



Leeds Trinity  
University

# Academic Quality Assurance

# Academic Quality Assurance at Leeds Trinity University: An Introduction

Leeds Trinity is an independent self-governing higher education institution which has the power to award its own taught awards and therefore the responsibility to assure the standards and quality of those awards and of the educational experience enjoyed by its students.<sup>[1]</sup> What follows is an introduction to how the institution discharges this responsibility.

## How do we define standards and quality?

Threshold **academic standards** are the minimum level of achievement that you have to reach to succeed on your course and achieve the qualification. A key feature of this is that threshold standards should not vary from one higher education provider to another.

**Academic quality** is how well an institution supports students in their learning: the teaching, the support available, how they are assessed, and the resources available.

**Quality assurance** is the process for checking that the standards and quality of higher education provision meet agreed expectations. This includes national frameworks for higher education, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory bodies and Apprenticeship Standards.

**Quality enhancement** is the process for continuously reflecting upon current standards and practice with a view to improving the quality of higher education provision and the educational experience enjoyed by students.

## Leeds Trinity's Governance Structure

The Academic Board, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, is responsible to the Board of Governors for oversight of the institution's academic strategy and the delivery of a quality student experience. This responsibility is discharged largely through a set of deliberative committees, primarily the Learning & Teaching Committee (focusing on quality assurance – 'QA') and the Student Experience & Engagement Committee (focusing on quality enhancement – 'QE'). School Boards have oversight of QA and QE at School-level for the University's three Schools, which are the School of Communications, Business and Law, the School of Social and Health Sciences and the Institute of Childhood and Education.

## Quality Assurance and Enhancement Activities

Leeds Trinity's quality assurance systems include the following elements which are undertaken in partnership with Schools and the Academic Quality Office:

- Annual Review – Programme Annual Review (PAR), School Annual Review (SAR) and the institutional Annual Report on Quality and Standards;
- [External examining](#) is a system of external peer review where student work is moderated and an examiner oversees internal assessment processes and produces an annual report for the University, which in turn inform the institutional Annual Report on Quality and Standards;
- Periodic Review – quinquennial internal academic review, involving partners and external academic peers;
- Programme approval, modification and withdrawal procedures;
- Academic collaborative activity procedures;
- Taught Programme Academic Regulations, which set out the rules so that all students are treated equitably;
- Student engagement in Quality Assurance processes including programme approval activity and Periodic Review;

Processes undertaken in other areas of the University are:

- Student surveys – the National Student Survey, Student Experience Survey and Module Evaluation Questionnaires;
- Student-Staff Academic Committees and the institutional-level Student Consultative Forum;
- Student representation on deliberative committees, managed by Leeds Trinity Student Union in liaison with the Academic Quality team;
- Publication of standard sets of data and information on academic provision and the wider student experience on the [Discover Uni](#) website and which can be found in various documentation published on the [Key Documents](#) section of Leeds Trinity's website.

Some of the relationships between these different elements are illustrated in a diagram of the [Academic Quality Cycle](#).

## The National Framework

The University is supported in meeting its responsibilities to the Office for Students for standards and quality by the designated quality body, the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#). To this end the QAA publishes guidance to help institutions develop effective systems, principally the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#). This is used to ensure that students have a high-quality educational experience and sets out expectations expressed as Core and Common Practices for standards and quality. This is supplemented by detailed advice and guidance on specific areas of activity, for example, how programmes are designed and approved, how they are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis, how information is communicated to students and how the student voice is listened to. The University's activities listed above are designed to comply with these expectations and guidance.

The QAA conducted its last formal *Higher Education Review* of Leeds Trinity University in May 2015 and this entitled the University to display the QAA Quality Mark. It provided assurance to the government, via the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), that academic quality and standards were being maintained and developed satisfactorily. The resulting report and action plan are linked from the University's [Key Documents](#) webpage. The regulatory framework for higher education in England is now the responsibility of the [Office for Students \(OfS\)](#) and, in future, the QAA will conduct Quality and Standards Reviews as required by the OfS.

Further information is available from the Academic Quality Office via its section of the Leeds Trinity Intranet pages (only accessible internally) or by email to: [AQSO@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:AQSO@leedstrinity.ac.uk)

[1] Postgraduate research students are studying for awards of the University of Leeds. In these cases the University of Leeds is ultimately responsible for standards and quality but Leeds Trinity has considerable delegated authority in delivering them at a practical level.

# Academic Quality Cycle Overview

