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## POLICY STATEMENT NO. HE03

**TITLE: HE ENHANCEMENT PROCEDURE**

### INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW:

Enhancement of learning opportunities is an important part of the academic cycle and ensures that courses and their constituent modules remain fit for purpose, academic standards are appropriate to the level of the course and best practice is recorded and disseminated to all academic and support staff involved in delivery of Higher Education.

Enhancement can be defined as deliberate and systematic steps taken at provider level to improve the quality of the Student experience. Enhancement is not about Quality Assurance or compliance but about looking for ways to innovatively improve the Student experience and measure the impact of these improvements.

Enhancement opportunities are recorded as they are identified through the College Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) Action Plan and through Course AMR Action Plans. Opportunities to enhance the learner experience come from a number of different sources:

- Student Involvement
- Industry
- External Examiners
- Partner Universities and Colleges
- Performance Data
- Staff Innovation and Improvement
- Strategic Quality Systems

Enhancing the learner experience is the responsibility of all staff. In order for this process to be successful there must be a clear cycle of feedback to share best practice and enhancement that involves students, lecturers, SLT and support staff.

This procedure details the requirements for student-assured enhancement and is informed by the Quality Assurance Agency's *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* specifically Advice and Guidance on Student Engagement (2018).

### STATEMENT:

#### **Student Involvement**

1.1 Vitally the enhancement of a programme and the College's HE provision as a whole involves students in a variety of ways that will ensure the learner voice is listened to and acted upon. Students are at the core of the College's operations and are therefore central to the process of enhancement. There are a range of opportunities for individuals, groups and representatives to attend meetings, report experiences and contribute to reviews that provide a range of perspectives that inform enhancement. All students are briefed on their responsibilities

within this cycle and those with specific roles are assigned training in order that they undertake duties with absolute confidence and to optimise impact.

1.2 Where feedback from students is received, this is collated by the course co-ordinator and feeds into a course AMR. Course co-ordinators are required to record any areas for development identified from student feedback alongside actions to implement improvements. Any best practice is also recorded. All course AMRs are moderated by the AMR Moderation Panel before being submitted to Academic Board for review. Where best practice is identified then this is added to the overall college AMR for dissemination across the provision.

1.3 Course AMRs are distributed to all students through the VLE and are discussed at each Programme Committee Meeting which is attended by Course Representatives. This ensures that all students are aware of actions being implemented in response to their feedback.

### **Student Representatives**

2.1 All courses are required to appoint a student Course Representative from each year group. Where more than one candidate stands then they are chosen by student election. The main role of course reps is to gather views from their peers regarding various aspects of their course and to communicate those to members of staff. This can be positive feedback on aspects that work well and thus might be shared as good practice as well as concerns about issues that negatively affect the Student experience. NCS provide training to Course Representatives to help them in their role.

2.2 A Lead Course Representative is also appointed. This appointment is made through a selection process involving both students and staff. The role of this person is to oversee student involvement in Enhancement, to contribute to Quality Assurance processes and sit on Academic Board.

### **HE Student Forum**

3.1 The Forum's purpose is to invite feedback from course representatives about student issues that have been communicated to them from the overall student body. All issues raised are recorded in the minutes with clear responsibility assigned for actions. These are overseen by the Academic Board to ensure actions are taken.

3.2 The Forum is also invited to comment on, and provide input to, proposed changes to HE procedures or structures. Course Representatives are expected to feedback to their classmates on main points of discussion. Minutes of the HE Student Forum are also made available to students through the VLE. These Forums take place once per term and are chaired by a member of the HE/Quality team.

### **Programme Committee Meetings**

4.1 Course Representatives are invited to attend the Programme Committee Meetings where quality and enhancement are discussed in depth. Surveys, Focus Groups, EE Reports, and AMRs form the evidence and catalysts for thought and students hold full membership whilst the committee sits, allowing them to contribute to and lead on decision making where appropriate.

### **National Students Survey (NSS)**

5.1 The NSS provides context against the background to HE as a whole by comparing localised student responses with national rates. All final year students are expected to answer a range of relevant questions about the provision and the quality therein. The College

encourages all students to complete the survey. Where the number of students on a course is high enough to receive course specific results then these are added to the course AMR with appropriate actions.

5.2 Overall college results are collated by the Head of Higher Education and considered by the Academic Board and where actions are identified these are added to the overall College AMR

### **College Surveys**

6.1 All HE students within the College undertake surveys once per year that target aspects of their education that may or may not exist in and out of the teaching spaces. Questions asked mirror those from the NSS to assure that all courses can be measured against national benchmarks. This includes applying the survey to our first year students. Results are collated and returned to Course Co-ordinators to feed into their AMRs.

### **Student Module Review**

7.1 A survey review of students is conducted at the end of each unit to ascertain the strengths and potential improvements to learning, assessment and teaching. Action is considered by the course team and monitored at the Academic Board to ensure planned adjustment for improvement. This may involve reconsideration of learning activities or assessment methods or at worst finding an alternative lecturer for the module/unit.

### **Focus Groups**

8.1 Where learners have identified clear concerns in a survey, or through other routes such as a complaint, a focus group is arranged where a member of the College team not directly attached to the course will conduct a target-driven conversation with the cohort. Minutes are returned to Course Co-ordinators to feed into their AMR and also considered by the Academic Board to feed into the College AMR.

### **Feedback to Students**

9.1 As enhancements are made it is important that there is a mechanism for feeding back to the Students and this will be done in several forms. Course Co-ordinators take responsibility for managing information and being transparent about the changes that are made in response to the student voice.

9.2 Course Representatives are responsible for feedback to the student body on discussions that have taken place through meetings and boards. Course AMRs, the College AMR, and External Examiner Reports are all made available to the Student body through the VLE.

### **Industry**

10.1 Feedback from industry is received in a number of formats. At course level, Course Co-ordinators work with industry on live briefs, work experience partners and as guest speakers.

10.2 When students work on a live brief they complete a reflective evaluation of the learning experience. Where possible clients also provide feedback on their assessment of the outcomes and development points for the Students involved.

10.3 Students undertaking work experience evaluate their own performance, successes and areas for improvement and gain feedback from the Employer. Course Co-ordinators track all

industry feedback and where areas for development are identified these are incorporated into the teaching schedule for future delivery.

10.4 When new programmes are developed then industry experts are, as a minimum, consulted on the course specification but where possible are integral to the design and development of the programme. They are also involved in validation events where their input is invaluable.

### **External Examiners (EE)**

11.1 All courses are appointed with one or more External Examiner. EEs oversee coursework and submit an EE report at the end of each academic year. As part of this process comments and recommendations are made on good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment as well as opportunities to enhance the quality of learning opportunities provided to students. All communication from the EE, including EE Reports, is provided to the Course Co-ordinator, the Head of HE and the Head of Quality. Actions are tracked through the AMR with clear and timely deadlines for implementation. The Academic Board monitor actions to ensure all actions are met. The issue, action and resolution are then reported in the Course AMR. The EE Report and AMR are made available to students through the VLE.

### **Partner Universities and Colleges**

12.1 NCS teaching and management staff attend a range of meetings and events at partner universities and associated colleges. These events include moderation events, quality and development groups, validation events and exam boards.

12.2 Minutes from all such meetings are forwarded to the Head of HE and Course Co-ordinators where relevant. Where discussions have taken place that relate to course delivery then these are input into the Course AMR with clear actions to implement enhancement. Where discussions occur that relate to overall college HE delivery and management then these are overseen by the Head of HE and are incorporated into the overall College AMR

12.3 Link Tutors, where these are provided by validating universities, are a conduit for advising on course and curriculum matters and also act as a critical friend to the Course Co-ordinator.

### **Performance Data**

14.1 HE course data is tracked through the College MIS Department. This includes continuation and attendance figures. This data is available to all course leaders who are required to track the data and where areas of concern are identified to plan remedial actions through their AMR. All data is also overseen by both the Head of HE and the Head of Department. Where there is lower than expected data then the Head of HE will investigate the matter through discussion with the Course Co-ordinator and Focus Groups with the students if necessary. The Moderation Panel will monitor the actions identified in the Course AMR.

### **Staff Innovation and Improvement**

15.1 Staff often identify enhancement opportunities and innovative examples of new teaching practices. This can be a result of external conferences, CPD, networking events or research. Where these opportunities are identified and implemented they are tracked in the AMR. Where innovative best practice is identified then the Lecturers involved are invited to present this to the Teaching & Enhancement Committee for dissemination across the provision.

### **Strategic Quality Systems**

16.1 HE Quality Assurance Systems are overseen by the Academic Board and ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place. Where appropriate the college follows partner HEI policies and procedures.

### **Enhancement Process**

17.1 All enhancement opportunities that relate to course delivery are tracked through the Course AMR. Course Co-ordinators are required to record any areas for development identified alongside actions to implement improvements. Any best practice is also recorded.

17.2 All college wide HE enhancement opportunities are tracked through the College AMR. The Head of HE is required to record any areas for development identified alongside actions to implement improvements. Any best practice is also recorded. The College AMR is monitored by the Academic Board and ultimately by the Corporation. Where CPD needs are identified these are forwarded to HR to be incorporated into the College CPD programme.

### **Conclusion**

18.1 Student involvement in enhancement is a vital aspect of the quality assurance and quality enhancement process and provides assurance to students and other major stakeholders that the College is both managing standards and has a clear policy and procedure for enhancing student learning opportunities. The QAA regards enhancement HE activity and learner involvement as fundamental aspects of a higher education provider's management of academic standards and quality.

18.2 Although student involvement necessarily involves responding to agreed procedures and deadlines via completion of agreed systems, it should not be viewed simply as an instrumental, maintenance-led activity but as one which provides an enabling framework through which programmes, subjects and faculties can engage in the self-evaluation, critical analysis, open debate and enhancement planning directed towards continuous enhancement of the College's provision.

### **IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

This policy has been assessed and considered for impact upon people who share the following protected characteristics and factors: race, gender and gender identity, disability (including learning difficulty), religion and belief, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy, maternity and marital status.

### **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY:**

This policy has been impact assessed and has identified the following:

- Negative impacts N\*
- Appropriate actions/mitigations to address the negative impacts have been put in place (Y/N)
- Positive impacts Y

### **PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

NCS is committed to protecting the personal data of its students, employees and other stakeholders in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We have a variety of methods and controls to ensure we protect that data appropriately. Personal data processing activities are subject to a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) as a key component of a 'Privacy by Design' approach. The risks to the rights and freedoms of individuals resulting from the processing of personal data are examined, and appropriate measures are put in place to protect these rights throughout the processing lifecycle.

**LINKED POLICIES:**

**MONITORING PROCEDURE:**

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

Head of Higher Education

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