Centre for Alternative Technology

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Plan 2026-27 – July 2026 Update

This QAP/QEP builds upon the lessons, challenges and developments of the previous 30 months, and recent successful QAA, UEL and LJMU partnership reviews. Many actions are ongoing as enhancement is a continual process.

1 Findings	2 Actions to be Taken	3 Date for Completion	4 Action By	5 Success Indicators	6 Progress Measures
Features of Good Practice					
The innovative design and development of adaptable programmes that provide a wide range of practical and professional skills and academic rigour for students that are aligned with the CAT's mission and values	Keep courses up to date by: CPD, Conferences Experience weekends	Ongoing	All Academic Staff Short Courses Team CAT Volunteer Manager	Partner universities continue to validate courses Collaboration with Short courses team to deliver CPD Development of additional experience weekends to widen range of skill development and opportunities for volunteer activities	LJMU Academic Programmes revalidated UEL courses awaiting validation event Many modules now offered with CPD options New programmes to recruit 2026/7 Increased CPD uptake on modules Experience Weekend activities progressing well

	M.Arch programme reviewed in response to proposed changes in accreditation – now awaiting ARB approval 'Part 3' replacement route option PgD Systems Thinking and Architectural Practice developed and awaiting validation	Validation Oct 2026 ARB Approval 2027	HoS / M.Arch Team	Successful 'Part 3' Architecture validation	ARB /UEL approve new programme ready for Sept 2027 recruitment
Well-organised and flexible learning experience that enhances the provision of learning opportunities for students	Continue to recognise and respond to the fact that no single learning approach can meet the needs of all students	Ongoing	PLs / academic staff	Student feedback demonstrates diverse student needs are being met	Ongoing – monitor student feedback
	Provide variety of learning approaches - consider more flexibility in teaching session durations and intersperse any long didactic content delivery with more interaction. Guest lecturers will be encouraged to also consider activities to run engagement activities or provide breaks during delivery.	ongoing	Module Leaders	Adjustments made to online delivery timetables	Good practice to continue throughout 2026/27 particularly in introductory modules to support student induction
Review Curriculum content	Use metrics such as assessment outcomes to review modules, support assessment and module development plans	Ongoing	PLs / Academic Staff	Consistency across all modules and programmes	All courses to be revalidated / reviewed by Sept/Oct 2026 Improved student engagement and progression with new modules Demonstrable consistency across modules – support module development plans where issues identified.

	Ensure greater internationalisation of curricula	Academic Year 2026 / 2027		Module teams to consider where examples from different countries can be incorporated and where a more global perspective might be appropriate.	International examples within all modules considered during course review process. LJMU courses revalidated successfully. Awaiting validation of UEL courses
The recognition of individual student capacities and the availability of specialist resources that support their academic, personal and professional development	Site Masterplan redevelopments	Ongoing	CAT SMT and Eco-centre Manager	New flexible training facilities planned as part of site redevelopment plan.	Support fundraising activities for planned redevelopment. Mid Wales Growth Deal application process still ongoing. Review training facilities in redevelopment
	Onsite library / quiet space for working	Summer 2026	HoS / Eco-centre Manager	Site redevelopment to include quite space working / library facilities	Garden Room Annex refurbished – Book and journal collection partially catalogued Guidelines for use completed and circulated at AC Consider security of store and acquire hard copies of core texts for library
Medr Register of Higher Education	CAT to be accepted and visible on mew Medr Register of Higher Education Providers	March 2027	HoS	CAT present on public register of Higher Education Providers in Wales	Meet deadline for appearance on register in Sept 2027

The wide range of assessment activities including live projects that use bespoke resources to engage and challenge students	Continue to widen the range of opportunities for students to acquire practical skills and experience and to expand capacities for analytical, critical and creative thinking as an independent learner. Students will continue to be encouraged to undertake projects and pursue areas of interest outside of their specialist programme areas	Ongoing	PLs	Positive Student feedback Feedback from external examiners	Ongoing Enhance opportunities for live projects, and student experiences. Review enhancements. High Quality Dissertations (Welsh content) now deposited at NLW
	Monitor use of AI in assessment.	Ongoing	All academic staff	Staff to consider use of AI in support of study but without breaching academic integrity.	AI policy agreed at Academic Council but kept under review.
	Consistency in feedback including between modules	Ongoing	PLs / academic staff	Support from external examiners on assessment and feedback methods	Robust internal and external moderation processes built into assessment tasks. Use of rubrics to help deliver consistency. Rubrics included across wide range of assessments
Improved coursework feedback	Ensure feedback consistency to show areas for improvement in response to EE comments	ongoing	Academic Staff	Improved student feedback	Improvements in student assessment outcomes for all students

Module Development and Enhancement Plans	produce Module Development Plans throughout academic year as modules are completed to inform CME/QAA process and include in EE packs for assessment boards	Complete but ongoing	Academic Staff	Improved modules as a response to module outcomes and student feedback	Module Development Plans now being routinely completed and now included in EE packs Module Development Plans have replaced 'dashboard'
Retention and Progression					
Enhanced Induction policy / early student interactions	Improve dropout rate in first few months of programme, which is key period for programmes, notably in initial module delivery	2025/26 Academic Year and ongoing	HoS PL SSM All Academic Staff	Improved Retention and Progression rates in first 3 months of programme	Initial progression through programme increases. Retention improving but good practices to remain in place
	Ensure student awareness of teaching and learning approaches at CAT and mechanisms for teaching delivery	Ongoing	SSOs/PLs / academic staff	Enhanced induction activities pre and on enrolment	More engagement with students at induction. Introduction to VLE. Initial modules increase engagement
Investigate barriers to progression	Review progression and report to Academic Council	2026/27 Academic Year	HoS PL SSM All Academic Staff	Improved Timely Retention and Progression New UEL timelines for completion aligns with LJMU	Progression report to AC in Oct 2025 shows improved progression. Aim to continue improved progression rates and ensure PT completion time reduces
Develop formal student engagement strategy	Create formal engagement strategy that enhances current enhancement strategy	2026/27 Academic Year	HoS (and All Academic Staff)	Improved progression – fewer withdrawals	Clearer policy on student engagement Lead to improvements on student engagement and progression
Consider EDI barriers in recruitment to programmes	Review applications and enrolments of diverse groups	Ongoing	HoS SSM EDI group	Improved enrolment levels from more diverse groups	Deliver improvement in the ethnic diversity of students to be more representative of the wider population – 'stuck' at around 10-12%. Meets subject PG norms

					Discussed within UEL MArch Review – support may be offered from UEL
Distance Learning					
Improve the learning experience for distance learning students	Continue using developments in Teams to enhance DL provision Create general point of contact and 'DL supra-group'. within Teams to encourage collaboration between DL students Clearly scaffolded tasks for break-out groups with check in and sharing – DL practicals	2025 / 26 Academic Year	Academic staff (leads BGS / TC) / SSOs and IT department	Improved online engagement amongst students and staff including more use of Teams insights to monitor engagement	Increased engagement by students with online activities – CAT students using WhatsApp groups – increases student collaboration, but impossible to assess effectiveness. IT/AV survey undertaken to identify areas for improvement. Training on scaffolding assessments delivered at all staff meeting
Employability					
HESA Outcomes survey	HESA survey. HESA contact students 15 months after graduation to survey their employment annually.	Complete – now annual survey	HoS / SSM	Improved information on student destinations that can support GSE activities and course development	HESA return annual requirement October / November CAT Graduates now included in public Graduate Outcomes Survey from HESA
Graduate Fair	Deliver annual graduate employability fair Reconsider timing of fair to support employer engagement	Spring annually Held in May 2026 dates to be considered for 2026/27	SSM and GMSO	Improved employability of students and engagement with employers	Improved employability of students
Student Outcomes / Leavers Survey	Review and repeat yearly graduate survey and use results to improve	Ongoing	SSM/ HoS	Improved employability of students and changes in programmes	Graduate Surveys performed and reported to University partners

	student learning experience and outcomes			to reflect alumni experiences	Consider student career outcomes within curriculum development
Skills Audit	Ensure that general skills reflected in programme outcomes, eg numeracy and presentation are reflected across programmes	Ongoing	HoS, PLs, All Academic Staff	Improved employability skills	Skills assessment audit took place during revalidation process
Student Experience					
The strong community engagement that promotes an innovative and positive environment for all stakeholders in the strategic enhancement process	Students meet personal tutors at least once each month (M.Arch), and at least twice a year (MSc). Programme Leaders monitor tutorial activities.	Ongoing	PLs / HoS	Student feedback. Records of meetings with tutors Academics to be more proactive with non-engaging students	Offer is made – MSc monthly/bi-monthly. Engagement variable. Monitor centrally and improve engagement. Offer is made – MSc monthly/bi-monthly. Engagement currently variable – improve take up
	Continued use of external lecturers and employers and guest speakers	Ongoing	PLs and module leaders	Student feedback. Lists of external lectures and employers used	Ongoing – review feedback of external speakers. Remote delivery increases opportunities to engage external lecturers, especially international
	Students to influence directly the GSE's plans for module and programme development through direct representation in major committees	Ongoing	HoS/PL's	Active student representation in all major GSE committees.	Student feedback included within module developments, and formally into module development and enhancement plans
	Continue to create opportunities for student input to site development plans and activities	Ongoing	HoS/Head of Eco Centre /Head of Development	Involve students in CAT development plans as key stakeholders Development actively reflects student input – demonstrate student creativity where possible	GB and MArch supporting redevelopment of 'self build' house, and redevelopment of eco-cabins. Thios work and Site Development Plans ongoing subject to Capital Fundraising

	Continue to seek and obtain student feedback at several times throughout the academic year	Ongoing	HoS/PLs/SSM	Feedback sought and actively responded to	Receive end of module feedback, course committee and representation through student reps Increased use of feedback dashboard to demonstrate responses Increased representation at Academic Council
	Continue to seek and obtain improved levels of MArch student feedback at several times throughout the academic year	Academic Year 2025 / 26 - ongoing	MArch Team / HoS	Improved levels of MArch student engagement (and MArch Reps) with feedback process.	Levels of feedback improve throughout 25/26 Academic Year to be on par with MSc feedback levels - ongoing
Staff Development					
Training to support the development of high quality staff	Review allocation of Continuing Professional Development budget.	Autumn 2026 / Winter 2027	HoS/HR manager	Number of conferences and CPD courses attended	more diverse range of CPD applications
	Additional opportunities for staff training identified	Ongoing	HR manager / HoS	Staff meet and achieve additional training requirements	Continued engagement of training with staff
	Peer observation and review	Ongoing	HoS / PL and academic staff	Review peer observation at academic council – to be completed Refresh Peer Observation process for 2026/2027	Improved professional skills of academics
	HEA accreditation for staff	Ongoing	HoS and Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching UEL Teaching and Learning Academy LJMU	UEL and LJMU admit (LJMU support) CAT staff to HEA programme inc AFHEA for SSOs (UEL only)	One CAT academic has successfully achieved HEA accreditation Access to HEA process also available to SSOs Inform New staff of opportunities

Other Actions					
Recruitment	Review recruitment strategies in light of falling student numbers consider potential barriers to entry for potential students from a broader range of prior certified and experiential learning routes consider potential barriers to entry for overseas students	2026/27 Academic Year	HoS / PLs GSMO	Review marketing strategy and consider options for improved effectiveness Introduction of new programmes to improve recruitment	Improved student recruitment for Sept 2027 Improved access for students of advanced standing and non-routine academic backgrounds Improved overseas student numbers
	Consider use of external agency to support overseas licence application and visa oversight	2026/2027	HoS / Trustees	Successful application for student visa support licence	Subject to resource availability – explore with trustees
Quality of Information	Annual audit process to ensure the continuing appropriateness of published public materials	ongoing	HoS/ GSMO/ SSM	Accuracy of all public information Meet UEL and LJMU information guidelines	Liaise with LJMU and UEL marketing departments to review documentation Reviewed course website for clarity for prospective applicants.
	Ensure student support information to cohort is of high quality.	Ongoing	HoS/SSM/PLs	Accuracy of all student facing information	Communications with students improved, measured through student feedback
	Improved module and programme guides	Academic Year 2026 / 2027	HoS / SSM / PLs	Edit current guides to improve focus clarity and usability Meet UEL and LJMU information guidelines	Documentation now more concise. New templates to be introduced
Widen the diversity of students on all programmes	Monitor the student diversity and attainment levels	Ongoing	HoS / Graduate Marketing Support Officer (GMSO)	Broader diversity of students, progressing on courses	Additional applications and success from students from diverse backgrounds

	Review documentation for unconscious bias	Ongoing	HoS / PLs	New and revised policy documents checked for use of pronouns	Documentation improvements
	EDI forum	CAT EDI forum / subgroup Autumn 2023	CAT EDI lead /Academic Staff / Students	Review of GSE activities	CAT EDI group to be refreshed. EDI group report to Academic Council 2026/27
	Review progression rates amongst diverse subgroups	Ongoing	HoS / PLs	Broader diversity of students, progressing on courses New and revised policy documents checked for use of pronouns	Diversity information included in annual monitoring and enhancement reports
Increase and widen the support for students with learning difficulties	Additional Learning Needs assessed more quickly at induction	Induction / Autumn 2026	ALN tutor / HoS	Quicker assessment of ALN student needs	More engagement and progression for students with ALN. Progress affected by staff illness, continue into 2026/27
	Ensure Wellbeing services are adequately 'signposted' to students	2026 / 2027 Academic Year	HoS/SSM/ALN Tutor	Improved use of services to support ALN both internal and external to CAT.	Improved ALN service
	Review ALN processes to support students (including additional support with assessment)	Autumn / Winter 2026	HoS/SSM/ALN Tutor	Improved assessment outcomes and retention rates for students with learning difficulties	Improved ALN strategy to support students learning and assessment Progress affected by staff illness, continue into 2026/27
Develop stronger links with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)	Develop further PSRB links with programmes	2026 / 2027 Academic Year	HoS / PLs	Additional PSRB programme accreditation	ISEP Application developed and awaiting final submission for accreditation of MSc/PGDip Sustainability and Ecology

					MSc/PGDip Sustainability and Food Systems MSc/PGDip Sustainability and Behaviour Change MSc/PGDip Sustainability and Transformative Futures* MSc/PGDip Energy, Environment and Society* *Titles subject to UEL validation
M.Res programme	First delivery of M.Res Sept 2023 – monitor progress	2023-25 Academic Years (2026 if intake PT)	HoS / Academic Staff	2026/27 Timely progression of M.Res students. Publication of extended dissertations / papers	Students now supported through both by CAT staff and UEL Research Students mechanisms
	Clarify entry information for overseas students	2026 and ongoing	Admissions Team	Overseas students to be aware that M.Res is unavailable for overseas students to study in person in the UK	Reduced overseas students applying for M.Res in error
Create a strong alumni	Creation of formal alumni network	ongoing	HoS / PLs / GMSO	Creation of alumni / membership network Students now CAT members	Numbers of ex-students engaging with the GSE and CAT increases at Graduate Symposium and with CAT membership. Continue development off network opportunities available for student body with ex-students
Create an academic advisory group	Creation of formal academic and employers group	2026/2027 Academic Year	HoS – Academic Trustee Lead	Creation of advisory network	Use to develop opportunities, for collaborations and academic activity (staff and students)