



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.^[1] 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.

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.

People

While all staff have a duty to provide students with a quality education, some have particular roles to fulfil:

- **Lecturers:** teaching, organising student learning and assessing students at module level;
- **Programme leaders:** organising and enhancing academic provision to ensure that students' needs are met at course level;
- **Associate Heads of Department:** monitoring the delivery of academic provision and developing it in order to achieve excellence;
- **Deputy Vice-Chancellor:** providing institutional leadership to ensure that academic provision and the opportunities available to students compare favourably with other UK HEIs and are continuously improved;
- The **Head of Academic Quality** and the **Academic Quality Office** manage the University's processes which support and guide departments in assuring the quality and standards of academic provision, organising programme approval activity, periodic reviews and other forms of monitoring.

All these staff work collaboratively through the following structures:

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 Arts and Communications, School of Social and Health Sciences and the Institute of Childhood and Education.

Quality Assurance 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 arrangements](#), which includes consideration of the annual reports produced by external examiners;
- Periodic Review – quinquennial internal academic review;
- Programme approval, modification and withdrawal procedures;
- Academic collaborative activity procedures;
- Taught Course Academic Regulations;
- 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 in Key Information Sets (KISs) on the [Unistats](#) website and of the Wider Information Set (WIS), 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 for standards and quality by the national [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 the high-quality educational experience that they are entitled to expect and sets out, for example, expectations about how programmes are approved, how they are monitored and reviewed 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.

The QAA conducts a formal review of each English HE provider (formerly 'Institutional Review', now 'Higher Education Review') roughly every six years to provide assurance to the [Higher Education Funding Council for England \(HEFCE\)](#), and thus to the government, that academic quality and standards are being maintained and developed satisfactorily. Leeds Trinity's last HE Review took place in May 2015 and the resulting report and action plan are linked from the [Key Documents](#) webpage.

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

[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

