

17 May 2012

New Code of Practice on Distance Learning

Purpose of the Paper

1. APRC is asked to **consider**, and it thought appropriate, **approve** a new Code of Practice on Distance Learning.

Proposal

2. That the Code of Practice attached at Annex 1, along with appendix 1 of the Code of Practice, and the Distance Learning Checklist be approved for the 2012/13 academic session onwards.

Background and Consultation

3. The University currently has a document 'Principles and Guidance for the Development of Distributed Learning (Including E Learning)', Annex 2, which has been in place for a number of years. This document makes reference to the QAA Code of Practice, but specifically notes the small distance learning provision and the University's intention that distance learning programmes should not increase in number.
4. In order to support the potential for a greater number of distance learning programmes, it was determined by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) that a Code of Practice on Distance Learning should be developed, and that this Code of Practice should support the expansion of distance learning, where Schools, Colleges and the University see fit.
5. A Code of Practice was drafted, taking a strong lead from the QAA's Code of Practice Section 2 'Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning (Including e-learning)', and from the recent paper to the Senate on the distance learning PhD.
6. A working group was established, Chaired by the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor and consisting of experienced colleagues from MDS, CAL and COSS. This working group reviewed and commented upon several drafts of the Code of Practice and the accompanying appendix and checklist, and were invited to share the drafts within their Colleges and networks. The working group have approved the attached documentation.
7. Senior colleagues from within the Corporate Services were also provided input, these included Library Services, IT Services, CLAD and Learning Spaces, Student Services, Registry and the Guild.

Argument to Support Proposal

8. The current guidance document is a time-sensitive document which has passed its useful life, making a number of statements about strategy which no longer apply. The guidance contained within that document is therefore linked to strategy and policy which is no longer in action at the University.

9. The new Code of Practice on Distance Learning sets out the minimum standards, as required by the QAA, and in a way that is applicable to the University and ensures that any expansion of distance learning activity is supported with appropriate guidance.

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