



Centre for Alternative Technology

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Plan 2023-24 – July 2023 Update

Following the end of the UK COVID pandemic measures, focus in the Graduate School has primarily moved back to the blended learning approach but maintaining the good practice derived throughout the pandemic delivering a quality online student experience. It is now prudent to return to the more rigorous assurance and enhancement plans from before the pandemic for the upcoming academic year.

This QAP/QEP builds upon the lessons, challenges and developments of the previous 30 months, and recent successful QAA and UEL partnership reviews.

<u>1 Findings</u>	<u>2 Actions to be Taken</u>	<u>3 Date for Completion</u>	<u>4 Action By</u>	<u>5 Success Indicators</u>	<u>6 Progress Measures</u>
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 Centre's mission and values	Keep courses up to date by: CPD, conferences	Ongoing	Head of School (HoS) and Programme Leaders (PLs)	Partner universities continue to validate courses	Successful re-validation by LJMU in 2024. Modules and programmes rationalised to avoid over duplication and provide additional focus to curriculum. (2022 UEL re-validated SA, SEPDM and GB, M.Res validated for delivery

					from 2023), SABE and SAP on teach out
	Review allocation of Continuing Professional Development budget	Summer 2023	HoS/HR manager	Number of conferences and CPD courses attended	Continued and more diverse range of CPD applications
	HEA accreditation for staff	Ongoing	HoS and Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching UEL	UEL admit CAT staff to HEA programme	CAT academics enrol upon UEL courses and achieve HEA accreditation Restarted process in 2022-3. Staff attended initial discussions Access to HEA process may to be extended to SSOs Continue enquiries regarding access to LJMU programme as alternative
	Peer observation and review	Ongoing	HoS / PL and academic staff	Review peer observation at academic council	Improved professional skills of academics
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	Sept 2022 and ongoing	Module Leaders	Adjustments made to online delivery timetables	Delivery changes delivered modules from Sept 2021. Good practice to continue throughout 2023 particularly in induction sessions

	lecturers will be encouraged to also consider activities to run engagement activities or provide breaks during delivery.				Consider learning approaches within LJMU programme review
	Online enhancement dashboard	Jan 2022 Enhancement dashboard Complete and visible on Teams for staff and students Ensure continual update and review - ongoing	PLs	Online enhancement database	Visible dashboard allows students to see changes in delivery in response to student feedback
	Online Feedback database and maintenance	Academic Year 23-24 Database To be created and visible on Teams for staff and students Ensure continual update and review - ongoing	PLs	Searchable feedback database	Use feedback database to support course enhancement.
The recognition of individual student capacities and the availability of specialist resources that support their academic, personal and professional development	Continue the equivalent of the National Student Survey for GSE students	July / August 2023	Student Support Manager (SSM)	Survey data analysed and repeat surveys show improved student satisfaction	End of year Survey issued in July 2023
	Consider separating responses by programmes subject to response rate			Student satisfaction shows improvement across programmes	Sufficient feedback received to allow detailed appraisal of feedback by programme

	Review access to specialist journals and resources following changes to remote access from UEL and LJMU	Summer 2023	Module Leaders and Academic Staff	Consider module reading lists in light of changes to access. Completed but ongoing as new literature released online and changes to LJMU provision	Revised module reading lists for new modules throughout 2023 and ongoing Student support sessions to be delivered by library staff at UEL / LJMU – annual ongoing activity
	Onsite library / quiet space for working	Spring 2024	HoS/ M.Arch staff	Site redevelopment to include quiet space working / library facilities	Garden Room Annex refurbished – Book and journal collection partially catalogued Incorporate M.Arch materials into library Consider security of store and acquire hard copies of core texts for library Online dissertation and final design projects to be available to students
	Site Masterplan redevelopments	Ongoing	CAT SMT and Eco-centre Manager /	New flexible training facilities planned as part of site masterplan.	Support fund raising activities for planned redevelopment. Encourage continued staff and student engagement with staged redevelopment.
Outline plan completed by external consultants				Mid Wales Growth Deal application process still ongoing. Review training	

				includes additional training facilities and accommodation	facilities in masterplan considering Growth Deal outcomes.
Review Curriculum content	Following first delivery of modules following UEL review and LJMU revalidation 2024 review success of introduction of new modules / programmes	Summer 2023 and ongoing	PLs / Academic Staff	Successful delivery of new programmes	improved student engagement and progression with new modules
	Use metrics such as assessment outcomes to support assessment module quality outcomes	Summer 2023		Consistency across all modules and programmes	Demonstrable consistency across modules – support module action plans where issues identified.
	Ensure greater internationalisation of curricula	ongoing		Module teams to consider where examples from different countries can be incorporated and where a more global perspective might be appropriate.	Introduction of overseas lecturers and/or international examples to all modules
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 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 Introduction of new assessments following course review UEL and LJMU to review assessments in advance of setting work - complete

	Expand on the range of learning opportunities for research led by applied research design module	Ongoing	PLs and module leaders	Positive student feedback to ARD module and improved progression to dissertation	All modules to include a section on research and reflection on dissertation opportunities for students
	Monitor influence of AI in assessment	Summer 2023 – and 23/24 academic year	All academic staff	Awareness of AI potential increased amongst academic staff and students (academic integrity)	AI policy agreed at academic Council
	PT route to dissertation	Introduction complete	HoS and PLs	Review PT student dissertation outcomes following new PT route	student engagement with dissertation increases and outcomes improve
	Introduce rubrics/effective methods for consistency in feedback including between modules	Ongoing	PLs / academic staff	Support from external examiners on assessment and feedback methods Changes to LJMU speedgrader assessment software mean that rubrics are built into assessment grading	Robust internal and external moderation processes are already built into assessment tasks
Improved coursework feedback	Ensure high achieving assessment also receives feedback to show areas for improvement	2023/4 academic year	Academic Staff	Improved student feedback	Improvements in student assessment outcomes for all students

Module Development Plans	Complete Module Development throughout academic year as modules are completed to inform CME/QAA process	2023/4 academic year	Academic Staff	Improved modules as a response to module outcomes and student feedback	All modules have Module Development Plans in time for start of 2024/5 academic year for action
Progression					
Consider EDI barriers in recruitment to programmes	Review applications and enrolments of diverse groups	Ongoing	HoS SSM	Improved enrolment levels from more diverse groups	Annual improvement in student diversity
Investigate barriers to progression	Review progression and report to Academic Council	2023/24 Academic Year	HoS PL SSM All Academic Staff	Improved Retention and Progression	Progression through programme rates increase and PT completion time reduces
Enhanced Induction policy / early student interactions	Improve drop out rate in first few months of programme, which is key period of programmes	2023/24 Academic Year	HoS PL SSM All Academic Staff	Improved Retention and Progression rates in first 3 months of programme	Initial progression through programme increase
Employability					
Refresh Skills Audit	Ensure that general skills reflected in programme outcomes, eg numeracy and presentation are reflected across	Winter 2023 / Spring 2024 (for LJMU revalidation)	HoS, PLs, All Academic Staff	Improved employability skills	Complete skills assessment audit with programme outcomes as part of LJMU revalidation – extend to UEL programmes
Graduate Fair	Deliver graduate employability fair	Spring 2024	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	Ongoing	SSM/ Data Manager / HoS	Improved employability of students and changes	Evaluate responses to Survey Sept 2023. Consider student career

	to improve student learning experience and outcomes			in programmes to reflect alumni experiences	outcomes within curriculum development
HESA Outcomes survey	Prepare to Incorporate HESA survey from 2024				HESA requirement 2024
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.	Annual report	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 – improved take up
	New booking system to ensure better access Student Support Officers.	Academic Year 2023/4	HoS/SSM	Student feedback. Notes of interactions	Improved timely access to SSO's and academics inc. online giving equal consideration for DL students (office hours / email)
	Continued use of external lecturers and employers and guest speakers, and opportunities	Ongoing	PLs and module leaders	Student feedback. Lists of external lectures and employers used	Ongoing – generally positive feedback to external speakers. Delivery of teaching sessions live through Teams / Zoom has increased live interaction for DL students. Remote delivery potentially increases opportunities to engage external lecturers

	<p>Students to influence directly the Centre's plans for module and programme development through direct representation in major committees</p> <p>Continue to create opportunities for student input to site development plans and activities</p>	Ongoing	HoS/Head of Eco Centre/Head of Development	<p>Active student representation in all major GSE committees. Involve students in CAT development plans as key stakeholders</p> <p>Development actively reflects student input – demonstrate student creativity where possible</p>	Site Development Plans ongoing subject to Capital Fundraising
	<p>Continue to seek and obtain student feedback at several times throughout the academic year Continue to seek and obtain student feedback at several times throughout the academic year</p>	Ongoing	HoS/PLs/SSM	Feedback sought and actively responded to	<p>Receive end of module feedback, course committee and representation through student reps</p> <p>Increased use of feedback dashboard to demonstrate responses</p> <p>Increased representation at Academic Council</p>
Other Actions					

Quality of Information	Repeat annual audit process to ensure the continuing appropriateness of published materials	October 2022 - ongoing	HoS/ GSMO/ SSM/ CAT data Officer	Accuracy of all public information Meet UEL and LJMU information guidelines	Completed during QAA review but ongoing Liaise with LJMU and UEL
	all students have equal access to their university-based VLEs	Ongoing	HoS and SSOs	Students use both CAT Teams VLE and university VLEs equally easily-	Ongoing. Additional use of Microsoft Teams during shared modules allows for consistent information to all students
	Ensure student support information to cohort is of high quality.	Ongoing	HoS/SSM/PLs	Support external training opportunities for SSOs inc AFHEA	Communications with students improved, measured through student feedback
	Improved information about module timetables and differences between timetable options	Ongoing	SSOs/PLs / academic staff	Provide greater explanation of the online timetable options and the implications for study patterns on teaching, learning and assessment	Greater student satisfaction and greater module performance from students selecting the module study pattern which best suits their personal circumstances Production of module guides (video)
Improved Induction	Ensure student awareness of teaching and learning approaches at CAT and mechanisms for teaching delivery	August/September 2023 and ongoing	SSOs/PLs / academic staff	Enhanced induction activities pre and on enrolment	More engagement with students at induction. Introduction to VLE

	Additional learning Needs assessed more quickly at induction			Quicker assessment of ALN student needs	More engagement and progression for students with ALN
Student Support options	Increase the level of student support for financial, health and family issues	Ongoing	HoS and HR manager	Introduce confidential and professional external support organisation to support students Monitor engagement on annual basis	Students have access to CAT employee assistance plan – telephone support system Complete but continue to review considering increased use of service
Enhancement Strategy	Continue effecting the CAT Student Learning and Enhancement Strategy Implementation Plan.	Ongoing	HoS	Academic Council agrees implementation	Ongoing process
Improve the learning experience for distance learning students	Continue using developments in Teams to enhance DL provision		Academic staff / SSos and IT department	Improved online engagement amongst students	Ongoing process
Widen the diversity of students on all programmes	Monitor the student diversity	Ongoing	HoS / Graduate Marketing Support Officer (GMSO)	Broader diversity of students, progressing on courses	Additional applications and success from students with minority characteristics

	Review progression rates amongst diverse subgroups	Ongoing	HoS / PLs		Diversity information included in CAM/CME reports
	Extra resources provided to support recruitment from broader population of students				Diversity of student intake on programmes largely consistent despite larger intake.
	Review documentation for unconscious bias	Ongoing		New and revised policy documents checked for use of pronouns	Student led activities on diversity
	EDI forum	Develop GSE EDI forum / subgroup Autumn 2023	Academic Staff / Students	Review of GSE activities	EDI group report to Academic Council 2023-4
Increase and widen the support for students with learning difficulties	Review newly implemented ALN strategy (2022/3) to support students (including additional support with assessment)	Winter 2023	HoS/SSM	Improved assessment outcomes and retention rates for students with learning difficulties	Improved ALN strategy to support students learning and assessment
Develop stronger links with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)	Develop further PSRB links with programmes	Sept 2024	HoS / PLs	PSRB accredit programmes	Links developed for new courses. Progress made on accreditation. LJMU validation considers routes for future PSRB accreditation
Introduction of M.Res programme	First delivery of M.Res Sept 2023	2023-25 Academic Years (2026 if intake PT)	HoS / Academic Staff	2025/26 Timely progression of M.Res students.	Ensure students are supported throughout M.Res delivery and

				Publication of extended dissertations / papers	extended research project
Create a strong alumni	Creation of formal alumni network	Spring / Summer 2024	HoS / PLs / GMSO	Creation of alumni network Alumni event to be held 2023 - complete	Numbers of ex-students engaging with the GSE and CAT. Continue development off network opportunities available for student body with ex-students
Develop formal student engagement strategy	Creation of formal engagement strategy that enhances current enhancement strategy	Spring / Summer 2024	HoS	Meet recommendations of QAA review	Clearer policy on student engagement Lead to improvements on student engagement and progression