a period of five years, subject to appropriate risk-assessment, to align with the standard approval agreement attached to academic provision and subsequent periodic programme review.

11.9 Data Protection and Freedom of Information

Legal responsibilities

The University should take a lead in ensuring that partnership arrangements consider how legal responsibilities for data protection and freedom of information will be discharged. Clarity should be obtained on GCU and partner roles and responsibilities including compliance with Scottish, UK or other national legislation as appropriate.

Consideration should be given to adopting the GCU policy without adaption, adopting partner policy or developing bespoke arrangements for the partnership.

Depending on the nature of the partnership it is likely that the partner will be responsible for ensuring compliance with local legislation and GCU will be responsible for compliance with Scottish and UK legislation.

The partner and GCU should ensure that students understand the arrangements for the provision covered under the academic partnership arrangement and how this relates to student information. The partners should ensure that staff of its organisation is also aware

of their responsibilities. In particular, it should be clear that for administration purposes, personal information will be exchanged between, and held by, both organisations. Where appropriate, it should also be clear that this data will be held in the both the partner country and the United Kingdom.

The partner and GCU are responsible for ensuring that their respective staff are briefed in the arrangements and that appropriate operational procedures are adopted.

Legislative compliance, reputation and the student experience

The University expects its partners to have in place organisational and technical measures to ensure information security and protect students' privacy. In addition, GCU encourages partners to manage information effectively.

The University has a responsibility to protect students' information, manage it well and ensure that it is not exposed to unauthorised people or organisations. Using incorrect information can directly impact on the student experience and, failure to manage and protect information presents a risk of eroding students' trust in the University.

Data protection and information security

The partnership agreement should normally include a Data Sharing Agreement. The Data Sharing Agreement will set out responsibilities and details of: the data that will be shared, the data subjects, how data subject rights will be managed, the purpose of data sharing, the mechanism by which the data sharing will take place; specific technical and organisational measure which should be implemented; and any other conditions.

Freedom of Information

The partner should be made aware that the University is subject to freedom of information legislation including the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. The partnership agreement should outline the arrangements for managing requests and consulting with the partner as appropriate.

11.10 Approval and Monitoring of Information

It is the University's responsibility to maintain control over the accuracy of all public information and publicity as it relates to the academic provision delivered through the partnership arrangement.

11.11 Monitoring and Review

All partnership arrangements will be monitored and reviewed in a range of ways to safeguard quality and standards and ensure that issues identified are addressed appropriately.

All formal academic programme arrangements, in common with all GCU academic provision, will be subject to the University's standard monitoring procedures and mechanisms. In general, the review of partnership arrangements is embedded within the normal quality enhancement and assurance procedures covered by Annual Programme Monitoring and Enhancement-led Internal Subject Review.

Academic and Contract Milestones

Depending on the scope of the partnership arrangement, agreements between the University and the partner institution may specify transition points (milestones) within the contractual period whereby the University will make an assessment of the academic capacity of a partner towards them providing a greater input to the overall delivery of a partnership arrangement.

Strategic KPIs

The University will additionally measure and monitor partnership arrangements using the undernoted KPIs approved by the University Executive Group:

- Contribution to staff and student mobility
- Contribution to University-wide strategic projects
- Contribution to fee paying student numbers
- Financial contribution to the University
- Number of research publications produced associated with the partnership
- Contribution to the reputation of GCU through the quality of partners as defined by the relevant external ranking of partner
- Partnership intensity expressed by the total number of partnership activities the University has with the partner
- Strengthening of the University's reputation as the University for the Common Good
- Supporting the development of GCU's learning and teaching pedagogy, in particular in relation to the Common Good Curriculum.

11.12 Management and Liaison

The management and oversight of an academic partnership will vary depending on the scope and complexity of the arrangement. For some partnerships, a Joint Management Board, Advisory or Steering Group may be established to provide overall strategic direction for the partnership and its activities and will include representation from GCU and the partner organisation.

For academic and quality assurance purposes, an Academic Liaison Group may be established to act as a formal channel of communication between GCU and the partner institution. This group will oversee the academic and administrative liaison arrangements relating to GCU programmes and modules delivered by the partner institution to ensure that these are maintained, and to monitor their effectiveness.

11.13 External Examining

All partnership arrangements which lead to an award or credit of the University will be required to have an External Examiner. To assist the External Examiner in fulfilling their duties, as defined in the University Assessment Regulations, they will normally visit the partner institution periodically.

In their annual report, External Examiners will be invited to comment on the comparability of standards, the quality of the student learning experience, and the effectiveness of assessment arrangements across locations (where this is applicable for the arrangement) for the programme(s) and/or module(s) under their responsibilities. In particular, this will include comment on the quality of the work of the students who studied in the different locations, the level of achievement of the different cohorts of students, consistency of practice, and equity of treatment of students.

The operation and management of External Examiners for programmes delivered through a partnership arrangement will be governed by the University's Academic Policy and Practice Section 10 in relation to [External Examiners](#) and the Process and Criteria for the Appointment, Resignation and Termination of External Examiners.

11.14 Associate Lecturers

The status of Associate Lecturer is reserved for individuals involved in partnership arrangements, normally as employees of the partner institution (for details on appointment of other categories of staff, please refer to People Services Resourcing Routes). The separate [guidance for the appointment of Associate Lecturers](#) is not intended to apply to guest lecturers who make contributions to the teaching of a module.

11.15 Certificates and Records

The University retains authority for the awarding of certificates and detailed records of study in relation to student achievement.

11.16 Changes to a Partnership

Proposed changes to existing partnership arrangements which may require an amendment to the existing agreement, for example, the addition of an academic programme(s) to the current approved provision with an existing partner should be notified to the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement for confirmation of the procedures to be followed.

Where there have been material/significant changes to an existing partner, additional financial and/or legal and academic due diligence may be carried out.

11.17 Withdrawal and Termination

Where the decision has been taken to terminate or withdraw from a partnership the following key principles must be adopted, some of which will be more relevant for specific partnership arrangements:

- The process must be carefully managed so as to ensure that academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience is maintained for remaining students.
- Both the University and partner institutions continue to have responsibilities until all students have completed or have left the programme or programmes.
- The withdrawal decision must be communicated promptly to the partner institutions by the University or vice versa. Communication of the decision must allow sufficient time for detailed arrangements to be discussed and agreed.
- An action plan (incorporating any teach out arrangements) must be agreed via a meeting(s) of the partner institutions. The plan should include an agreed date for final student admissions to the programme that are the subject of the partnership agreement.

- Following the completion or departure of the final students, the University will write to the partner institution to confirm the termination of the partnership arrangement.

11.18 Guidance and Forms

Guidance and forms relating to academic partnerships are available upon request from the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

11.19 Resources and further information

Resources and further information relating to academic partnerships are available upon request from the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

11.20 Outline Principles for the approval of a GCU Programme for Delivery in a Foreign Language

It is anticipated that, in the normal course of events, all GCU TNE partnerships will be delivered and assessed in English. However, there may be exceptional cases where it is in the University's interests to extend delivery of an approved GCU programme of study, for delivery in a foreign language. Early approval will be required by the University Executive Group, following consideration of a full proposal and initial due diligence by the proposing School(s). It is imperative that proposals continue to adhere to GCU's robust quality assurance and enhancement protocols. Senate has approved outline principles, to be considered and adopted, where initial approval to develop the proposal is given by the University Executive Group. See Appendix 2, for further details.

Appendix 1 Typology of Partnership Types

The typology of the various types of partnership arrangements that the University will consider to engage in provided below. Depending on the type of arrangement, proposals submitted will be asked to follow a particular process with specific information and documentation required for the main stages of the approval process.

It should be noted that the procedures for the approval, monitoring and review of arrangements will also vary according to type and the degree of risk involved. As such, some arrangements will require a higher degree of oversight than others such as TNE partners and/or providers relatively new to the HE arena.

Table: Overview of Partnership Types and Quality Assurance Stage Requirements

Type	Definition	Complexity Level	Agreement	QA Stage Requirements
Accreditation	Accreditation is the process by which the University judges that a programme (or module) designed, delivered, and assessed by an external partner institution without degree awarding powers is of an appropriate quality and standard to lead to an award (credit) of the University. Through this arrangement the external partner programme (or module) will be subject to the quality assurance procedures of the University.	Medium	Yes – financial arrangements will be specified in the legal agreement and external institution will be charged for the University’s accreditation services.	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval
Articulation	A specific form of partnership between the University and a partner institution, whereby the University will agree to recognise the successful achievement of specified qualifications and/or credits offered by the partner institution for entry, or advanced entry, to applicants from the partner institution to enter a specified	Low	Yes – the agreement also commits the partner institution to a series of related actions and communications regarding the articulation process.	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval

Type	Definition	Complexity Level	Agreement	QA Stage Requirements
	programme of study at the University. Articulation partnerships are a useful international recruitment tool and a way for GCU to assure the quality of articulating students. Planned articulation pathways can greatly augment recruitment, which can be subject to fluctuation.			
Branch Campus	A branch (or satellite) campus is a campus of the University that is physically at a distance from the original University site. The campus may be located in a different city or country, and is often smaller than the main campus of the University.	High	No specific agreement is required unless the University requires and approves the provision of academic services by an external provider.	The establishment of a branch campus will be an institutional arrangement, normally a GCU strategic objective and approved by University Court.
Close Co-operation	The University agrees to promote co-operation, discussion, and positive academic relations with another partner institution to their mutual benefit, without establishing a binding legal relationship between the two institutions.	Low	For this type a Memorandum of Understanding would be established. The MoU may be multi-layered and include a number of activities. Any of the party has the ability, in co-ordination with the respective points of contact identified in the agreement, to develop and engage in further joint activities. The content and special conditions of such further activities will be specified by a party in a supplementary agreement or contract to the general agreement	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval

Type	Definition	Complexity Level	Agreement	QA Stage Requirements
			of co-operation that will govern the partnership activity.	
Credit Rating (External)	A process of evaluation by GCU of programmes or individual units delivered by an external organisation. The evaluation takes place against the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) guidelines in order to assess the level and volume of credit attributable to the programmes or units concerned. Its primary purpose is to give a specific value at a specific level, of general credit to learning undertaken in the workplace, or learning that is work related. From the external organisation's perspective, it may enhance the attractiveness of the learning from the point of view of potential learners. The process and procedures laid out in the Handbook for Credit Rating at GCU will be followed.	Low	Yes – financial arrangements will be specified in the legal agreement and external institution will be charged for credit rating services.	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval
Degree Apprenticeship	Degree Apprenticeships (DAs) are work-based learning programmes that lead to a degree or degree-level, professionally recognised qualification of the University. DAs combine both higher and vocational education and fully test both the wider occupational competence and academic learning, either using a fully-integrated degree co-designed by employers and the	Medium	Yes	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval

Type	Definition	Complexity Level	Agreement	QA Stage Requirements
	<p>University, or using a degree plus separate end-test of professional competence. The GCU DA model is based on the Trailblazer Standards (England) which define and bound the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to perform the specific job role and thus inform the programme development.</p>			
Dual Award	<p>The University, with one or more partner institution(s) together provide a programme leading to separate awards conferred by both, or all, of the partners.</p> <p>A dual award will normally require a minimum period of study at GCU and the partner institution. GCU and the partner institution(s) will retain overall responsibility for its own award.</p> <p>Under special arrangements, the University will also consider dual award arrangements with existing partners and which do not involve the study of any GCU credit. The basis for this type of arrangement is in the shared design, approval, assessment and quality assurance of the award at the partner institution. In practice this is the same as Accreditation.</p>	Medium	Yes – financial arrangements will be specified in the legal agreement and partner institution will be charged for their input to the arrangement.	<p>Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval Implementation plan</p>

Type	Definition	Complexity Level	Agreement	QA Stage Requirements
Double Degree	<p>Similar to Joint Degree, but in recognition that there may be legal or regulatory impediment to a single, joint certificate.</p> <p>In these circumstances, students are awarded two (or more) certificates, one from each partner institution involved. The GCU certificate and/or transcript draws reference to partner institutions and makes it clear that students have completed a single, jointly conceived programme.</p>	Medium	Yes – financial arrangements will be specified in the legal agreement and partner institution will be charged for their input to the arrangement.	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval Implementation plan
Dual PhD Degree (by Cotutelle)	<p>A Dual PhD Degree (by Cotutelle) refers to the joint supervision of a research student by GCU and another HEI from a different country and leads to the award of two doctoral degrees, attesting the successful completion of the requirements of the doctoral programme at GCU and the partner HEI. The research student is jointly registered at GCU and the partner HEI and will spend a period of time at each university and will have access to the research training of both universities during the course of the PhD award. The regulations for each institution will apply which requires the student to successfully complete all the required progression milestones for both institutions.</p>	Medium	Yes – a Cotutelle agreement is normally established on an individual student basis and will be expected to last for the duration of the student’s registration.	Initial approval to proceed Academic approval

Type	Definition	Complexity Level	Agreement	QA Stage Requirements
Erasmus+	A scheme which encourages universities throughout Europe to establish close links through joint activities, in particular, student and staff exchange.	Low	Yes – in all cases, agreements should not be entered into without an assessment of the suitability of the exchange partner including evidence of the status of the institution. A relevant academic staff member is required to undertake an initial assessment of the proposed exchange partner institution to determine if entering into an exchange agreement will be viable or not.	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval
Franchise	An approved GCU programme (level of a programme or part of a programme), delivered and assessed by staff of another educational institution or other body, leading to an award of the University. GCU retains direct responsibility for the programme content, teaching and learning strategy and assessment. Such institutions/bodies will be subject to the quality assurance procedures of the University.	Medium	Yes – financial arrangements will be specified in the legal agreement and partner institution will be charged normally in line with agreed student numbers.	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval Implementation plan
Graduate Apprenticeship	Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs) are work-based learning programmes that lead to a degree or degree-level, professionally recognised qualification of the University.	Medium	Yes (with SDS)	Strategic approval Academic approval Implementation plan

Type	Definition	Complexity Level	Agreement	QA Stage Requirements
	GA's are developed by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) through consultation with employers, universities, professional bodies and qualification authorities in the form of Technical Education Groups (TEGs).			
International Exchange	An exchange arrangement not otherwise covered under the ERASMUS+ scheme, for example, with a transatlantic/overseas partner.	Low	Yes – similar process for Erasmus+ applies to determine suitability of partner.	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval
Joint Award	<p>A programme delivered by GCU together with one or more degree-awarding institution(s), leading to the conferment of a single award made jointly by both, or all, partners. The nature and extent of the partnership may vary and may require the design of programme-specific regulations and quality assurance procedures which are approved by all partners.</p> <p>GCU or the partner institution(s) will be designated as the 'Administering University' and will take the lead in the coordination of the financial, administrative and QA functions. The award certificate will attest to the joint nature of the arrangement.</p>	Medium	Yes – financial arrangements will be specified in the legal agreement and partner institution will be charged for their input to the arrangement.	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval Implementation plan

Type	Definition	Complexity Level	Agreement	QA Stage Requirements
Joint Delivery	An arrangement where one (or more) partner institution(s) provide teaching towards an award of the University.	Medium	Yes – financial arrangements will be specified in the legal agreement and partner institution will be paid for their contribution to the arrangement.	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval Implementation plan
Off-campus delivery	An arrangement whereby an approved GCU programme (level of a programme or part of a programme) is taught by University staff at an off-campus location. The University will need to assure itself of the quality of the resources and student support facilities at the site for the off-campus delivery, whether in the UK or overseas, before final approval of off-campus delivery. In cases where the achievement of the learning outcomes is dependent on the involvement of the partners in teaching and assessment at the delivery site this will be classified as a franchise.	Medium	Yes – financial arrangements will be specified in the legal agreement and partner institution will be charged for their input to the arrangement.	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval Implementation plan
Research Degrees (Dual PhD Award)	GCU will partner with one or more degree-awarding institution(s), leading to the award of two doctoral degrees, one from each institution, attesting the successful completion of the requirements of the doctoral programme at GCU and the partner institution.	Medium	Yes	Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval Implementation plan

Type	Definition	Complexity Level	Agreement	QA Stage Requirements
	<p>A dual award will normally require a minimum period of study at GCU and the partner institution. GCU and the partner institution(s) will retain overall responsibility for its own award.</p>			
<p>Research Degrees (Joint PhD Award)</p>	<p>GCU will partner with one or more degree-awarding institution(s), leading to the conferment of a single PhD award made jointly by both, or all, partners.</p> <p>A joint award is a structured programme where all the elements of the doctoral provision are delivered jointly and the provision of specialist teaching/supervision integrated during the period of registration.</p> <p>A single set of regulations may be devised, agreed and approved by all the partner institution(s) for this type of arrangement.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval Implementation plan</p>
<p>Research Degrees (Joint supervision)</p>	<p>A student associated with a partner institution and registered for the award of a higher degree with GCU in accordance with the University's Higher Degree Regulations. Part of the student's period of study may be spent at a partner institution, with a co-supervisor appointed from the partner institution.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Initial approval to proceed Strategic approval Academic approval</p>

Type	Definition	Complexity Level	Agreement	QA Stage Requirements
Serial Arrangement	The University does not permit any serial arrangements, which is effectively sub-contracting by a partner institution to a third party.			
Study Abroad (Incoming)	A scheme whereby fee-paying incoming students from non-exchange partners study for a trimester or year at GCU as part of their home programme of study.	Low	No	No specific requirements
Study Abroad (Outgoing)	A scheme whereby GCU-registered students on a GCU programme of study undertakes a trimester or year of study at a non-exchange partner institution.	Low	There should be agreement between the outgoing GCU student and the host institution with approval from the relevant GCU Programme Leader. The University guidelines on placement learning shall apply and a placement learning agreement must be concluded with the student prior to departure.	No specific requirements
Summer School (International)	International Summer School programmes give incoming students the chance to complete a shorter period of study at GCU. Summer School programmes at GCU may be divided into two possible types of programme: credit-bearing courses or non-credit experiences.			

Appendix 2 Approval of a GCU Programme for Delivery in a Foreign Language

Approval Event:

- The Panel to include a bi-lingual external, with UK HEI experience
- The Panel to be provided with approval documentation in English **(the partner's academic and support staff must be proficient in English, to provide assurance from the point of approval).**
- The Programme approval event will be conducted in and reported in English.
- **Post event, programme approval submission documentation will be updated to reflect any requirements and recommendations from the programme approval event. Student facing documentation (to include PSP, Module descriptors and supporting academic regulations and policy) will then be translated into the language of delivery, prior to commencement of the first intake.**

Responsibilities for the Proposing School and Partner (in addition to standard AQPP protocols):

- To identify bi-lingual academic staff to support in-country delivery of the programme(s)
- To appoint bi-lingual External Examiners to undertake GCU's approved External Examining function for programmes delivered in a foreign language. EEs must have an understanding and experience of UK Higher Education.
- To translate all applicable regulations and policies into the language of delivery, to ensure students undertaking a GCU programme in a foreign language have the opportunity to learn, to be supported and to benefit from a student experience similar to that offered on an English speaking programme delivered in the UK.
- To undertake a systematic mapping of the programme's modules, identifying and prioritising those modules which are considered key to the achievement of the educational aims and objectives of the programme and where there is potential for core concepts and facts to be lost through the translation processes. Modules identified through this mapping exercise must have their associated learning resources and session plans back translated into English for Quality Assurance and Enhancement purposes after translation to the delivery language, to ensure that the content and spirit of the intended learning is not lost.
- To identify link tutors, to facilitate on-going relationship with the partner institution
- To have the ability to undertake ad-hoc, independently verifiable translation as required. This may include Academic Appeal and/or student complaint submissions from students studying in a foreign language; GCU must be assured that the translation in such instances is independent of the partner institution, fully articulates the student's concerns and is administered under existing policy. In cases where a student interview is required, a translator for the student must be provided.
- Teach out arrangements, to preserve the continuity of study to point of completion in the event of termination, must be clear from the outset (QAA Quality Code).
- To ensure from the outset that the partner institution and prospective students are fully aware of the elements of the partnership that will be set in English, regardless of the language of delivery; this is likely to include (as a minimum) registration/recording of

student names on central systems, recording of marks against modules, PAB consideration, award, academic transcript and graduation certification

- To engage with normal, on-going QAE protocols as outlined in the AQPP (in English)

Operational Considerations

- To identify and prioritise modules for back translation of associated resources and session plans to English, where core concepts and facts could potentially be lost through translation into a second language.
- VLE translation of academic content to a second language
- Assessment invigilation to GCU standards.
- Assessment materials and ML responsibilities at the start of examination
 - To follow GCU protocols, from assessment prep/moderation, through cycle to feedback and reporting of marks.
- Bi-lingual support staff (Programme Co-Ordinator equivalent)
 - Requests for transcripts/proof of student status – Some delegation to partner to be considered, GCU will be the issuing authority. Language of official documentation will be English.
 - Student Partnership Forum and translation to English – independent translation will be required.
 - Last minute timetable updates and GCU Learn announcements - some delegation to partner may be required.
- Cultural issues and awareness of academic misconduct and plagiarism – GCU standards to be applied.
- Student wellbeing and needs assessment/reasonable adjustment to reflect GCU standards.
- Dissertation and Project supervision – second marker be GCU member of staff at the outset and until partnership reaches assured level of maturity.

Anticipated materials for translation:

the PSP and module descriptors;

Student Handbooks;

Placement Handbooks, where applicable;

University regulations and assessment procedures;

all student-facing regulations and process documents;

Session plans to assist delivery;

any modified regulatory, policy or process documents, as modified (on-going cost);

Annual Reports and External Examiner Reports must be written in English;

Responses to external examiners must be written in English;

Translation of University materials from the language of study into English for quality assurance and enhancement processes will include:

Student Partnership Forum minutes

Output (free text) from MEQs or equivalent – to be translated as required

Appendix 3 Preliminary Partnership Appraisal Report

1. Partner details		Risk
Name of Academic Lead completing report		
Job Title		
Name of School		
Dates of travel to partner		
Date of last visit (if applicable)		
Name of partner		
Country and region of partner		
Description of the proposed relationship between the University and the partner institution		
2. Programme details		
Exact title and name of proposed academic award(s) ³		
Name of the host School (at GCU) and the equivalent in the partner institution		
Does the proposal lead to a GCU award and/or joint award? Please briefly outline the nature of the anticipated partnership.		
Does the proposed partner have authority to make academic awards in its own name?		
Mode(s) of study and length of the programme and proposed academic calendar.		
Does the proposal require the creation of a brand new programme, or is a current GCU programme going to be offered? If the latter, will any contextualisation be required, and who (GCU staff or partner) will have the knowledge base to provide this?		
Are there any in-country regulatory authorities, ministries, etc. with requirements for min/max		

³ It is anticipated that the programme title may change as discussions evolve; the academic award to be conferred should correlate with GCU's Qualifications Framework.

proportions of face-to-face or online teaching?			
Admissions criteria. Who is responsible for ensuring that minimum admissions requirements are met? Does the partner have any additional admissions requirements beyond standard GCU? Is any mapping required for equivalencies of qualifications from other countries? Who is responsible for marketing and enquiries?		Low	
		Med	
		High	
3. Quality Assurance			
Does the partner anticipate any in-country governmental approvals, in advance of any partnership to run academic programmes?			
Does the partner have a teaching and learning ethos that is compatible with GCU?		Low	
		Med	
		High	
Are there adequate administrative systems and quality assurance mechanisms in place in the partner institution to support the programme, and the necessary liaison with the host University department?		Low	
		Med	
		High	
CVs of teaching staff		Low	
		Med	
		High	
Is the partner institution committed to an adequate staff development policy that would support the programme?		Low	
		Med	
		High	
Are mechanisms in place for student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement?		Low	
		Med	
		High	
Are there opportunities for students to provide feedback on their learning and student experience?			

Is there clear assessment criteria?	Low	
	Med	
	High	
Is student feedback provided on assessment?	Low	
	Med	
	High	
Are there procedures for student complaints?	Low	
	Med	
	High	
What arrangements are in place for annual monitoring and review?	Low	
	Med	
	High	
Are there procedures for student discipline and appeals?	Low	
	Med	
	High	
Will the partner provide students with a programme handbook that contains all the relevant academic and student support information?	Low	
	Med	
	High	
What arrangements are in place for student induction?	Low	
	Med	
	High	
What mechanisms are in place for academic advising?	Low	
	Med	
	High	
Staff Exchange		
4. Academic Environment and Infrastructure		
General academic environment	Low	
	Med	
	High	
IT facilities and supporting internet facilities	Low	
	Med	
	High	
Laboratory facilities (if relevant) If Computing/Engineering labs required, consultation required re. portability of software licences and minimum hardware requirements.	Low	
	Med	
	High	
Library/journal access – is capacity within the partner	Low	
	Med	

institution sufficiently advanced for the subject area in question?		High	
Library – e-resources (GCU owned/licensed) – consult with GCU Library in terms of license portability.			
Health and Safety		Low	
		Med	
		High	
Student accommodation (if relevant) – sufficient capacity and standard for projected student numbers.			
5. Student Support			
Are there appropriate student study areas at the partner institution?		Low	
		Med	
		High	
Does the partner provide adequate student support services?		Low	
		Med	
		High	
6. Risk Assessment			
Please make your overall assessment of risk based on your findings above		Low	
		Med	
		High	

Date report completed:

12. THEMATIC REVIEW

12.1 Context

Thematic Reviews are the University's opportunity to conduct an institution wide exploration of a major theme that may not be fully captured through the Enhancement Led Internal Subject Review (ELISR) or the Programme Approval/Review process. Thematic Review (TR) is coordinated by the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement on behalf of the University.

TR is articulated as part of the University's commitment to Quality Enhancement in Learning and Teaching. The purpose of thematic review is to review the operation of existing processes and procedures and/or to assess current practice across all relevant aspects of the [QAA Quality Code](#) for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education and to fulfil an enhancement function through the dissemination of information on good practice throughout the University and, where weaknesses are identified, to require and/or recommend appropriate action for improvement.

12.2 Thematic Review

Thematic reviews are informed by key university priorities and the nominated theme scoped and operationalised by the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and approved by the Learning Enhancement Sub-Committee (LESC). The format and scope of each review is bespoke and designed in relation to the particular theme being reviewed.

12.3 Reporting and Follow-up Activity

The outcomes of the review take the form of recommendations to the Learning Enhancement Sub-Committee. The Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement co-ordinate the development of an action plan which will be submitted to the Learning Enhancement Sub-Committee together with the report of the review. Where there are policy and practice implications a report will also be submitted to Education Committee.

A year-on progress report will be prepared by the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, with updates provided by the nominated lead for the theme under review. The report will identify definitive steps taken to address the recommendations set by the original review and/or highlight any difficulties in meeting/responding to the report recommendation.