

Ada, the National College for Digital Skills



Higher Education Programmes

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT HANDBOOK

2022

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SECTION 1 : Framework for Managing Academic Quality and Standards

1.1 Purpose

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook is designed to capture the quality assurance and enhancement processes that relate to Ada's HE provisions in one place so that all staff have access to guidance on how the college ensures and maintains the quality of the student experience. It is a key means for the college to manage monitoring and review processes that maintain high standards and keep the college moving forward in what is a rapidly evolving and changing subject area.

The Handbook initially focuses on the quality assurance governance structures before focusing down on to specific policies and requirements for Ada's unique approach to teaching and learning and student support. It shows how the college delivers a cycle of processes and activities throughout the academic year, all geared towards the same goal of maintaining high standards of professional practice. Some sections, in particular the College's approach to teaching and learning and student support make links to the College's 16-19 provision where necessary to ensure a holistic and coherent approach.

1.2 Principles

UK higher education in the FE content is based on the principle of the autonomy and responsibility of the delivery institution and degree-awarding body working collaboratively and coherently to ensure the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities for the programmes offered. The College recognizes that monitoring and review of its HE programmes is an essential aspect of its internal quality assurance mechanisms and that these enable that responsibility to be exercised and form a fundamental part of the College's academic cycle.

The quality assurance programme monitoring and programme review processes, ensure the College's academic provision makes, and will continue to make available to students, appropriate learning opportunities, which enable the intended learning outcomes of the programmes to be achieved. They also evaluate student attainment of academic standards and allow the College to confirm that its portfolio aligns with its mission and strategic priorities.

The creation and maintenance of this handbook will support the College's efforts to reflect on the learning opportunities students have experienced, the academic standards achieved, and their continuing currency and relevance. Through cyclical monitoring and review, the College will be able to better judge to what extent our aims for the programmes of study have been achieved. A consistent cycle of monitoring and review will also include opportunities to ensure we are listening to our students and to respond to their feedback, and feedback from other stakeholders, such as industry partners and employers.

The handbook will help ensure that monitoring and review are not treated as isolated events but become part of a continuous engagement by staff and students with a programme over time, which provides assurance, as well as identifying problems or issues.

1.3. Committees: Their Structures and Terms of References

The following organogram describes the College HE quality assurance structure and illustrates how both internal and external QA roles and committees relate to one another. The Academic Board is the ultimate decision-making entity that makes recommendations to the awarding body the Open University (OU) and ensures that the annual quality assurance cycle is completed to a high standard and then feedback and on-going improvements are implemented effectively.

The Academic Board is chaired by the CEO who then provides the Board of Governors of the College (in particular the Education Sub-Committee of the Governing body) with line of sight to the activities of the Academic Board without jeopardising its autonomy and decision-making authority.

The sub-committees of the Academic Board each have specialist roles and responsibilities outlined in their Terms of Reference and ensure that the Academic Board can deal with significant issues and matters arising rather than become cluttered with a breadth of priorities that would lessen its efficiency and leadership capability.

The Board of Examiners and the External Examiner have autonomy from the Academic Board but also provide direct input into and feedback on its performance and provide evidence-based feedback.

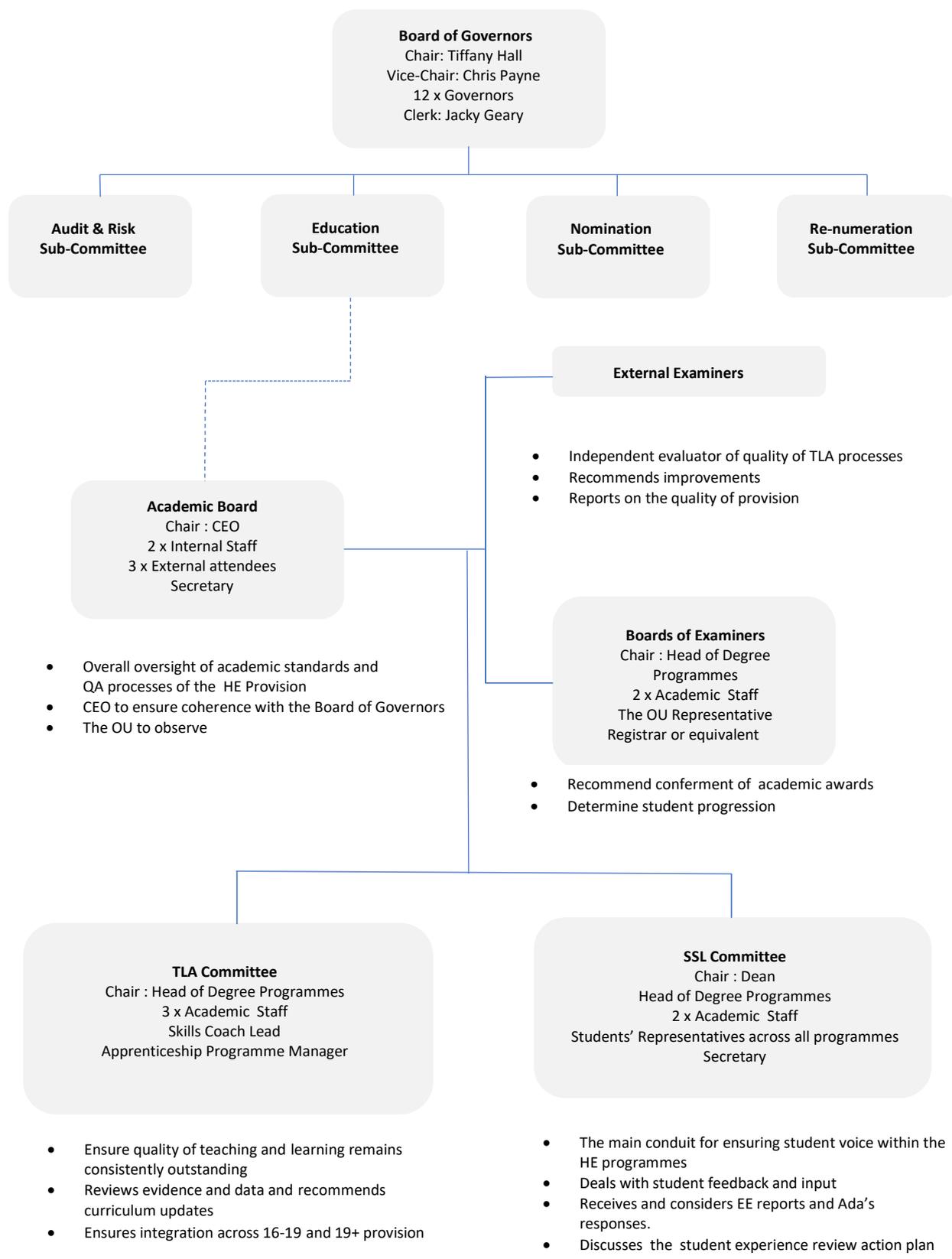
1.3.1 The Academic Board Terms of Reference

Purpose of The Academic Board

To establish the requirements for degrees and other awards that the College delivers and to put in place procedures, policies and boards for the consideration of such awards and the preservation of the highest standards of teaching and learning.

Specific Functions of the Board:

- To approve regulations relating to the admission, assessment and operation of all programmes, modules and awards in particular in relation to the teaching and learning of all qualifications and the effective assessment of progress and student outcomes.
- To approve procedures for approval and amendment of programmes and modules leading to awards by the College and ultimately the Open University.
- To approve procedures for the withdrawal of programmes and modules.
- To consider and approve or advise on, as applicable, strategies and policies designed to ensure the academic quality of programmes, including the teaching, learning and assessment strategy.
- To receive reports on procedures that relate to academic standards, academic quality and the quality of the student experience and recommend appropriate action in the light of these reports.



Key : TLA : Teaching, Learning & Assessment
 SSL : Staff-Student Liaison
 EE : External Examiner

Governing Structure of the Boards and Committees

Composition of the Academic Board

The Academic Board will be chaired by the CEO or the DEAN of the College and supported by the Head of Degree Programmes and two internal staff and three or more external attendees from other HEI institutions.

The Academic Board will ensure that the External Examiners (EEs) feedback and observations, both formal and informal, are incorporated. The EEs will not sit on the Board but will be invited to contribute and will act as the independent evaluator of quality processes for Teaching Learning & Assessment (TLA). Their feedback and insights will input into the decision-making and on-going enhancement of the Academic Board and the College's degree programmes. These insights will be key to making improvements to course quality and provision through the Academic Board's annual reporting to the OU.

Quoracy

The minimum number of board members permissible for a quorate meeting is four. This must include the Chair or Deputy Chair and at least one External Representative not employed by Ada.

Ways of working

- Minutes of each Academic Board meeting will be publicly available. To provide line of sight to the College's Governing body, the minutes will be circulated to the Board of Governors and there will be a standing agenda item for the Education Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors for either the CEO or Dean to provide an update of key items of discussion at the Academic Board.
- Scrutiny of the effectiveness of the Academic Board will be provided by the Education Subcommittee. Meetings will be held every other quarter until further notice.
- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually
- Meeting papers will be circulated electronically at least 3 days in advance of the meeting
- The Chair of the Board will be responsible for ensuring the attendance of an individual that is capable of keeping an accurate record keeping and minutes are produced for each meeting or an appointed deputy will be responsible for recording actions and creating updates for the board members.

1.3.2 The Board of Examiners Terms of Reference

Purpose

- There must be a Board of Examiners responsible for every taught programme. The Board of Examiners will report to the Academic Board to ensure high standards of rigorous assessment and examination of students are maintained and that students

are credited with the appropriate level of academic award based on a thorough review of their academic knowledge. The Boards of Examiners have delegated powers from Academic Board for the determination of academic awards to students, and for decisions about the progression of students.

- For every programme leading to a validated award of The Open University there will be a Board of Examiners whose constitution (including a note of those members constituting a quorum) and terms of reference will have been approved by The Open University as part of the Institutional approval and review process.
- Examination boards are attended by external examiners, who are subject experts from UK universities and who provide an independent point of reference for the standards of awards. They are sufficiently experienced to make judgements about the standards of awards compared with those of other UK universities. They do not, however, moderate or adjust the marks of individual students of whom they see only a representative sample within each award.
- External Examiners are appointed by, and report to The Open University. The terms under which they engage with the partner institution and the programmes to which they are appointed are those determined by The Open University.

Specific Activities:

- To set, safeguard and monitor the academic standards of the programme.
- To ensure that assessment, marking and moderation processes are appropriate, rigorous and fair, as well as equity of treatment for students.
- To ensure that assessment has been conducted within Ada's regulations and guidance.
- To confirm module marks and determine each student's eligibility for progression, condonement, award and classification.
- To recommend students for the award of a qualification.
- To agree actions in the event of failure including condoned failure and re-sit provisions.
- To receive a report from each External Examiner on the appropriateness of the assessment process and on the extent to which the regulations governing the assessment of students have been rigorously and consistently applied.
- To ensure that programme teams respond to issues raised by the External Examiner(s).
- To highlight any issues for discussion at Faculty or institutional level.
- To consider any matter referred to it by the Academic Board or its sub-committees
- To ensure that appropriate moderation arrangements are in place.

Membership of Boards of Examiners

Each Board of Examiners will include:

- i. A Chair
 - ii. At least one Internal Examiner for each main subject area covered
 - iii. The relevant External Examiner
 - iv. The registrar (or equivalent) , as a non-voting attendee
 - v. The OU representative
- The Academic Board is required to agree the membership of Boards of Examiners, at the start of each academic year.
 - Under no circumstances may a student of Ada studying for an award of The Open University may be a member of, or attend, a Board of Examiners.
 - The Chair of the Board of Examiners will be a senior member of staff, commonly the Head of Degree Programmes or , Dean of college, and not directly involved in the delivery of the programme or the assessment of students in the programme considered by the Board of Examiners.
 - The External Examiner will be required to provide detailed feedback and understanding of their recommendations and to assist with the preservation and enhancement of quality assurance processes where deemed necessary.
 - The Registrar (or equivalent) or a nominee at Ada – acting with the authority of the Academic Board – should normally be appointed as Secretary to the Board of Examiners.
 - A member of The Open University staff must be present at any Examination Board where final decisions on recommendations for an Open University award is made and where decisions about progression are made.

Authority of Boards of Examiners

- The Board of Examiners is authorised to determine the progression of students in accordance with these academic regulations and to recommend progression or the conferment of validated awards of The Open University.
- All progression and award recommendations are made to The Open University's Module Results Approval and Qualifications Classification Panel (MRAQCP) for them to ratify. The Panel is responsible for approving recommendations for module results and the award and Classification of qualifications.
- All decisions related to a student's progression, final results, and awards, will be approved by a properly constituted Board of Examiners.
- No other body has authority to recommend conferment of an award or progression, nor to amend the decision of an approved and properly constituted Board of Examiners

acting within its terms of reference and in accordance with the regulations for the programme of study. A Board of Examiners may, however, be required to review a decision, or may have that decision annulled under the Appeals procedure.

- Decisions of a Board of Examiners are normally taken at a full, quorate meeting of the board and the minutes of boards must record the decisions of the board and the reasons for those decisions and must comply with the format specified by the Open University.

Quoracy

The minimum number of members permissible at a full meeting of a Board of Examiners is four. This must include the Chair, the appointed External Examiner for the programme and the OU representative.

Candidate Anonymity

All marks, progression decisions and awards considered by a Board of Examiners must be considered on an anonymous basis.

Confidentiality

All members have the following responsibilities:

- To preserve absolutely the secrecy of unseen assessments at all stages until the assessments have been completed by candidates in accordance with the instructions prescribed by Ada.
- To preserve confidentiality in respect of the proceedings of the Board of Examiners.
- To preserve confidentiality in respect of final awards until results have been formally published.
- To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Conflicts of Interest

Examiners, whether Internal, or External, who have a personal or professional conflict of interest should not be appointed to a Board of Examiners. External Examiners who have any current teaching or other collaborative activity with the staff or students examined by a Board of Examiners may not attend.

Examiners should also declare any interest in the future supervision of a student. Such an interest will not debar an examiner from the assessment of that student but should be declared when that student's results are being discussed at the Board of Examiners meeting.

Conduct of Board of Examiners' Meetings

Prior to the Exam Board

- Exam Board dates should be provided well in advance and a request for dates is sent out by Open University each year.
- Ada provides the required documentation following completion of an Exam Board. With effect from 1 January 2022, the required documentation is:
 - Completed and signed Award Recommendation List for each final or exit award title recommended.
 - Email confirmations from External Examiner (EE) where electronic signatures have been added to the documentation.
- Award Recommendation Lists must be prepared prior to the Exam Board (based on the recommendations being made) and made visible to attendees during the meeting.
- Information on the Award Recommendation Lists must be accurate as it will determine the information which is input by the Open University on the award lists for conferment and certificates which are later produced. Award titles must be correctly entered on the documentation and the date of the Exam Board should be accurate and consistent.

During the Exam Board

- The following information will be made available to an award and progression examination board:
 - (a) the full history of each student coming under consideration at the board;
 - (b) the recommendations of the extenuating circumstances decision making teams relating to each student coming under consideration at the board.
- It is essential that the Award Recommendation Lists are made visible to attendees during the Exam Board. Changes may occasionally need to be made and, if this is the case, an Award Recommendation List can be amended during the Board meeting with agreement from the relevant EE(s). For physically held Boards, the changes should be handwritten on the documentation in clear, legible writing and the EE should sign or initial next to the amendments as confirmation of their approval.
- The EE(s) for the programme should verbally confirm that they agree with the final Award Recommendation List before the board ends and this should be recorded by Ada in the minutes of the Board.
- For remotely held Boards, an email will then be required from each EE (during or shortly after the Board) stating, "I hereby give permission for the use of my electronic signature and confirm that the information on the Award Recommendation List is correct." If the Board has been held in person, the EE(s) should sign the paperwork before they depart

After Exam Board

- The required documentation should be sent via secure electronic transfer to OUVPEXAMBOARDS@open.ac.uk as soon as possible after the Board, and ideally within 2 working days, using a secure file transfer.
- Once the documentation has been received, it will be thoroughly checked, and any errors found will be referred back to Ada. within five working days of receipt, but this process may take longer for particularly large Exam Boards or during busy periods. Assuming all is in order, we have received the report from the OU staff member who attended the Exam Board and produced the award lists for conferment, the submission will then be sent to MRAQCP for ratification and conferment of the awards.
- Ada must not issue results to students (or send Diploma Supplements/transcripts) until the awards have been ratified/conferred by MRAQCP and formal notice has been received from the University that the results can be released. If for any reason the results must be released, Ada ensures that students are aware that they are provisional and may be subject to change.

1.3.3 The Staff and Student Liaison Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Staff and Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) is made up of student representatives and members of academic staff and provides a link between staff and students enabling discussion on matters to do with teaching and learning that don't fit the stricter remit of the Academic Board nor the College-led Teaching, Learning and Assessment committee. The SSLC deals with student feedback and input and is the main conduit for ensuring student voice within the HE programmes. Student representation on the committee ensures that the SSLC is well-informed of developments across the HE programmes in the College and can usefully inform future strategy, policy development and programme growth and evolution.

The SSLC should be consulted of any major changes to course structures or content. The SSLC MUST NOT consider matters relating to named members of staff or students, nor is the SSLC the place for students to air their personal grievances.

Specific Functions:

- To discuss follow-up action resulting from previous SSLC meetings.
- To comment upon the outcome of degree programme and course evaluation questionnaires and any consequent follow-up actions.
- To receive notification of any faculty and course changes with respect to teaching, admissions and assessment.
- To comment upon any significant changes to College policy which would have a

direct consequence for HE teaching, admissions, and assessment.

- To comment upon student and staff safety within the HE programmes.
- To comment upon physical resources within the College e.g. computer facilities etc.
- To make students aware of the College's Equality and Diversity policy and agenda
- To receive and consider copies of the annual reports of the Chairs of Boards of Examiners and College responses to External Examiner recommendations.
- To comment on feedback to students on their assessed work.
- To receive, where possible and as part of the Internal Quality Review process, the College's self-evaluative Statement and the Internal Quality Review Report.
- Each year to receive and discuss the Annual Student Experience Review Action Plan

The minutes of each meeting of each such Liaison Committee shall

- i. Be forwarded to The Academic Board. The minutes should also be forwarded to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (TLAS).
- ii. Be produced and circulated to a standard, time-frame (it is recommended that a two-week time-frame for production of the minutes from the date of the meeting is a reasonable expectation).
- iii. Include a standing item "matters arising from the minutes", to ensure that feedback on action points raised at previous meetings is reported.
- iv. Record the names of those in attendance, giving titles and, for student members, year of study.
- v. Record in the minutes any action to be taken and by whom.
- vi. Be available to the students on-line.
- vii. Be submitted to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (TLAS)'s meetings for consideration and where necessary, further actions.
- viii. Be forwarded to The Academic Board for monitoring

Composition of the Committee

The SSLC will be chaired by the Dean of the College. There will be two staff representatives chosen through either election or nomination at the discretion of the Dean.

There will be student representatives for all the programmes, chosen from the College's HE student body either through election or nomination. Students will be given the choice at the start of each academic year about which approach they would like to adopt.

Quoracy

The minimum number of board members permissible for a quorate meeting is four. This must include the Chair and at least three student representatives.

Ways of working

- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensuring the attendance of an individual that is capable of keeping an accurate record keeping and minutes are produced for each meeting
- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensure that the minutes are shared with the Chair of the Academic Board for review and discussion and subsequent meetings and that actions identified in previous sets of minutes are actioned and followed up on.
- Meetings will be held quarterly until further notice.
- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually
- Meeting papers will be circulated electronically at least 3 days in advance of the meeting

Reporting Mechanism

Responsibility for reporting shall rest with the Chair. Minutes of the SSLC are monitored by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment sub-committee and key points raised as required. Minutes of meetings are available to staff and students via the VLE. The Chair of the Board will be responsible for appointing a deputy if deemed necessary.

1.3.4 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose

The committee will ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Ada's HE provision is of a consistently high standard. It will make evidence-based recommendations for improvement in HE teaching, learning and assessment across the College's HE programmes.

It will incorporate recommendations and suggestions from the academic team, employers and also the OU academic Reviewer. The committee will also ensure integration across 16-19 and

19+ provision in line with Ada's over-arching approach to industry-led teaching and learning that sits at the heart of the College's mission statement and role as a Government National College. On a regularly basis a review will be undertaken of teaching and learning across the HE programmes. This will incorporate a review of the variety of assessment methods of student progress and learning outcomes. This will achieve three outcomes:

- i. An on-going enhancement of pedagogical practices and student learning at Ada through on-going incremental improvements in practice that will be added to by peer-to-peer support and development as well as continuous professional development for staff and the use of self-evaluation tools for students through our VLE.
- ii. Implementation of evidence-based changes to assessment practice and processes.
- iii. The reliability of recommendations to the Board of Examiners for the awards of qualification are an accurate reflection of each HE students' progress on their programme of study and the development of the knowledge and skills against the QAA Quality Code Qualification Descriptors and Subject Specific Statement.

Specific Functions

Teaching

- Review evidence and data collected from lecturer observation, student feedback relating to teaching and learning as well as HE student performance and learning outcomes to inform decision-making regarding teaching and curriculum improvements.
- Ensure a rigorous teaching evaluation framework is in place and well maintained.

Learning

- Ensure the student voice is heard in the evaluation of teaching and learning and proposed curriculum changes.
- To approve procedures for the evolution, update and changing of degree programme curriculums and assessment methods.
- To consider and approve or advise on, as applicable, strategies, policies and assessment methods to ensure the learning outcomes of programmes are realized and effectively and accurately assessed.

Assessment

- Review evidence and data collected from HE student assessments both formal and, where applicable, informal to extrapolate trends and useful conclusions to inform decision making for HE student assessment.

- Ensure consistency in the approach to HE student assessment across modules, pathways and programmes of study and where necessary devise appropriate intervention strategies to ensure improvement.
- To propose, consider and approve or advise on, as applicable, strategies and policies designed to improve the quality of HE student assessment at the College.
- Listen to the student voice, through a variety of means, to gauge whether assessment of HE students is effective and accurate and if sufficient variety of assessment methods and techniques are being employed to measure student-learning outcomes.

In addition, the Committee's responsibilities also extend to:

- Develop and review policies and procedures relating to learning, teaching and assessment in the context of the identified needs of our students and discernible good practice in higher education.
- Advise on policy that impacts on the student learning experience focusing on the academic support and assessment provided for all students. Such areas would include learning resources, academic guidance, feedback, assessment, progression and retention.
- Encourage, promote and disseminate good practice in the design, delivery and assessment of programmes across the programmes.
- Identify and promote staff development initiatives aimed at enhancing the overall student learning experience.
- Make recommendations on proposals that support programme development and other learning, teaching and assessment initiatives.

- Consider the module performance reports, and implement any emergent teaching, learning and assessment recommendations across all programmes.
- Promote integration of key skills, employability and the academic curriculum.
- Report principal recommendations and actions to the Academic Board Committee

Composition of the Committee

The Committee will be chaired by the Head of Degree Programmes. In addition, three internal academic staff, the Skills Coach lead and the Apprenticeship Programme Manager will be appointed.

Quoracy:

The minimum number of board members permissible for a quorate meeting is five. This must include the Chair.

Ways of working

- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensuring the attendance of an individual that is capable of keeping an accurate record keeping and minutes are produced for each meeting.
- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensure that the minutes are shared with the Chair of the Academic Board for review and discussion and subsequent meetings and that actions identified in previous sets of minutes are actioned and followed up on.
- Meetings will be held twice per semester until further notice.
- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.
- Meeting papers will be circulated electronically at least 3 days in advance of the meeting.

Reporting Mechanism

Responsibility for reporting shall rest with the Chair. Minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee are monitored by the Academic Board and key points are raised as required. Minutes of meetings are available to staff and students via the VLE.

1.4 Policies and Procedures (Admission, Misconduct and Appeals)

The College is focused on being a centre of excellence for the teaching and learning of advanced digital skills. To that end it takes seriously the admission of its student body and seeks to provide guidance and expectation for them once enrolled at the College. Ada seeks a student body that is diverse but united by a common passion for learning and exploring digital skills within a defined framework of study. The following policies help ensure we meet this objective:

1.4.1 The Admissions Policy Statement

Objectives and principles

The College recruits students from a diversity of backgrounds, admitting to its programme those applicants who, by virtue of their interests, abilities, knowledge, experience and motivation, will be best assisted to realise their full academic, creative or professional potential by benefiting from the College's educational provision.

The College wants students to gain the highest level of award of which they are capable. Therefore, the admission of each student is based on a reasonable expectation that the applicant will be able to achieve the aims and outcomes of the programme and the standard required for the award for which they wish to register.

This expectation can be demonstrated through a wide variety of forms of preparation, including relevant experiential learning derived from employment or voluntary work, through vocational and professional awards, as well as through conventional certificated qualifications. Where appropriate for some identified groups offers will be contextualised to ensure all those who have the potential to benefit from higher education have the opportunity to participate.

Equality of opportunity

The admissions process is consistent with the College's Equality and Diversity Policy and its commitment to encouraging the enrolment of students from many different backgrounds, especially from those groups currently under-represented in further and higher education. The admissions process is fair and equitable and applies equally to all individuals. There are specific procedures for applicants declaring a disability and for applicants declaring a criminal conviction, as follows:

Applicants declaring a disability

An applicant declaring a disability on their application will be contacted to discuss their required support needs whilst at the College. The academic decision on an application is made independent of any disability support needs. The emphasis in the disability procedure is to support the applicant as required additional support needs will be discussed with an applicant and recorded to form the basis of a support plan for the student whilst at the College.

Applicants with criminal convictions

As part of its duty of care, the College asks all applicants with unspent criminal convictions to disclose them and to provide further information where needed. A criminal conviction is not of itself an automatic cause for rejection. The emphasis in the criminal conviction procedure is not to discriminate against or further punish an applicant, but to make a responsible assessment of risk to the College's programme, other students, staff and other members of the community, which may impact on the College.

Pre-entry information and guidance

The College shall provide accurate, relevant and up to date information to ensure that all applicants have a realistic understanding of the programme for which they may apply and the conditions they would be expected to meet to be offered a place. The information should include as a minimum:

- Mode of delivery of modules
- Duration of modules, and of the Academic Programme as a whole
- Start date of the Academic Programmes
- Module details in outline
- Average contact time
- Assessment methods
- Entry requirements
- Career opportunities and graduate employment
- Student satisfaction survey reports
- On-campus services and support
- Information about local services

For Higher Level and Degree Apprentices, this will be shared through their employer either at the time of their application for the apprenticeship or upon acceptance of the offer of an apprenticeship.

Application

All apprentices must be interviewed, assessed and offered a position by an employer before being admitted to the degree. Although the College may receive direct applications and filter these applications before passing them to prospective employers. Upon acceptance of an offer of an apprenticeship, the College's employer partners will share the stipulated data required to ensure the applicant meets the College's minimum entry criteria (see later section) and that the below criteria are met.

All direct applicants for full-time courses can apply direct to the College through its Online Application System or send a hard copy application to the College. Direct applicants to the College will require a formal application, which will be processed according to the following criteria:

Criteria for admission:

- The College will communicate with all applicants using the contact details provided on the application.
- The deadline for application is generally six weeks before the start date of the programme.
- The deadline is suggested to ensure that an application can be processed in detail and properly, in time for applicants to prepare themselves for induction, enrolment and study. Late applications and subsequent delays in the application consideration process can be to the detriment of the student' and their engagement in their programme of study.

- Qualifications submitted in support of an application should be copies. No responsibility will be taken for the return of original certificates. The original certificates should be brought to enrolment for inspection.
- Applicant information is used primarily for the purposes of application processing. For students who are admitted to the College, the data becomes part of their student record. All data is held and processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

Recruitment and selection

- In assessing the suitability of applicants for admission and the suitability of the College for the applicant, admissions staff ensure that applicants are in a position to benefit from the College's provision, that the provision will make appropriate demands of the applicant, and that the applicant's motivation for the course of study and for the institution is high.
- Recruitment and selection decisions are made using the application, references, interviews where appropriate, records of achievement and examination results (which are interpreted in the context of the applicant's personal and educational situation).
- Admission staff reserves the right to interview any applicant with non-traditional qualifications or who has been out of education for a time. This is to ensure that the applicant is ready for Higher Education and to identify additional support that may be required.
- The College does not use 'Admissions Tests' for each student it recruits but some interviews may be conducted if required and an interview may include short tests.

Entry requirements

To be eligible for admission to a programme an applicant must satisfy the General Entry Requirement as follows: ^[L]_[SEP] Applicants must have one of the following:

- Three full A-Level Qualifications at grade C or above
- AND/OR Level 3 (QCF) BTEC National Diploma in Information Technology, or computing related courses.
- Additionally, students are normally required to have a grade C in GCSE Maths and English Language or to have demonstrated ability in Maths and English in further studies.

In exceptional cases, the College may admit students who do not satisfy the above requirements, provided that they are able to demonstrate that by virtue of other studies and/or experience, they are capable of managing their studies and benefiting from the route. Mature students Non-traditional or mature students (aged at least 21 by 31st

December of the year of admission) who do not meet these criteria will be considered on an individual basis as an 'admissions decision'. The decision on admission will be based on assessment of the candidate's ability to successfully complete the route. Applicants will be judged using the following criteria:

- Evidence of ability for self-organisation
- Evidence of ability to work independently
- The motivation to learn
- Interest in the subject area
- Evidence of ability to work with others
- Evidence that they will benefit from the programme of study

The College aims to process applications and inform applicants of decisions in a timely and professional manner. In order to achieve this, the College shall:

- Acknowledge all applications on receipt of the application form.
- Process all decisions as efficiently as possible.
- Aim to communicate the decision within five working days where the applicant has provided all required information, or to progress the application to the next stage in cases , where interviews or other additional selection methods are utilised.
- Record a reason if an applicant is rejected.
- Provide the reason for rejection on receipt of a written request from the applicant.
- Inform offer holders at the earliest opportunity if any significant changes are made to the programme applied for and advise of the options available.

Complaints about entry decisions

- The College treats all applications in a fair, equitable and professional manner and aims to respond to all enquiries promptly, courteously and to the satisfaction of the enquirer. The decisions on applications are final, and there is no right of appeal against them.
- In the event that an applicant is dissatisfied with the handling of their application, the College will consider a complaint against any decision only if there is substantive evidence of an irregularity in the processing of the application in question ((for example. failure to make a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability)).
- For all applicants, complaints concerning an application should be addressed to the Chief Executive officer.

Conclusion

By clearly matching applicants to the programme, the College will work towards a situation in which it is the institution of first choice for those applicants whose needs it is best able to serve, will enhance retention and success rates.

1.4.2 Misconduct

Scope and Purpose of Policy

This policy applies to all further and higher education students of the College, whether full time or part time, including all full time 16-19-year olds enrolled with the College via direct recruitment.

This policy is expressed through a Code of Conduct. Students are expected to adhere to this Code in return for being admitted to the College and being provided with education and other services and facilities. It also sets out the procedure to be followed where the Code of Conduct is breached.

Breach of the Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action being taken against a student and repeated breaches or a single serious breach may result in a student being suspended or withdrawn from the College.

Policy Statement

The College expects students to behave well and to abide by the Code of Conduct at all times whilst present on College premises or whilst participating in any offsite activity on behalf of or managed by Ada. The College will make an appropriate response or act, including disciplinary action, where the behaviour or actions of a student breaches the Code of Conduct.

Principles

The stated aim of the college is to produce rounded individuals who are ready to enter the workplace or continue onto to further academic study. This requires students to be able to self-manage their emotions and general conduct. As young people who have recently left the highly structured environment of school, our students will need very clear guidance and expectations to be able to reach the stage of maturity necessary to function effectively and independently in the workplace. It is therefore crucial that all staff adopt a consistent approach to student conduct, both in terms of their expectations and in the management of conduct that is not conducive to a productive work environment.

Recognising positive conduct

A positive environment is the cornerstone of successful outcomes for students. We would expect all students to behave in a manner that reflects well on them and on the college. It is important that we recognise positive behaviour as part of the behaviour policy. Positive behaviour should be regularly recognised through verbal praise, calls home to parents/carers, certificates for 100% punctuality and/or attendance, and in exceptional cases with letters to be kept on the student file, and to be included in student portfolios. However, there may be circumstances when behaviour falls short of expectations, and this will be addressed through the measures outlined in this policy.

Definition of negative conduct

Negative conduct is defined as being any conduct that is likely to impact on other students or on staff or visitors in an unconstructive way. At the most basic level, this could mean levels of noise in shared working spaces that mean it is difficult for others to work productively. More serious incidents can include bullying, possession of illegal substances, and theft. Each of

these types of incident need to generate an appropriate consequence, so it is useful to categorise these as low, medium, and high level.

Obligations of Students

When present on College premises or whilst participating in any off-site activity on behalf of or managed by Ada, students are expected to:

- Wear their student ID badge and to show to a member of staff when asked to do so
- Behave in a way that respects the needs and aspirations of others to learn, teach and live within the community of the College when using any of the College facilities.
- Be punctual, attend all sessions required by their course timetable and undertake all associated work. Understand and adhere to College rules, regulations and policies, including the prompt payment of fees.
- Familiarise themselves with the College's Health and Safety regulations, comply with those regulations and act at all times with due regard for their own safety and that of others.
- Respect the property of the College, and its staff, other students and visitors.
- Support staff and other students in the maintenance of a clean and tidy environment throughout the College.
- Follow the reasonable instructions of any member of College Staff.
- Comply with the College's IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Comply with the College's Safeguarding Policies including the Prevent Policy which aims to prevent the radicalisation of staff and students.

Students should also refer to the section on Student Support, Guidance and Advice in section 9 of the HE Student Handbook.

Misconduct The following are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action being taken against students. **The list is not exhaustive:**

- Failure to wear or refusal to produce a student related identity card, without good reason, if asked to do so by a member of College staff (NB: non-production of the ID card could lead to a student being escorted from the College premises).
- Any breach of any of the students' obligations set out above (including non- payment of fees which are due, any breach of Health and Safety or other regulations of the College).
- Any failure to follow the reasonable instructions of a member of staff (NB. Failure to follow reasonable instructions may result in a student's removal from College premises).
- Any smoking on College premises outside of the designated smoking areas.
- Any cheating, plagiarism or copying of the work of other students.
- Any noisy or unruly behaviour or the use of foul or abusive language.
- Disrupting any class or other College activity, whether or not involving staff or other students or visitors, including persistent lateness or non-attendance. Failure to attend any part of the programme of study, including English and maths, may lead to disciplinary action.

- Deliberately or by gross negligence causing damage to any College buildings, equipment, books or furnishings or any property of others.
- Participating in or willingly permitting unauthorised interference with software or data belonging to or used by the College.
- Any theft of property or any other dishonest acts.
- Any drunkenness or behaviour consistent with the use of controlled substances on College premises or activity associated with the College or the use, possession, supply, or intent to supply, any controlled substance or alcoholic beverage.
- Any bullying, intimidation, taunting, verbal abuse or the use of any violence or threat of violence towards any person including through the use of social media both inside and outside of College.
- Any language or behaviour which is racially or sexually inappropriate/offensive or which is inappropriate/offensive to those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and any other students with protected characteristics (see appendix 1)
- Any behaviour which could bring the College into disrepute.
- Any illegal act which may have an adverse effect on the work or reputation of the College, other students, staff or visitors.
- Refusal to comply with the requirement for drugs and alcohol testing if staff deem it necessary through student behaviour on site.

The Disciplinary Procedure

Ada reserves the right to make changes to the staff involved at each stage due to specific circumstances or the availability of staff. If a meeting is chaired by someone other than as indicated, it will ordinarily be someone of equal or higher authority.

A student can enter the disciplinary process at any point, depending on the severity of the misconduct or failure to adhere to Ada's expectations.

Disciplinary Stages

Informal Stage

Minor lapses from acceptable standards of behaviour, these should be dealt with informally by staff as part of their general management of students/apprentices and the learning process via a verbal warning. Concerns can be issued by any member of staff and must be recorded in data@ada.ac.uk

Formal Stage 1 – First Written Warning

If the student/apprentice fails to achieve these targets, then a disciplinary meeting should be completed where clear targets should be set and monitored appropriately. Actions should be recorded in data@ada.ac.uk. This meeting is chaired by the Head of Degree Programmes.

The outcome of this meeting would be recorded as a First Written Warning, outlining clearly the improvements required and timescales.

Formal Stage 2 – Final Written Warning

This is chaired by the Dean, with others involved as appropriate.

A **Formal Disciplinary Hearing** will be held where serious misconduct is in question, in its own right, or where it constitutes 'the final straw' and it could be judged to either warrant the issuing of a Final Written Warning or place in question the student's entitlement to remain at College.

The outcome of a Disciplinary Hearing may be:

- A First or Final Written Warning
- A period of Suspension
- A recommendation that the student voluntarily withdraws from the College with immediate effect
- A recommendation, and action, that the student be excluded from the College.
-

Written warnings, both first and final, will normally be understood to remain in force for the remainder of the academic year or for two terms, whichever is the longer period. However, the Director can extend this period by notifying the student if circumstances warrant it.

Suspension

Suspension is not a disciplinary action and should not be confused with exclusion. In cases of possible gross misconduct, students/apprentices may be suspended until the disciplinary meeting is held.

The decision to suspend is made by the Dean. Suspension is normally used for one of the following reasons

- i To provide a 'cooling off' period for students involved in an incident
- ii Where a student's/apprentice's continued attendance at the College presents a risk to others
- iii Where a student's/apprentice's continued attendance at the College is likely to hamper any investigation prior to a disciplinary meeting

If the student/apprentice is suspended, the Programme Leader will arrange for the student/apprentice to keep up with work as far as is possible.

During the suspension period, students/apprentices must not be on college premises without the prior permission of the Dean who suspended them. Students' ID cards will be retained by the relevant Director conducting the suspension.

Disciplinary Hearing

Where possible the hearing will take place within 10 working days of the incident. Students/apprentices will be sent a copy of the information to be used at the Disciplinary Hearing as soon as possible, usually within 5 working days of the incident including:

- Confirmation of the alleged breaches of acceptable conduct and behaviour
- Copies of the evidence gathered during the investigation

- Copies of documents that the relevant College intends to rely on at the hearing (including copies of relevant policies and procedures)
- Given at least 5 working days written notice of date/time of the Disciplinary Hearing
- Asked to provide a written statement of their response to the case and any other evidence at least 2 working days before the Disciplinary Hearing.
- The student/apprentice will receive written confirmation of the outcome within 5 working days.
- It is normally assumed that if a student fails to attend and has not given a reason for this non-attendance, they have withdrawn voluntarily. A letter indicating that this is so will be sent to the student informing them that they have been deemed to have withdrawn from their programme.

Any student interviewed or called to a hearing as part of the disciplinary process is allowed to be accompanied by a friend, relative or student representative but not by any legal or other professional adviser unless the college agrees to this, having received such a request prior to the Hearing, or that Ada intends to be legally represented.

Involvement of Employers and Sponsors

Ada reserves the right to contact employers or sponsors regarding serious issues relating to students. However, if we are aware of any conflict of interests or rights, the case will be discussed and considered by the Dean before a decision is reached regarding contact.

In accordance with Ada's position regarding contact with sponsors or employers, they will be informed of serious misconduct issues and complaints.

Appeal

If a student/apprentice wishes to appeal against a disciplinary panel outcome, s/he must lodge a written notice of appeal within 10 days of receipt of the letter from the College confirming that outcome. The appeal must detail the grounds for the appeal, and can only be made on the grounds of:

- New evidence
- Decision did not take account of all relevant evidence
- Procedural irregularity

If a student appeals against their warning or exclusion, a member of the Senior Management Team, or a nominated person who has had no previous involvement with the case, will consider the appeal. The person, will review the meeting notes, outcome and student/apprentice appeal letter which should outline why they are appealing.

If the appeal is allowed, it may be decided that a sanction less severe than that recommended should be imposed. It may also be decided that no further disciplinary action should be taken.

If the appeal is dismissed, the original recommendation will stand. No greater sanction against the student may be imposed, as a result of an appeal. The final decision will be confirmed to the student in writing within 5 working days of the appeal interview.

1.4.3 Appeals, Complaints and Data Protection Procedures

Procedures for Appeals and Complaints

For full details please refer to the College's appeals and complaints policy found on the College's VLE.

General

An appeal is a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progression, assessment and awards. A complaint is different, and arises from a specific concern about the adequacy or quality of the provision of a programme of study or related academic service. The College believes that students should be able to raise matters of concern without fear of disadvantage and in the knowledge that their privacy and confidentiality will be respected as will that of members of staff.

How to make an appeal

Students are strongly encouraged to discuss any matters leading you to consider appealing with their Skills Coaches before submitting a formal appeal. Depending on the circumstances, their skills coaches may be able to help them resolve their concerns in consultation with the Board of Examiners without the need for you to make a formal appeal. If they decide to appeal, they may wish to seek advice on completing the Appeal Form.

Timescale for appeals

The appeal must be submitted in writing to the CEO's Office within one calendar month of the date of the letter notifying you of the decision against which the appeal is directed. The College aims to deal with appeals as quickly as possible. However, students should be aware that it may take some time before the appeal is resolved. Students may be asked to provide further information before your appeal can be considered

Action following appeal procedures

The student will be sent a written statement setting out the decision that has been made and the reasons for reaching that decision, together with any actions required by the student or the College to follow up and implement that decision. The outcome will be either to:

- rescind the original decision, or
- vary the original decision, or
- reject the appeal.

The written statement will also include details of any further right of appeal available to the student if they remain dissatisfied with the final outcome of the College's procedures. This will include, where applicable, the right to appeal to The Open University.

Complaints Handling Procedure

The College is committed to providing all its users with high quality services and we aim to do so fairly and efficiently. However, there may be times where a student, feels that his/her expectations have not been met. Where this happens, our procedures aim to make it as easy as possible for users to submit a complaint. The procedures and guides listed describe our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. You can complain about things like:

- The quality and standard of any service we provide or fail to provide
- The quality of our facilities and learning resources
- The quality and standards of academic services and personal support services available to you
- Failure of the College to follow an appropriate administrative process
- Unfair treatment or inappropriate behaviour by a student or staff member.

Equality and Diversity

The College is committed to and strives for equality of opportunity for all its students and staff (existing and prospective) and will recognise and celebrate their diversity. In practice this means that we:

- are committed to providing an environment where all people are respected and treated fairly regardless of irrelevant characteristics or distinctions such as: gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, socio-economic group / background, religious belief / faith, political belief or affiliation, marital status, family responsibilities and sexual orientation;
- will develop a culture in which diversity is celebrated;
- will not discriminate unfairly or illegally against anyone and will take positive action to promote equality and diversity;
- embed equality and diversity at the heart of our mission and values, including action against individuals who behave in a discriminatory manner.

For details of the full Equality and Diversity policy please refer to the College's policy repository.

Data Protection summary for Students

The Data Protection Act 1998 sets out rules for processing personal information, and it applies to some paper records as well as those held on computer. The Act gives individuals certain rights, and also imposes obligations on those who record and use personal information to be open about how information is used and to follow eight data protection principles. Personal data must be processed following these principles so that data are:

- processed fairly and lawfully and only if certain conditions are met
- obtained for specified and lawful purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate and where necessary kept up to date
- not be kept for longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the subject's rights
- kept secure
- not transferred abroad without adequate protection

For details of the full Data Protection policy please refer to the College's policy repository

Student's rights

Students are entitled to have access to information held about them, except where releasing that information would breach another person's privacy. They also have rights to prevent data processing likely to cause unwarranted damage to distress, and to prevent processing for the purpose of direct marketing.

Student's responsibilities

Any personal data must be collected, processed and held according to the data protection principles, whether this is on student's behalf or as part of their research or studies. The College is responsible for the data collected for their own proper purposes, and if students have access to this information they must follow relevant policy and procedure. If they process data on their own behalf, they are responsible for compliance with the law.

How your data is used by the Colleges

Information is used for a full range of student administration including education, research, support services, statutory returns, alumni relations, accounts, public relations, security and crime prevention. Full details on the University and Colleges' notifications with the Information Commissioner are available at: <http://www.dpr.gov.uk/search.html>)

Health and Safety

The College recognises and accepts its responsibility to ensure the health and safety of its students whilst at the College, as well as its obligations to employees, contractors and visitors.

The College's Health and Safety Policy Statement, along with procedures, guidance and forms are available on the College's VLE.

1.5 Roles and responsibilities of the management team and teaching staff

It is the responsibility of the management team to make sure that teaching staff focus their professional activity on delivering those learning outcomes listed in the degree specification under programme outcomes as:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Cognitive skills
- Practical and professional skills
- Key transferable skills

Specific roles are:

CEO

The CEO has overall responsibility for the performance of the College as set out in the College's business plan and in time its strategic plan. The CEO is held accountable by the Governing body of the College and his or her role is to implement the agreed overall plan for the College and ensure that the KPIs defined to measure performance against this plan are met. The CEO is the accountable officer.

Dean

The Dean of the College is in charge of the day-to-day running of the College and ensuring that FE and HE students can study in a safe and effective learning environment that meets their needs. The Dean has particular responsibility for the quality of teaching, the resources of the College and the operations management of the College and is held accountable by the CEO for the College's KPIs in this regard.

Head of Degree Programmes

The Head of Degree programmes is in charge of the HE Programmes that the College delivers and for ensuring the quality, rigour and growth of this provision. He or she is focused on maintaining high standards of teaching and learning and the delivery of efficient systems and processes that ensure student enrolment, progress and progression.

He or she is responsible for the development of new HE programmes of study as well as the quality assurance and enhancement of existing programmes. He or she is also responsible for the research activities of the College's staff and students

Expectations of teaching staff

- This team is responsible for delivering these general educational objectives of the programme:
- To provide a challenging quality programme, vocationally focused on the knowledge and skills required for work in the computing industry.
- To enable students to develop their academic, practical and transferable skills as preparation for their subsequent careers in the computing industry.
- To create employment in industry, government, or entrepreneurial endeavours to demonstrate professional advancement through significant technical achievements and expanded leadership responsibility.
- To provide opportunities for students to work independently and in collaboration with others, providing the opportunity to develop self-discipline, determination and responsibility.
- To develop appreciation on the part of the student of the professional, moral and ethical issues involved in IT as well as a degree of adaptability in the rapidly-changing environment.
- To provide the technical and study skills and background material so that the graduate will be able to conduct a near state-of-the-art research or development project in their final year of study.

SECTION 2 : Programme Review and Monitoring

2.1 Overview

The Ada College's internal review processes take account of chapter B8 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The Ada College's internal review processes comprise: (i) module review, including use of a core set of questions for student module evaluations; (ii) annual programme review; (iii) periodic learning and teaching review. The effectiveness of module and programme review is considered as part of the learning

2.2 Annual Programme Review

The procedures for annual programme review provide a framework for the Head of Degree Programmes to reflect upon the outcomes of the module review process, consider feedback from external examiner(s) and students (via the student staff- liaison committee), as well as data on student achievement and the qualifications awarded.

The Head of Degree Programmes has responsibility for monitoring the programmes of study as specified in the Calendar. He/she is asked to comment on the curriculum and assessment methods across the programme, the learning resources that support it, the implementation of changes proposed in earlier monitoring reports and any future developments.

The Head of Degree Programmes submits the Annual Programme Review report to the Academic Board and the Open University. Annual Programme Review reports are considered at the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee. Any relevant points are reported to Student Staff-Liaison Committee.

Learning and Teaching Review

Given the primary responsibility of the academic team for quality of provision and the maintenance of academic standards, the rolling programme of learning and teaching review is a major element of the College's quality strategy. The aim of the learning and teaching review is:

- To provide assurance about the quality of educational provision and the standards of academic awards and to consider the continuing appropriateness of the programme specifications with particular attention to curriculum content and learning outcomes;
 - To consider and advise on the plans for the future development of the College's teaching programme,
 - To identify and disseminate good practice.
- It is intended that the review process should be positive and supportive and should involve the academic team as a whole in portraying an accurate and comprehensive picture of its learning and teaching activities. A self-evaluation document will be produced, in accordance with the review guidelines.

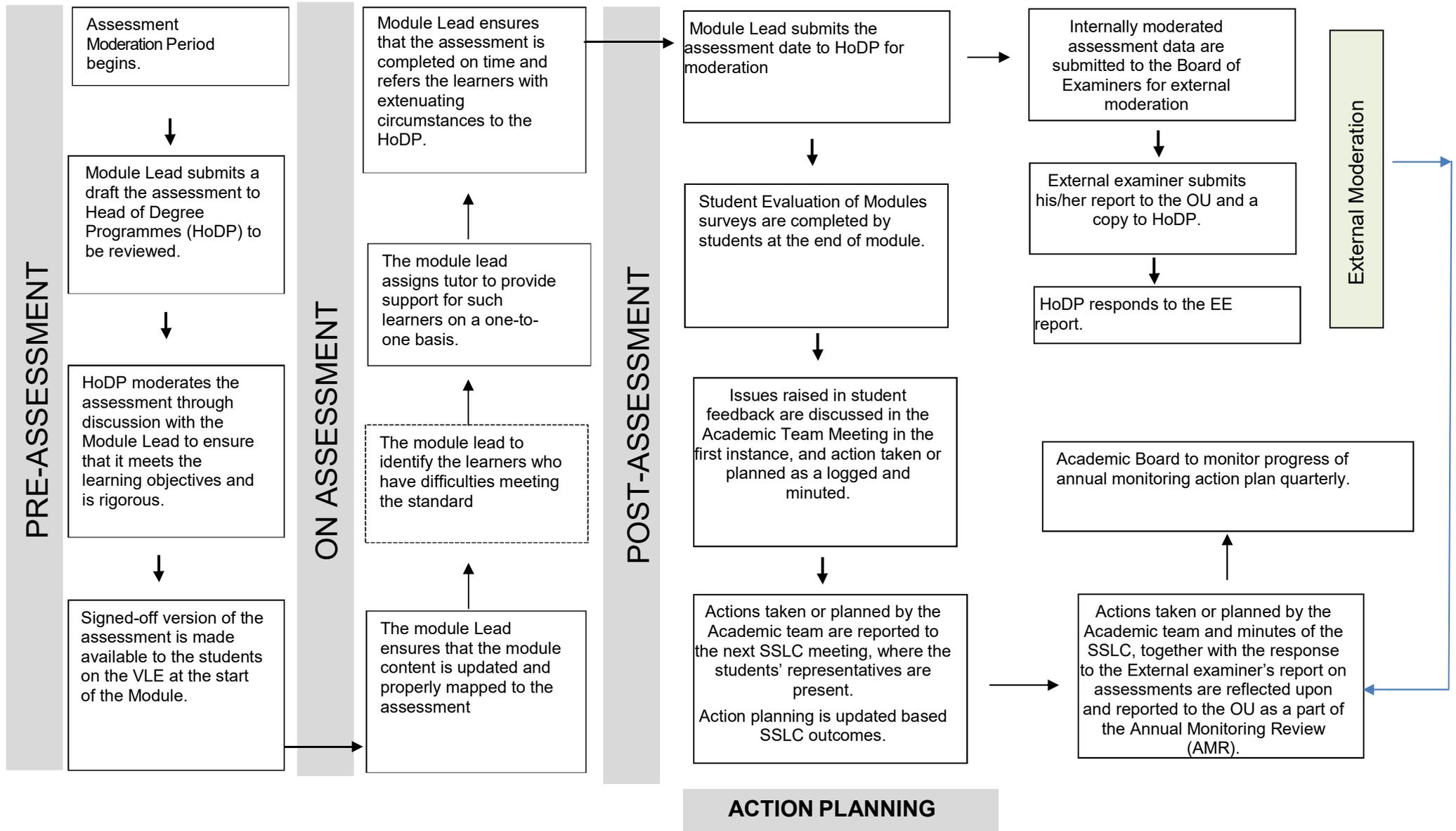
- The learning and teaching reviews are undertaken by the Teaching, Learning & assessment Committee.
- The self-evaluation document, submitted in advance of the review is of fundamental importance to the review process, in setting the context and identifying issues for discussion.
- All members of the academic team are included in the review and are expected to engage in prior discussions on the preparation of materials as a collegial activity. It is required to reflect on learning and teaching, and to consider the effectiveness and continuing validity of the taught programmes and associated curricula, and the extent to which academic standards are being maintained.
- Finally, it will be required to consider computing support, and any other aspects of the wider learning and teaching infrastructure that impact upon provision.
- All of the above areas of activity are inter-related and should not be considered in isolation. The College's approach to the review ensures that members of the academic team come together to reflect on, and justify what they are trying to achieve in all aspects of their work, and how these different areas of activity impact upon one another.
- External points of reference include the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and QAA Subject Benchmark Statements,
- A draft report, based on discussions during the review, is prepared by the Head of degree Programmes. Once the report is finalised, it is submitted for formal approval to the Academic Board.

Monitoring of Programmes & Modules

The below flowchart is intended to provide a summary of the main stages of the monitoring of programme and modules procedure.

MONITORING OF PROGRAMMES AND MODULES PROCEDURE FLOWCHART

This flowchart is intended to provide a summary of the main stages of the Monitoring of Programme and Modules procedure.



SECTION 3 : Teaching, Learning & Assessment

Teaching excellence is at the heart of our mission. We recognise that our students have varying needs, but that the principles underpinning our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy remain relevant to them whatever educational objective they are pursuing.

Ada College, has a distinctive focus on employability, culturally aware and relevant curricula, offering comprehensive student support and academic guidance, and a strong commitment to equality and diversity. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy builds on this and will further enable the College to reinforce its reputation for offering a distinctive high-quality student learning experience, founded in secure College processes for continuous quality enhancement, and underpinned by nationally-leading teaching innovation and research informed teaching. It will do this by setting a series of challenges which the programme team is expected to take up in ways that are appropriate to their own academic disciplines.

3.1. Strategic Principles

- I. Varied assessment and delivery to enable student learning and achievement
- II. Enabling the development of students as independent, autonomous learners
- III. Continual focus on student employability and graduate skills
- IV. Enhancing Learning through Technology (ELT)
- V. Culturally aware, national and relevant curricula
- VI. Commitment to inclusivity and diversity

3.2. Aims and Challenges linked to Strategic Principles

I. Varied assessment and delivery to enable student learning and achievement

The Ada College's Assessment Policy and Practice define expected feedback and moderation, and set out expectations of programme team and students. As part of this, students benefit from a varied learning, teaching and assessment diet that allows them to develop and be examined in their strengths, while addressing the integrity of subject disciplines, subject benchmarks, national academic standards and where appropriate, accreditation requirements of relevant professional bodies.

The aim is that:

- The programme team will review the assessment regimes annually to confirm to students that they are actively responding to their feedback, provided through mechanisms such as the end of module questionnaire, end of the programme feedback and National Student Survey.

- The curriculum will provide sufficient opportunities for students to respond creatively in ways best suited to their own skills, attributes and previous experiences.
- Learning opportunities will challenge and extend students as well as supporting and nurturing them, so that they are confident enough to take intellectual and creative risks, and to pursue activities and interests that go beyond the college curriculum.
- Assessment regimes will encourage individual critical reflection and evaluation whilst also fostering social skills such as the ability to think and act ethically.
- Feedback will link the student's response directly to the task set such that students can see exactly how to improve. Feedback should be timely enough to enable students to build upon it in subsequent work, and be consistent, fair and transparent so as to engender confidence.
- The challenges we set ourselves will be:
 - Through the programmes, module leaders will develop positive relationships with their students to establish/maintain a community of learning that embraces creative endeavour and co-production of knowledge between staff and students.
- All students will have the opportunity to use appropriate feedback from earlier assessments to inform and thus improve subsequent pieces of assessment.
- Teaching , learning & assessment Committee will monitor the way in which assessment tasks make clear to students what is expected of them to ensure transparency, fairness and consistency, drawing upon best practice across the institution and sector.
- The programme team will extend their use of technology to support online submission of coursework and progressively introduce online feedback to students after work has been marked.

ii. Enabling the development of students as independent, autonomous learners

At Ada College, we recognise the importance of supporting students in their transition to higher education and the value of continued and relevant support throughout the student life cycle. A staff/student partnership approach is at the heart of our commitment to progression and achievement which involves engagement with feedback and taking appropriate actions.

The aim is that:

- All students will have access to learning spaces which are fit for purpose and conducive to learning in the 21st century, and to the resources and support necessary for the development of graduate skills and academic independence.

- Programmes will support individuals to draw on their genuine curiosity, diverse knowledge, technical skills and ability to experiment, while understanding the nature of risk in a global context.
- Students will be encouraged to accept personal responsibility for their own autonomous learning and know how to benefit from feedback and access appropriate support.
- Programme team will co-create and communicate new knowledge for the benefit of students, staff and the institution. Students will be encouraged to contribute original ideas through peer group learning, as part of developing their intellectual, critical thinking and other graduate skills.

The challenges we set ourselves will be:

- The college will continue to enhance the learning environment through investment in its learning spaces and resources. This will include regular review of facilities, and consideration of alternative methods of resource discovery, access and learning support.
- Staff and student e-learning resources will be equally accessible wherever students choose to study.
- The curriculum will incrementally increase student autonomy and should be progressively challenging through each level of the programme.
- The programme team will foster their relationship with students to establish and develop a true community of learning.

iii. Continual focus on student employability and graduate skills

The Ada College is passionate in its conviction that its provision be aligned to the practical needs of business and the professions. The programmes actively enhance the ways in which employability is achieved by students, and nurture the development of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes in ways which are made explicit to students.

The aim is that:

- Each programme highlights the development of skills which are relevant to the world of work and any related professional body
- Our programmes develop skills which should last our students a lifetime.

The challenges we set ourselves will be:

- All programme information including handbooks will clearly articulate the skills being developed that have particular resonance with the world of work.
- Students and staff will engage with each other in skills development in order to enhance student employability and graduate skills.
- The academic team will actively engage with alumni to support and develop vocational and business links to the curriculum and the learning community.

iv. Enhancing Learning through Technology

At Ada College, we wish to prioritise how learning and teaching can be transformed through the considered use of technologies in the curriculum. We will use technology to nurture, stimulate and enhance our capability for inclusion, creativity and innovation.

The aim is that:

- The programmes will develop and integrate Enhancing Learning through Technology (ELT) to support, enhance and transform student learning.

We will develop strategies for:

- E-assessment and e-feedback
- Open Educational Resources (OER)
- The use of ELT to support student transition into higher education.
- Delivery of an institutional approach to supporting virtual communities of practice.
- An institutional approach to distance learning.
- Programme team will extend their use of technology to support online submission of coursework and progressively introduce online feedback to students after work has been marked
- Programmes will integrate ELT into their curriculum in ways that are appropriate to the programme and its students.
- The academic team will ensure that ELT employs assessment tasks and feedback linked to learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

v. Culturally aware, national and relevant curricula

The Ada College is committed to becoming a truly national college by creating citizens who are aware of and able to respond to a changing and challenging environment both in education and in the world of work. To this end, curriculum opportunities will be developed and enhanced in order to encourage students to develop the social responsibility and intercultural adaptability that is critical for national awareness, understanding and career development in a fast-moving global economy.

The aim is that:

- Students will be able to reflect upon and respond to their place locally and nationally through curriculum content and delivery.

The challenge we set ourselves will be:

- Staff and students will proactively engage with the wider national agenda through activities such as, progression agreements and curriculum enhancement.

vi. Commitment to inclusivity and diversity

We acknowledge the importance of developing learning and teaching practices that recognise the diversity of the student body. 'Diversity' is understood in its broadest sense and we recognise that inclusive higher education entails designing curricula and preparing learning, teaching and assessment activities that meet different student needs and learning styles from the outset, and are also sufficiently responsive to the particular needs of individual students.

The aim is that:

- Our entire curriculum offer will demonstrate an inclusive approach to learning that has taken account of barriers to learning, as evidenced through the validation/revalidation and periodic review processes
- All of our students will have fair and equal access to the curriculum and positive support will be provided to address diversity-related under-representation and disadvantage.

The challenges we set ourselves will be:

- The academic team will identify where students from different diversity groups and with protected characteristics are under-represented or are underachieving, take positive action to address this and report their results annually.
- Resources and development activities will be provided to ensure staff have the knowledge, understanding and skill to meet the diverse needs of all of our students.

SECTION 4 : Student Engagement

4.1: Principles of student engagement

Introduction

Students and staff work in partnership to co-create Ada’s distinctive educational environment. Through effective student engagement, the College shall continue to enhance its provision, ensure a collegial and respectful environment based on mutual responsibilities of staff and students, and develop our students’ skills and qualities.

Ada College’s Education Strategy is committed to ensuring that all members of the College work “together as an academic community committed to educational excellence and a culture of reflective practice”, and “a student-centred approach to education”, where “students are inducted into academic communities of practice at the same time that they develop the intellectual and personal qualities that will prepare them for their future lives and employment.” The following principles shall apply to student engagement across the College.

Guiding Principles

1. Either directly, or through their representatives, students shall be engaged in a meaningful manner in decision-making processes related to the student experience.
2. The College shall agree the means by which students are represented on appropriate bodies within the College. The College shall recognise and respect a democratic process by which representatives are selected.
3. It shall be made clear to all students the opportunities available to engage with the College, both formally and informally, on issues relevant to their diverse student experiences.
4. Students shall be made aware of the purpose for seeking engagement and feedback, and also its consequence and impact. Staff and students shall recognise the legitimacy of honest and polite disagreement.
5. Student engagement activity shall be timely, inclusive, collegial, well-communicated, and informed by relevant evidence.
6. Student engagement and feedback activity shall contribute to enhancement of the College’s educational provision, services and governance. Students and student representatives shall be encouraged to identify areas for enhancement, and work in partnership with staff to improve the life and work of the College.
7. Effective student engagement shall be a means of identifying student queries and concerns. Where concerns and queries are raised, the College shall provide a clear, timely and meaningful response.
8. Students shall be enabled and encouraged to praise and celebrate good practice across the College.

9. Engagement activities shall recognise the diversity of the student body, ensuring that typically underrepresented student groups and those with protected characteristics are equitably engaged.
10. The College shall monitor and review student engagement activity in order to ensure continuation of good practice, enhancement of engagement activity, and action in line with these principles.

4.2 Policy statement on student representation

Introduction

Ada College is committed to developing academic communities characterised by mutual respect between staff and students, and which draw on the expertise and experience of both groups to reflect on and enhance the quality of the educational opportunities the College offers. Central to this approach is student representation on the College committees with responsibilities for the student experience. This policy statement outlines the ways in which the College's commitment to student engagement through the student representative system will operate.

Policy statement on student representation - Staff-Student Liaison Committee

The College's Principles of Student Engagement state that:

- Students and staff work in partnership to co-create Ada's distinctive educational environment. Through effective student engagement, the University shall continue to enhance its provision, ensure a collegial and respectful environment based on mutual responsibilities of staff and students, and develop our students' skills and qualities.
- Building on this core principle, the purpose of the Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) is therefore to facilitate an effective dialogue between the student body and the academic staff regarding the educational experience provided by Ada College. The Student-Staff Liaison Committee is underpinned by the concept of co-responsibility; staff and student members have a shared obligation for ensure the effective running of the consultative committee. Please refer to the earlier terms of reference for the SSLC

Policy Statement on obtaining and using student feedback

The College's Principles for Student Engagement embody the commitment of both the College's staff and students to gather, consider and act on feedback from students in order to develop and enhance the educational experience of students. This directly supports the College's strategic aim of achieving the highest quality and standards in its educational provision.

The College is committed to using a range of methods for obtaining feedback on the student learning experience, with the choice of method being made in light of the reason why feedback is being sought, and the nature of the issue(s) being considered. These methods include:

- i. Formal representation on committees, including Staff-Student Liaison Committee.

- ii. Direct communication between staff and students.
- iii. Module and programme questionnaires.
- iv. College-wide questionnaires, for example National Student Survey.
- v. Student involvement in programme monitoring and review processes.

Please see Annex 1 for a sample

i. Student representation

The student representative system is at the heart of college’s approach to obtaining and using student feedback. Please refer to the Terms of Reference earlier in the document for specific articulation of student representation on Boards and Committees

ii. Direct communication between staff and students

Much valuable feedback can be gained through the formal and informal direct communication between staff and students. This takes place through normal day-to-day interaction (for example issues raised by students as part of teaching sessions, through meetings or email correspondence between staff and students).

iii. Module and level/programme questionnaires

Questionnaires play an important role in all student feedback systems. The College recognises the value of questionnaires as a means of obtaining feedback, but believes that the use of questionnaires needs to be balanced with other mechanisms that yield different, often richer, information on the experience of students (for example SSLCs). It is also aware that administering, answering and analysing questionnaires demand significant amounts of staff and student time, and is conscious of the need to respect the many demands on the time of both staff and students.

4.4 Policy statement on the involvement of students in quality management

- The College has in place a range of policies and processes to support it in effectively assuring and enhancing the quality of its educational provision. Ada College recognises the significant contribution that our students can make to these processes, by allowing their views and their experience to be considered alongside those of other groups involved in the approval, monitoring and review of educational provision.
- In order to ensure that it obtains the full value of this contribution, the College is committed to the direct involvement of its students in its quality management processes. In order to meet this commitment:
- Students will be consulted by the academic team when they develop new programmes and modules.

- External examiner reports for taught programmes will be shared with students through SSLC.
- Students will be directly involved in the annual review of taught programmes through meetings between review teams and students.

SECTION 5 : External Examining

5.1 Purpose of External Examiners

The External Examiners are appointed for two main reasons: to benefit from direct experience of relevant standards in other institutions; and to subject its examining methods and processes to external assessment. External examiners will be an essential part of Ada's quality assurance practice. All approved programmes that lead to a student studying for a degree at Ada will be overseen by external examiners suitably qualified to assure the quality of students' learning experiences. Their involvement will also ensure that students are assessed fairly in relation to other students studying similar computer science or software development degree courses, with an element of business management included, across the UK.

5.2 Selection and Nomination of External Examiners

External Examiners for the College will be nominated by the college and appointed by the OU. The College will work with the OU to ensure that this selection process is rigorous and a suitable candidate for the College's unique offering is identified. The name, position and home academic institution of the external examiner appointed by the OU will be included in the student handbook. External Examiners will refer any direct correspondence from students back to the institution, and the college includes this in their guidance to External Examiners.

5.3 Induction of External Examiners

The external examiner will be provided with key course documentation, including Foundation and BSc programme specifications and a copy of the student handbook. This will follow notification from the OU of their appointment. They will also receive a half-day induction as soon as possible after appointment which will cover higher education at Ada and which details:

- The history and structure of Ada
- The place of higher education at Ada,
- The college governance structure and their role in it

The College's CEO, Dean and Head of Degree Programmes will organise necessary briefings to ensure the External Examiner has a thorough understanding of the College and its workings and organise for them to meet all relevant faculty staff involved in teaching and learning for the Foundation and BSc programmes. They will also have a tour of the college facilities and an opportunity to meet student representatives.

5.4 Role and Responsibilities of External Examiners

The role of External Examiners is to ensure that justice is done to the individual student and that the standard of the awards is maintained. The External Examiners have autonomy from

the Academic Board, they are independent evaluators of quality of processes of teaching, learning and assessment, but also provide direct input into and feedback on its performance and provide evidence-based feedback. In order to carry out these responsibilities, External Examiners must:

- Be able to judge students impartially on the basis of the work submitted for assessment without being influenced by previous association with the programme, the staff or any of the students.
- Be able to compare the performance of students with that of their peers undertaking comparable programmes of higher education in the UK and in the light of subject benchmarks and qualification descriptors, as appropriate.
- Moderate and approve the final draft of each examination paper or end-of-module component together with the related marking scheme or notes for the guidance of markers. This activity should include scrutinising the form and content of examination papers, coursework and other assessments that count towards the award in such a way as to enable the External Examiners to judge whether students have fulfilled the aims and learning outcomes of the programme and reached the required standard. This activity should include alternative assessments and adjustments made for students with declared disability or impairments, in order to ensure that all students will be assessed fairly in relation to the programme syllabus and regulations.
- Be consulted about and agree to any proposed changes to the approved assessment regulations or assessment strategy which will directly affect students currently on a programme.
- Have access to all assessed work, and see samples of the work of students proposed for each category of award and for failure, in order to ensure that assessment criteria have been interpreted correctly and that there is parity of assessment across the cohort.
- Consider the reliability of the mode of monitoring the marks of module assessments and the final end-of-module component (e.g. examination) and report to the board of examiners on such revisions as they consider necessary.
- Ensure that the assessments are conducted in accordance with the approved programme regulations.
- Attend the meetings of the board of examiners at which decisions on recommendations for award are made and ensure that those recommendations have been reached by means in accordance with the College's requirements and normal practice in UK higher education.
- Report back to the OU and the Ada College on student performance and academic standards as well as on the effectiveness of the assessments and any lessons to be drawn from them.

5.5 External Examiners Report

External examiner reports are an integral part of the college's quality assurance processes. They form part of the requirement for annual review of the programme by the team responsible for delivering the course and responding to such reports will for part of the terms of reference for the Teaching and Learning and Assessment , and the Staff-Student Liaison committees.

The Ada College has the following procedures in relation to External Examiners Report :

- Reports of External Examiners are formally considered and, where necessary, that appropriate action is taken and informing External Examiners, in writing at the beginning of their appointment, that they have a right to raise matters of serious concern with the Open University, if necessary by means of a confidential report which may be copied to the CEO of Ada College.
- Following receipt of reports from External Examiners a response setting out the action taken will be sent to them.
- The Academic Board will be provided with copies of External Examiners' reports, as well as the College responses to the Examiners.
- The Open University will be provided with an account of the responses made to the issues raised by External Examiners in an annual programme evaluation report.
- Students will be advised in the handbook that the external examiner's report will be available to all students for the purpose of quality assuring the degree programme.

SECTION 6 : Student Support

Section 9 of the Student Handbook provides all students with information on the administrative and technical support that is available from staff. Please refer to the Student Handbook for further detailed guidance where necessary.

6.1 Guidance from the Student Handbook

Induction

After enrolling and at the beginning of the first session students will complete an induction. The student induction will be arranged with a teaching member of staff. Student induction will include:

- An overview of training facilities
- Discussion of student handbook content
- Introduction to relevant instructors
- Discussion of course outline
- Outline of assessment requirements for the course/training program
- Supply of reading lists/text book references as appropriate

Induction is an important part of commencing any program of study. Students should take this opportunity to satisfy any questions related to the program, student facilities, access to support services or any other information required.

Skills Coaching

The skills coaching system provides every student with one member of staff who gets to know them as an individual, who keeps an eye on their overall academic progress and who is concerned for their general welfare. On one hand, the pastoral side of the role can often be simply a friendly conversation at the start of the meeting. On the other hand, the academic/developmental aspect of the role offers the chance for students to discuss their development beyond their formal studies. Tutorials and quarterly reviews at workplace can be used by students to sound out their thoughts, ideas and concerns with an experienced professional, who can guide them in the right direction, personally, professionally and academically.

The intention behind the College's Skills Coaching Strategy is that all students:

- are given the opportunity to reflect on their learning and academic progress and to discuss and formulate appropriate strategies to fulfil their potential during their studies at the College.
- are equipped with a lifelong approach to learning enabling continuing personal and intellectual growth.
- are provided with pastoral support which is tailored to their needs, enabling them to take full advantage of their time at the college to develop and maintain a healthy and happy outlook on life.

- develop an awareness of the need for professional and career development and receive guidance on the planning and recording of skills development throughout their studies in order to realise their career aspirations;
- experience the benefits of working with peers and academic tutors within a supportive atmosphere.

Role of Skills Coach

At the beginning of the programme of study, each student will be allocated a skills coach to act as your adviser throughout your studies; the skills coach is responsible for facilitating a student's overall development. S/he will meet the student at least once in each semester to monitor progress and encourage on-going academic development. Meetings may be face-to-face, or over the internet and a record of what is discussed will be kept. The skills coach is the official first point of contact for any student. Skills coaches should:

- Arrange a minimum of 3 formal meetings with their tutees, of which 2 must be one-to-one, with further opportunities for them to drop in.
- Take an interest in all their tutees and their activities.
- Be well informed on their academic progress.
- Agree a timetable for seeing each of their tutees on a regular basis.
- Set aside times when their tutees can consult them.
- Provide clear directions for appropriate points of contact in an emergency.
- Ensure that students know the contingency arrangements when skills coaches are absent from College for any length of time.

Study Skills Support

Good study skills enable students to be better organised, read and take notes effectively, research and produce essays, and be better prepared for exams. In order to help you develop effective study skills, the College offers a wide range of services, including one-to-one support, and the Study Skills Packs. On the VLE, there will be a series of packs, which cover a variety of topics as follows:

Academic Reading and Writing

- Writing Reflective statements
- Proof reading
- Reading and note-taking
- Writing assignment
- Scientific report writing

- Business style reports
- Writing project proposal
- Formatting & writing dissertation

Research & Referencing

- Harvard referencing
- Critical analysis of a journal article
- Literature review and paraphrasing

Group Work and Presenting

- Working in groups
- Presentation Skills
- IT Skills

Assessment, and Examinations

- e-Submission
- Making the most of feedback Revision
- Approaching exams
- Time management
- Careers Advice

Counselling & Student Welfare

Student welfare provides personal and individual learning and welfare support to all students throughout their time at the College. If a student is unhappy or worried, there is always someone who will listen and give support. We aim to ensure that our students' years at the College are happy, fulfilling and successful.

The College's counselling service provides confidential counselling for any student who has personal problems affecting their work or well-being. It doesn't matter how small or large you think the problem is - the counselling service is there to help students find ways of dealing with it. Everything that is discussed is kept completely confidential.

Disability Support

Teaching and Learning

The College will endeavour to meet all students' academic support needs, wherever possible, and has procedures and resources in place to serve this purpose. We aim to provide a high-quality service for disabled students and are committed to making all possible reasonable adjustments to prevent disabled students from being placed at a substantial disadvantage.

The College may not always be able to meet every individual's need in every instance, therefore early contact with a learning support adviser is recommended. In summary we can provide advice or decide in the following areas:

- Study related assessment of needs
- Assistive technology and training in the use of this technology
- Exams
- Liaison with the skills coach and the module leader

Learning Support – Disclosure of a Disability

The College is committed to supporting all its students and to taking all reasonable steps to adjust practices, procedures and circumstances that adversely affect students with disabilities. It seeks to foster an inclusive community and to prevent anyone from being marginalised or unable to realise their potential. To this end, it has in place a number of ways to ensure that students with disabilities are not disadvantaged. Often, these meet students' needs as a matter of course (for example, the standard provision of audio aids in the class rooms or the advance posting of course material on VLE). However, while the College attempts to fulfil its duty to anticipate students' needs, there are occasions when the right support and necessary changes can be arranged only if the College is aware of a student's particular situation. For this reason, students are encouraged to disclose any disability to the College. This can be done either:

- by contacting the learning support adviser who will arrange a confidential one-to-one meeting to discuss the issues and possible adjustments to College practices or arrangements. If the student then decides that they would rather keep their circumstances private, the matter will go no further, except that a confidential note will be made that the matter was discussed.

or:

- if a student prefers, they may speak to any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable. If the student then decides that formal disclosure is in their best interest, a confidential meeting with the learning support adviser will be arranged to discuss the issues.

SECTION 7 Work-based Learning

7.1 Framework

Work-based learning (WBL) is an integral part of the programme and enables you to take on appropriate role(s) within the workplace, giving the opportunity to learn and apply the skills and knowledge you have acquired as an integrated element of the programme. It is a two-way process, where the learning in one environment is applied in the other. Work-based Learning and engagement with employers have been embraced accordingly in this programme through a number of modules but principally in the Level 6 Work-based Dissertation. WBL operates a blended learning and teaching approach in line with the College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy. The following methods are offered to enable you to develop your knowledge and understanding:

- Induction workshops
- Formative feedback on work from the student's workplace mentor
- Tutor-led face to face and online discussion/meeting
- Student-led interaction via online discussion forums
- Student-led interaction with workplace colleagues
- Self-directed learning facilitated by programme handbook and other learning materials

7.2 Academic Support

- Ada College, will appoint a skills coach to oversee the delivery of the programme and training delivered within the workplace.
- Similarly, the employer will appoint a supervisor, who will work closely with the skill coach, to oversee delivery and evidencing of relevant training delivered in the workplace via a learning log, in agreement with the College.
- The College provides extensive support to help students develop their academic learning skills. Study skills are embedded within taught modules; however, students can also make use of a wide range of one-to-one, group and eLearning resources on topics such as; reading and writing, IT and digital skills, referencing, group work and presentations research skills, assessment, revision and exam support.

7.3 Support in your Workplace

- At your workplace, students will be supported by their employers. Exact arrangements and terminology are the responsibility of the employer, but typically, they will be supported as follows, where the roles may be combined in one person;
- A Mentor/Supervisor designated by the employer to provide vocational and pastoral support for individual students, who may or may not be their line manager. In particular support will be provided for work-based learning assignments and the final year project.

- The College and the employer are bound by contract to work together to support you as an apprentice. This will include quarterly meetings between the College, the student, and the employer.
- You will also be allocated a **Skills Coach**. Your skills coach will manage the relationship between each employer, the students working for that employer, and the College.
- If you or the workplace mentor have any questions concerning the programme relating to the work-based competencies, then they should be initially addressed to the Apprenticeship Team.

7.4 Roles and Responsibilities

Students are required to :

- Engage fully during planned Work-based Learning program in order to achieve the stipulated learning outcomes;
- Inform the skills coach or of any issue which is likely to affect the achievement of the agreed learning outcome for the WBL programme;
- Conform to the regulations and policies of the placement organisation;
- Maintain the confidentiality of any sensitive information concerning the organisation and its business;
- To notify the mentor of the placement organisation and University, in advance where possible, of any absences or lateness from scheduled work hours in line with the University protocol;
- To complete the WBL portfolio and evaluation form following completion of the placement experience;
- To submit the portfolio within the specified deadline;
- To be an ambassador of the University when gaining the WBL experience;

The employer is required to :

- Define clearly the types and nature of placement learning opportunities available in the organisation;
- Induct, support and provide learning opportunities to meet the WBL needs of the students;
- Review and assess the students' progress during the placement learning episode;
- Provide relevant and organisation specific information on regulations, health & safety

policies and the nature of the business;

- Enable the student to gain a fair, safe and equitable WBL opportunities;
- Advise the Skills Coach of any issues which may affect the students' experience and outcome during a planned WBL Practice;
- Conduct the WBL assessment in line with the agreed assessment process and criteria;
- Assist and guide the student in the development and completion of the WBL e-Portfolio in accordance with the stipulated guidelines;
- Work in partnership with the College in the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the WBL opportunities;

The Skills Coaches are required to:

- Visit the students (apprentices) at the placement setting and monitor achievement of learning outcomes, compilation of evidence and completion of stipulated learning outcomes;
- Provide guidance and support on request and act as the initial university contact for students experiencing difficulties during WBL;
- Respond to student queries/concerns related to the WBL experience and assessment process;
- Provide feedback to link areas on student evaluations of their experience;
- Ensure that mentors return all assessment forms in due time;

7.5 Commitment statement

The apprentice shall :

- Attend training sessions, either on- or off-the-job, as and when required;
- Liaise with the link tutor and the employer, as applicable, in relation to any reviews, monitoring, or audits required for the apprenticeship, including providing information for, and access to, all documentation relevant to the apprenticeship on request;

The employer shall

- Provide a safe and supportive environment for the work-based elements of the apprenticeship;
- Ensure that the apprentice's roles at work allow him/her to gain the wider employment experience required by the programme and the apprenticeship framework;

- Ensure that the apprentice is given sufficient time to enable him/her to complete all elements of the work-based learning elements of the programme within his/her contracted working hours;
- Allow the apprentice to attend all agreed off-the-job learning and shall continue to pay the apprentice during such time, where it falls within normal working hours;

The College shall

- Deliver the academic learning elements of the programme and establish and/or deliver on- and off-the-job learning to meet the needs of the apprenticeship, the apprentice and the employer;
-
- Monitor the apprentice's progress in liaison with the employer, and the link tutor shall keep the employer informed of the apprentice's progress, including any disciplinary issues;
- Monitor the quality of learning delivery to ensure that it meets the required standards, including liaising with both the employer and the apprentice;

SECTION 8 : Future proofing, Maintaining Quality through Growth

Ada is exceptionally focused on the quality of teaching and learning and assessment. The Academic Board and relevant sub-committee will focus on ensuring high standards from day one for Ada's HE provision.

Since commencing FE provision in September 2016, the College has piloted a number of strategies to ensure consistently high standards in terms of teaching and learning and curriculum planning and revision.

As of March 2017, a three-pronged strategy will be adopted that focuses on:

- Effective quality assurance through day-to-day/operational
- Effective quality enhancement through termly reviews
- Effective quality enhancement through governance structure arrangements.

These are outlined in more detail below:

Day-to-day / Operational delivery:

- Every week, every teacher or lecturer at the College has an observation that lasts at least 15mins. There is then a 20min meeting scheduled for feedback. The person that observes is frequently a peer and sometimes the coaching is reciprocated (eg find pairs that can learn from each other). Senior Management are also observed to make this process feel inclusive
- They use video to inform their practice and regularly review their own teaching to identify areas of improvement

Termly Reviews:

- All staff are given a one-hour coaching training session and given a document that provides pointers and tips. It is based on 'leveraged leadership' methodologies.
- The feedback from observations are shared in an online folder which all can access.
- Those that need more assistance or are on a development plan just have more of these observations - frequently by senior leadership.
- All staff submit all their decks for the following week to a shared folder to be reviewed by the leadership team who provide feedback.
- All new faculty members provide lecture plans as well as slides for their module in advance. If their teaching is unsatisfactory this process is extended until necessary standards are reached.
- Every term, lecturers present their students' learning data to the leadership team and or Teaching, learning and assessment sub-committee.

Effective quality enhancement through governance structure arrangements:

- The College will ensure there is a board of examiners for each degree programme
- The College will ensure there is relevant expertise on the Academic Board and the sub-committees. Initially this will be through inviting external candidates while the College builds its own robust faculty
- Ada will conduct its own annual quality review. This will form the basis of the annual OU self-evaluation submission and the College is excited to work with the OU to understand more about their approach to this process.
- Ada will continue to seek feedback and input from its industry partners in the QA processes seeking to learn from industry best practice in agile working environments

SECTION 9 : External Review

9.1 QAA Review

- The College has applied to HEFCE for registration and recognition as a degree delivery institution and this process is now underway.
- The College will therefore be subject to scrutiny by the QAA. The College is seeking to recruit HE specialist knowledge onto its Board of Governors to ensure that there is appropriate expert oversight. The Board has some specialist knowledge at present through Chris Payne from NCG Group who have degree awarding powers and he has oversight of their HE provisions. However, the Search committee of the Governing body is looking for a candidate with suitable HE experience to provide relevant expert input.
- NCG group have offered to provide formal and informal 'peer' inspection and observation sessions to support Ada to establish high quality QA and QE processes during its initial years of delivery.
- The Clerk to the Board of Governors has compiled a detailed overview of the proposed new requirements of the Board of Governors in regards to self-reporting in line with the AoC (Association of Colleges) recommendation.
- The College continues to consult with the OU and other Colleges in regards to the changing requirements of QAA in regards to reporting and inspection but by May 2017 will be ready for inspection should this occur.

9.2 The OU Review

- An annual self-evaluation report will be compiled by Ada College in the format and template required by the Open University of all its partner institutions. The College looks forward to working with the OU to understand the requirements of this self-evaluation that will be reviewed by the College's Academic Board, the sub-committee of the Board of Governors and the Board of Governors itself before being submitted.
- Ada College will then pro-actively work with the OU to incorporate its feedback and recommendations into its policies, procedures and processes to ensure an on-going and sustainable approach to quality assurance and enhancement.
- The 5-year re-validation point provides a specific opportunity for more detailed assessment of the on-going relevance of the degree programmes and a deep-dive review of the QA process to ensure they are robust and scalable to larger student volumes.

Annex 1:

Guidance on Student Questionnaires

Good Practice

It is intended that this guide should be read by, and be useful to, all members of staff who are responsible for designing and distributing student questionnaires. While the final responsibility for implementing an appropriate student questionnaire format and mechanisms for the subsequent analysis of data must rest with the individual academic, these guidelines are strongly commended :

1. Student questionnaires should be distributed at least once a year for each module within the programme.
2. A separate questionnaire should be distributed after the completion of the entire degree programme, the structure of which should reflect the aim of assessing the whole programme and not just its constituent parts.
3. The questionnaires should concentrate on the effectiveness of the teaching on the module as perceived by the student, and should not address the syllabus.
4. To aid analysis of data, it is recommended that a five-point Likert assessment scale is used to allow students to express their level of agreement with the statements on provision, i.e.

Strongly agree - 5

Agree – 4

Neither Agree nor Disagree - 3

Disagree – 2

Strongly disagree – 1

“Non-applicable” is also a valid response.

5. Questionnaires can be read using electronic systems to enable on-line completion and to assist the data analysis. It is advisable to retain the use of the five-point assessment scale for electronic questionnaires in order to ease comparability with previous years' data. The academic team may use a Student Questionnaire template (see Appendix 2) if they wish.
6. The following headings represent the recommended areas to be covered by the core element of the questionnaire, although it is accepted that the individual questions may vary depending on the type of teaching employed (e.g. when lectures do not represent the main mode of teaching):

a) MODULE STRUCTURE

- The module aims were made clear at the start. The course aims were met.
- Teaching sessions were well-prepared and presented in a logical order.

b) **SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL** (where issued) The hand-outs/reading lists were useful.

c) TEACHING DELIVERY

- The lecturer was audible and the subject matter clearly explained. The pace of teaching was at the right speed.
- Slides/overheads and other teaching aids were adequate and well-prepared.
- Online materials and activities were clearly structured and presented and integrated well into the module (including VLE).

d) **STUDENT PARTICIPATION** (where applicable)

- Student participation was encouraged during the module.
- When active participation online was required (e.g. discussion forums, online development of materials, collaboration) this was managed and supported effectively.

e) WORKLOAD AND FEEDBACK

- The workload was manageable.
- The criteria used for marking and assessment were clear in advance.
- The feedback provided on my coursework was helpful in developing my understanding of the subject.
- Feedback on my coursework was provided within one calendar month.
- Feedback was provided by the supervisor on research projects/dissertations/long essays on at least one occasion.

f) INTEREST

The teaching was stimulating and helped make the subject interesting.

g) **TEACHING SUPPORT FACILITIES** (optional where applicable)

- The computer terminals provided were adequate for my needs. The space provided was sufficient for my needs.

- I was able to access all the recommended reading for my course.

h) INDIVIDUAL STUDENT COMMENTS

- An adequate space should be provided on each questionnaire to allow the student to add any additional comments. Such comments should be positively encouraged.
- The assessment of central facilities should be undertaken separately is a matter for the respective head of the administrative/service areas who should seek appraisals of their services through the distribution of questionnaires to a randomly selected number of students.
- A report, summarising both the analysis of quantitative data and the commentary written by individual students, should be produced.
- The analysis of data should be conducted by the academic team and a summary of the results produced should be forwarded to the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (TLAC). It is recommended that analyses of questionnaires should be retained for a period of time in to allow individual staff to consult them as and when appropriate.
- It is recommended that there are mechanisms in place to ensure students receive feedback from student questionnaires, including analysis of the data and summary of comments. The College should provide an opportunity for collective comment by students (possibly through SSCCs) on data from questionnaire responses and where relevant, to receive the reaction of module tutors.
- A high response rate is an essential part of any questionnaire survey. Various techniques for improving response rates include:
 - the distribution of questionnaires during a timetabled teaching session towards the end of the course;
 - sending regular (perhaps staggered) e-mail reminders for electronic questionnaires to the students, or using the VLE to prompt students to complete the survey.
- The questionnaire should be anonymous.