

The UCEM Academic Infrastructure

An Introductory Overview

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Author: Philip Leverton / Helen Edwards / Kate Greenway
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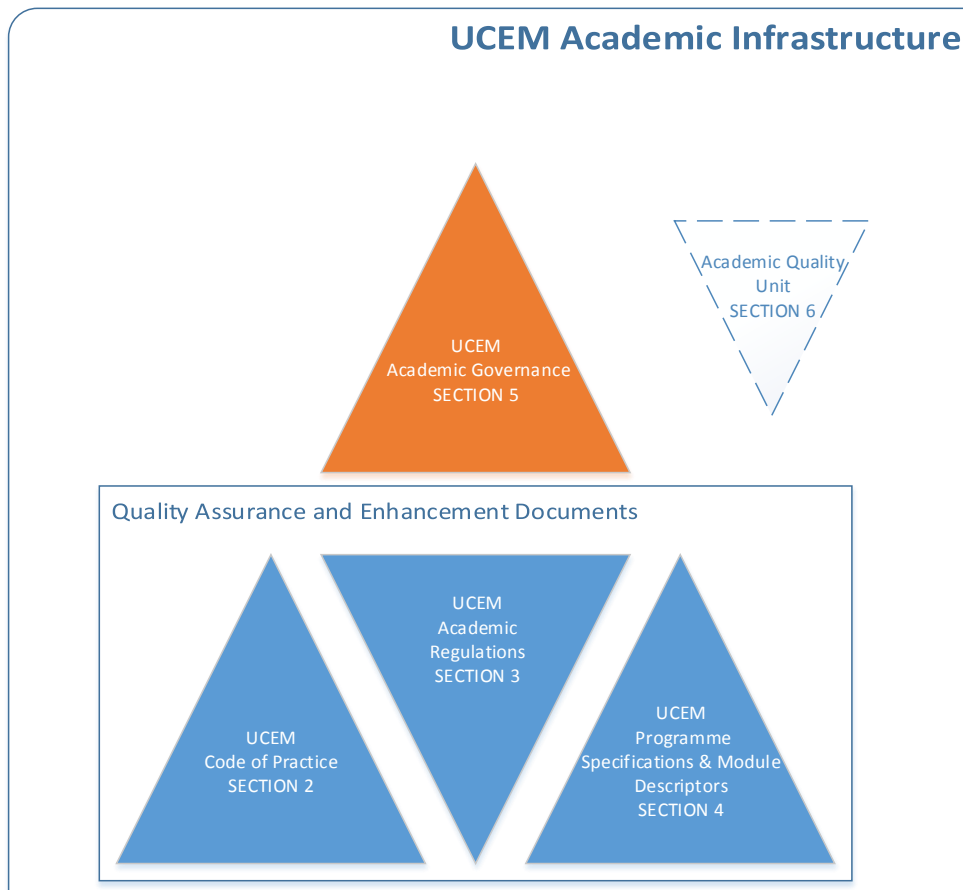
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1. Introduction to the Academic Infrastructure

1.1 Overview

The University College of Estate Management (UCEM) Academic Infrastructure is comprised of the following quality assurance and enhancement documents:



This Introductory Overview to the Academic Infrastructure is set out to introduce students and other readers inside and outside of UCEM to each of the above aspects of the Academic Infrastructure and to sign post you to the more detailed guidance and statements of policy and practice in conjunction with which this document should be read. It is divided into the following sections:

Section 2: Code of Practice

A series of 17 separate chapters and accompanying documentation that set out the academic policies and procedures which underpin the quality and standards of UCEM awards.

Section 3: UCEM Academic Regulations

The regulations that apply to students:

3.1 Academic and General Regulations for Students

3.2 Programme Assessment, Progression and Award Regulations.

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Section 4: UCEM Programme Specifications and Module Descriptors

Programme Specifications: set out the intended learning outcomes of a programme and how these outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated.

Module descriptors: describe in detail the content and learning outcomes of each module of study.

Section 5: UCEM Academic Governance

The framework of committees which undertake academic decision making concerning academic standards across all programmes.

Section 7: The Academic Quality Unit (AQU)

The department responsible for co-ordinating the development of the framework of quality assurance and enhancement documentation which is signposted within this document.

This document replaces the draft UCEM Academic Quality Handbook and the UCEM Code of Practice Introduction as single introductory synopsis to the various aspects of quality assurance at UCEM. As such, it also includes an overview of the deliberative committees which underpin quality assurance at UCEM (see section on 'Academic Governance').

This is a working document and is subject to regular review and updating. The latest version is available on the [UCEM Website \(click here\)](#). It can also be accessed via the internal archive of UCEM general documents and the [AQU SharePoint site \(click here\)](#).

The Academic Infrastructure covers programmes at Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) levels 4 to 7. UCEM also delivers a programme at level 3 linked to the Trailblazer Apprenticeship scheme and some information within the Academic Infrastructure is also relevant to level 3 awards. Where this is the case, it will be highlighted within the relevant documentation. Please refer to the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#) for further information on the level 3 programme.

Note that in addition to the sources introduced in this Overview, UCEM makes use of a number of other relevant policy documents and guidance notes. These include a Freedom of Speech Policy and a Policy for Using External Speakers. Both of these are published on the [UCEM Website \(click here\)](#) in the Policies section.

1.2 Key Definitions

The following are useful definitions when considering academic quality and standards. Please see the UCEM glossary, which can be accessed via the VLE, for a more extensive list of terms: <http://learn.cem.ac.uk/mod/glossary/view.php?id=50688>:

- **Academic quality:** The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) defines academic quality as *'how well higher education providers manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed'*.
- **Quality assurance:** a system for monitoring and reviewing institutional processes to ensure that they remain fit for purpose in meeting the expectations of relevant stakeholders.
- **Quality enhancement:** the process of augmentation or development which leads to the improvement in the quality of the institution or individual programme of study. Quality enhancement is an important part of institutional quality management.

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UCEM has a continuous action plan of quality enhancement contained within the UCEM Enhancement Plan. The Academic Quality Unit (AQU) is the custodian of the Enhancement Plan regularly monitoring progress with the stated objectives. AQU also provides biannual updates to the Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee (QSEC) and to Academic Board on progress with the current objectives. A copy of the UCEM Enhancement Plan is available as an internal document on the [AQU SharePoint site \(click here\)](#).

- **Threshold academic standards:** QAA defines a threshold academic standard as *'the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award'*.

1.3 The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

The QAA is an independent body reporting to the UK Government's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, with responsibility for reviewing and guiding Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on the quality and standards expected for UK higher education. These should underpin the institution's own framework.

The QAA has produced a series of resources to help guide HEIs on the standards expected, the core three are:

- [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies \(QAA, 2014\)](#) describe the level of study required for each higher education qualification.
- [Subject Benchmark Statements](#) are guidance organised by subject area which sets out the expectations of the knowledge that should be acquired by a student studying that award. They are subject to periodic review. Those that are particularly relevant to UCEM are the Subject Benchmark Statements for Land, Construction, Real Estate and Surveying and for Business and Management.
- [The UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) is designed to assure the academic standards and quality of higher education in the UK. It contains a series of **expectations** that all HEIs are expected to meet, as well as a series of **indicators** that detail best practice in ensuring the quality of the student experience. **Qualification Characteristics Statements** are part of the UK Quality Code and describe the distinctive features of a qualification at a particular level:
 - [The Master's Degree Characteristics Statement](#) was published in September 2015
 - [The Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement](#): the latest third edition of the Statement was published in September 2015 and replaces the Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark

The QAA periodically visits HEIs to audit how well they are fulfilling their responsibilities in maintaining the quality and standards expected of a UK institution with higher education provision. As part of this review it will check that the institution is engaging with the guidance listed above. UCEM was visited by the QAA in September 2016, in the form of a **Higher Education Review**, using [QAA's methodology for 'alternative providers'](#) published in 2015 (with the results published in the form of a Review Report in December 2016). As a non-HEFCE funded HEI, UCEM is considered to be an 'alternative provider' to the traditional HEFCE funded universities.

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1.4 Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills)

UCEM is subject to the oversight of Ofsted in connection with its level 3 apprenticeship programmes. The quality framework for level 3 programmes will be contained within a separate 'Quality Framework for Awards at Level 3' document.

1.5 International Regulatory Bodies

Periodically, UCEM is required to report to regulatory bodies based outside the UK in connection with the recognition and monitoring of programmes offered to students based within their national jurisdictions. These include the **Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (KYSATS)** and the **Hong Kong Non-Local Courses Registry (HKNCR)**. An annual return is provided to HKNCR in respect of both UCEM's legacy programmes and those validated under the CAO, in those cases where the programmes concerned are registered for delivery in Hong Kong. UCEM also liaises via HKNCR with the **Hong Kong Council for the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ)**.

2. UCEM Code of Practice

The UCEM Code of Practice sets out UCEM's academic policies and procedures which underpin the quality and standards of UCEM awards. It is modelled on the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education and is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains in line with both QAA guidance and proposed changes to UCEM policy and practice.

The custodian of UCEM's Code of Practice is UCEM's Head of Quality and Enhancement, who ensures that the sections are maintained and scheduled for review at regular intervals. The Code is a dynamic document that is constantly under review. QSEC is the key review group for the Code; however further consultation occurs through the relevant UCEM deliberative committees as appropriate. Following this process of consultation and revision, all sections are subject to approval by UCEM's Academic Board prior to their adoption.

The Code has been developed and continues to be informed by good practice in the wider Higher Education (HE) community and by the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education. UCEM staff are encouraged to notify UCEM's Head of Quality and Enhancement if there are any parts of the Code that require amendment as part of the continuous improvement of the Code.

The Code is developed within the context of academic and general regulations relating to both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Where UCEM policy and procedures are affected by legislation, the relevant section of the Code will make explicit reference to the relevant statutory instrument(s). The Code will also reflect principles, policies and procedures adopted by UCEM to meet the requirements of external professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs). Some chapters may be supplemented by additional documents that are used in connection with the implementation of the content of the chapter.

The Code of Practice seeks to achieve certainty and consistency for all those engaged in the relevant processes within UCEM and transparency and accountability for the benefit of external stakeholders.

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The UCEM Code of Practice is available on the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

The UCEM Code of Practice is made up of the following chapters:

2.1.1 UCEM Code of Practice: Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning

The UCEM Code of Practice on Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning sets out UCEM's policy on the admission of students and the recognition of prior learning for all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study. The policy aims to ensure that:

- all applicants are treated fairly and consistently;
- appropriate support and guidance is given through the application process;
- applicants can make appropriate, informed choices;
- UCEM strategic objectives are recognised.

The Code of Practice also sets out UCEM's policy and procedure in respect of credit transfer and recognition of prior learning, as well as the procedure for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) for non-standard admission.

Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning

Credit transfer is where an institution recognises credit(s) *'awarded by a higher education degree-awarding body in accordance with the relevant higher education qualifications framework'* (QAA 2013, p4) and allows that credit to count towards module exemption on a relevant UCEM programme onto which a student may transfer.

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

RPEL is a mechanism for institutions to evaluate previous learning undertaken through experience and practice. This recognition may enable entry to a programme if the outcomes achieved through the prior learning are judged as equivalent to the **entry requirements** of the programme. Some institutions will allow experiential learning to count towards credits on programmes; however, at present UCEM does not additionally allow **module exemption** in such cases.

The current UCEM Code of Practice on Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

UCEM supplementary documents:

- [Academic and General Regulations for Students](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Student Appeals Candidate Guidance Notes](#)
- [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Terms and Conditions of Contract](#)
- Core entry requirements for each programme of study: UCEM [Undergraduate Prospectus](#) and [Postgraduate Prospectus](#) and <https://www.ucem.ac.uk>

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2.1.2 UCEM Code of Practice: Disability and Additional Needs

UCEM is committed to equal education for all regardless of special needs or requirements. UCEM will endeavour to meet any such needs in order to give all students with disabilities an equal opportunity in education. The UCEM Code of Practice on Disability and Additional Needs outlines UCEM's commitment to this provision and to the promotion of disability equality. It sets out the policies and procedures for disabled students and students with special educational needs.

The UCEM Code of Practice on Disability and Additional Needs can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

Note that this is undergoing review and revision during 2016.

UCEM supplementary Documents:

- [Disability and Special Educational Needs Statement of Service](#)
- [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Privacy and Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Student Charter](#)
- [Terms and Conditions of Contract](#)

2.1.3 UCEM Code of Practice: Learning, Teaching and Assessment

UCEM's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy is a high-level planning document identifying the principal objectives and priorities for these areas at UCEM. This is under review and revision. Following approval of the updated Strategy, a Code of Practice on Learning, Teaching and Assessment, based on the Strategy, will be published.

The current UCEM Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

UCEM supplementary Documents:

- [Work Based Learning Guidance Notes](#)

2.1.4 UCEM Code of Practice: Collaborative Arrangements

The UCEM Code of Practice on Collaborative Arrangements sets out the scope of the collaborative provision arrangements currently undertaken by UCEM, the principles under which collaboration takes place and how academic standards and quality of learning are maintained.

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Collaborative arrangements

On 'legacy' programmes (i.e. those introduced prior to its adoption of Taught Degree Awarding Powers in January 2013) UCEM has collaborative arrangements with the University of Reading. UCEM is therefore a partner institution operating 'collaborative arrangements' for the University of Reading, which retains the overall responsibility for the academic standards and quality of awards delivered in its name.

UCEM does not currently engage in its own collaborative arrangements for academic delivery of any of its programmes due to its model of supported distance learning delivery. UCEM does however enter into collaborative arrangements for administrative support and facilities and does engage a number of representatives (agents) and a UCEM Ambassador internationally. UCEM's UK Apprenticeship activities also require a partnership agreement with a lead apprenticeship broker organisation.

The UCEM Code of Practice on Collaborative Arrangements can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

UCEM supplementary Documents:

- [Collaborative Arrangements Checklist](#)
- [Guidance on Appointment of UCEM Representatives](#)

2.1.5 UCEM Code of Practice: Programme Development and Validation

The UCEM Code of Practice on Programme Development and Validation sets out the broad principles and procedures that guide the design and approval (in respect of both peer-based validation and accreditation by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)) of programmes comprising UCEM's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study. It closely partners the UCEM Code of Practice chapter on Programme Monitoring, Amendment, Review and Discontinuation.

Validation is the process by which UCEM evaluates whether a proposed new programme of study meets institutional and national academic standards, and whether the content and delivery will provide UCEM students with a good quality learning experience. Normally, validation is undertaken by a panel comprising internal and external expertise drawn from academia and professional practice. Wherever feasible it includes representation from the UCEM student or alumni community.

The UCEM Code of Practice on Programme Development and Validation can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

UCEM supplementary documents:

- [Briefing Document for Validation / Periodic Review & Re-validation Panel Members](#)
- Guidance for Programme Teams Preparing for Validation and Periodic Review and Re-Validation Business and Academic Case proforma
- Programme Specification Template
- Programme Development Validation Tracker
- Module Descriptor Template

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- Internal scrutiny checklist
- External validation panellist nomination form
- External panel member's details form
- The validation panel and the conduct of the validation event

The forms and templates listed above are appended to the Code of Practice and are also available internally on the AQU section of the UCEM intranet. The Briefing Documents can found on the UCEM Website.

2.1.6 UCEM Code of Practice: Programme Monitoring, Amendment, Review and Discontinuation

The Code of Practice on Programme Monitoring, Amendment, Review and Discontinuation sets out the broad principles and procedures that guide the monitoring, periodic review, re-approval and withdrawal of UCEM programmes.

The programmes that form part of UCEM's 'legacy' provision also must meet the expectations of the University of Reading (as validating partner) concerning monitoring, amendment and discontinuation; additionally the University conducts periodic review of these programmes in line with its own documented procedures. All UCEM programmes also have to comply with the reporting requirements of accrediting professional institutions and other regulatory bodies.

Programme Monitoring

This is the mechanism for checking that the standards of UCEM modules and programmes are maintained, that opportunities for enhancement are identified and implemented and that aspects of good practice are disseminated. It includes:

- Module review
- In-delivery monitoring of modules
- Annual Programme Review, including the:
 - Annual Programme Report and Quality Enhancement Plans (monitored by the Board of Studies)
 - Annual Programme Review Meeting
- Annual module resources review
- Boards of Studies annual reports

Programme amendment

Proposed amendments to programmes may be in response to student feedback or to reflect changes in the requirements of the QAA, a validating partner, a PSRB and /or developments in professional practice. Enhancements to a programme may be identified through the annual monitoring process.

If any changes are proposed to the delivery of a programme of study including the module diet, changes in delivery patterns and changes to study regulations, students will be consulted over the changes, and their prior agreement will be sought.

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Periodic review and revalidation

The standard period of validation for UCEM modules and programmes is five years, consequently, towards the end of this period of approval these modules and programmes are subject to periodic review, and to revalidation. This process seeks to ensure that the learning outcomes for the module or programme are still appropriate to the content and academic level; that the learning opportunities provide the appropriate support to students and that the curriculum is valid and up-to-date. As with proposals for new programmes, revalidation is undertaken by a panel comprising expertise from academia and professional practice and representation from the student or alumni community.

Programme discontinuation

Authority to discontinue programmes of study either for a temporary period or permanently rests with either the Academic Board, in terms of the academic viability of the programme, or the Principal, in terms of financial viability or resource availability. Before any decision to discontinue a programme is made, consideration will be made as to how the interests of remaining students will be protected and the relevant Board of Studies will approve the appropriate means of support to be provided. Typically, if a student is already registered on a programme which is being discontinued, they will be allowed to continue their studies consistent with the maximum number of individual attempts allowed within the regulations. UCEM will make necessary arrangements to enable students to complete their studies within an appropriate period of time. Where feasible, provision may be made for students to transfer to relevant alternative modules or programmes.

The UCEM Code of Practice on Programme Monitoring, Amendment, Review and Discontinuation can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

UCEM supplementary documents:

- [Terms of Reference for Programme Review Meetings](#)
- [Terms of Reference for Module Resources Scheduling Meetings](#)
- Proposed amendment to programme form
- Module review questionnaire for CAO modules
- Programme Closed form
- Programme Closure or Suspension of Recruitment form
- Request for recommencement of a suspended programme of study form
- Quality Monitoring plan for programmes template
- Annual Programme Review Report Template
- Programme Development Validation Tracker
- Briefing Document for Validation Panel Members

The forms and templates listed above are appended to the Code of Practice and are also available internally via the UCEM Word template library and on the AQU section of the UCEM intranet.

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2.1.7 UCEM Code of Practice: External Examining

The UCEM Code of Practice on External Examining sets out the principal responsibilities of External Examiners appointed to modules and programmes offered by UCEM; procedures relating to their appointment; induction; reporting and other duties; their involvement with Boards of Examiners; their remuneration; and circumstances relating to the termination of their appointment.

The QAA defines External Examiners as external experts *'appointed to provide each institution with impartial and independent advice, as well as informative comment on the institution's standards and on student achievement in relation to those standards'* (QAA 2011, p4).

The appointment of External Examiners is regarded one of the most effective means of monitoring standards and maintaining the academic and professional relevance of higher education programmes. It should be noted that no qualification arising from a programme offered by UCEM will be awarded without the participation of a least one External Examiner in the assessment process. The number of External Examiners appointed to each programme will reflect the numbers of component modules and elements of assessment plus any additional requirements of any PSRBs that recognise or accredit the programme. The University of Reading is responsible for the appointment and training of External Examiners to UCEM's 'legacy' degree programmes, following nominations received from UCEM.

Further details of External Examiners' principal responsibilities, their nomination, and appointment, reporting and other duties are set out in the UCEM Code of Practice on External Examining, which can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

UCEM supplementary documents:

- External Examiner Interim Report Form
- External Examiner Report Form
- Response to External Examiner's Report Template
- External Examiner Handbook
- External Examiner Appointments Committee Terms of Reference

The forms and templates listed above are appended to the Code of Practice and are also available internally via the UCEM Word template library. The External Examiner Handbook is available to External Examiners via the VLE.

2.1.8 UCEM Code of Practice: Student Appeals and Complaints

The UCEM Code of Practice on Student Appeals and Complaints applies to all UCEM programmes. It sets out the separate procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals. In addition to the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education chapter B9: Academic appeals and student complaints, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Good Practice Framework for handling complaints and appeals has been consulted in the production of the Code of Practice.

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UCEM aims to treat all complaints and appeals appropriately, fairly and with regard to applicable law, and in line with UCEM's Equality and Diversity Policy and Disability and Special Needs Policy. Both UCEM's academic appeals and student complaints procedures give due consideration to students' need to raise issues of concern with the assurance that such issues will be treated in confidence and with impartiality.

Students taking degree programmes validated by the University of Reading should make appeals against the decision of one of UCEM's examination boards or its Mitigating Circumstances Committee directly to the University. They may also take up a complaint with the University should they consider that it remains unresolved following consideration under UCEM's own process: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/student/rules-and-regulations/student_complaints_procedure.aspx

Student Complaints

UCEM defines a complaint as *'an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about UCEM's action or lack of action, or about the standard of services provided by, or on behalf of UCEM'*. UCEM is committed to resolving complaints in a timely manner and encourages the resolution of complaints at source prior to escalation to the Complaints Officer. The UCEM Complaints Officer is responsible for offering students advice and guidance on the complaints process.

Student Appeals

UCEM defines an appeal as *'a request for a review of a decision taken by an individual or academic body charged with making decisions about students' progression, assessment, and awards'*. Appeals normally are related to decisions on admissions or decisions made by a Board of Examiners, Mitigating Circumstances Committee or Academic Misconduct Committee. All queries relating to decisions from these bodies should be raised with the relevant department in the first instance. These matters can be raised to appeal only where agreement cannot be reached. The UCEM Head of Assessment is responsible for offering advice and guidance on the UCEM appeals processes.

The UCEM Code of Practice on Student Appeals and Complaints can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

It should be read in conjunction with the following:

UCEM supplementary documents:

- [Student Complaints Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Appeals Guidance Notes](#)
- [Independent Appeals Board Terms of Reference](#)
- [Complaints Form](#)

2.1.9 UCEM Code of Practice: Academic Misconduct

The Code of Practice on Academic Misconduct sets out UCEM's procedures relating to Academic Misconduct, which UCEM defines as cheating, attempts to cheat, plagiarism, collusion and any other attempts to gain an unfair advantage in assessments. Assessments include, but are not limited to, coursework, examinations, projects, and dissertations. Academic Misconduct is a disciplinary offence under the Terms and Conditions of Contract, and a range of sanctions can be applied in these circumstances.

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Academic practice and academic integrity are central to the values promoted by UCEM. It is important that all UCEM students are assessed on their own ability and that no student is allowed to gain an unfair advantage over others, or to diminish the quality or academic standing of a UCEM award or that of UCEM's validating partners. Students taking degree programmes validated by the University of Reading may be referred by UCEM's Academic Misconduct Committee to the University in such cases for consideration.

The Academic Misconduct Code of Practice chapter should be read in conjunction with the following:

UCEM supplementary documents:

- [Terms and Conditions of Contract](#)
- Academic Misconduct Committee Terms of Reference.

The UCEM Code of Practice on Academic Misconduct can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

2.1.10 UCEM Code of Practice: Student Engagement

The Code of Practice on Student Engagement provides information on policy and procedural issues at UCEM in relation to how it engages with the student body and to the representation of UCEM students their programme of study.

UCEM values the contribution of students and is committed to working in partnership with the student community to develop the student experience. In order to ensure that UCEM provides a high-quality learning experience, UCEM needs to engage with students through both informal and formal mechanisms to collect feedback.

Informal feedback is collected via:

- the compliments and suggestions section of the VLE;
- Module Tutors;
- the Student Advice Team.

Formal feedback is collected via:

- programme and module questionnaires;
- questionnaires issued by the Student Services Department, the results of which feed into the annual monitoring process;
- participation in external surveys such as igrad Distance Education Barometer and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey.

UCEM appoints Programme Student Representatives for each level of each programme to collect feedback from their year group and also appoints Student Representatives to sit on each of UCEM's academic deliberative committees.

In addition to this, UCEM engages with students during the design phase of new or revised curriculum, and there is a student or alumni member at UCEM validation and periodic review and re-validation events.

UCEM also ensures that student feedback is disseminated effectively and that feedback is received from UCEM on actions taken as a result, for example via:

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- the UCEM Student Newsletter;
- a summary based on the results of the Annual Student Experience Survey;
- Student Representatives;
- feedback to individuals via email;
- the sharing of External Examiners reports and reports from PSRBs.

The UCEM Code of Practice on Student Engagement can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

UCEM supplementary documents:

- [Student Representation Handbook](#)
- [Student Charter](#)

2.1.11 UCEM Code of Practice: Development Policy for Academic Staff

The Code of Practice on the Development Policy for Academic Staff sets out UCEM's commitment to the development of its staff. UCEM recognises that its academic staff are a valuable resource and their expertise and capacity to change is essential to the institution in its pursuit of current and future goals. Accordingly, the institution recognises its responsibility to work with academic staff to encourage and support their personal and professional development. In the context of the Code of Practice the academic staff includes both full- and part-time internal tutors and associate tutors.

The UCEM Code of Practice on Development Policy for Academic Staff can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

Note that this is undergoing review and revision during 2016.

2.1.12 UCEM Code of Practice: Career Education, Information and Guidance

The UCEM Code of Practice Career Education, Information and Guidance sets out UCEM policy and procedure in relation to its aim to ensure that all UCEM students have access to appropriate career education, information, advice and guidance and are provided with opportunities to develop career related knowledge and skills.

The UCEM Code of Practice on Career Education, Information and Guidance can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

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2.1.13 UCEM Code of Practice: Research and Scholarship

The Code of Practice Research and Scholarship presents a framework for UCEM's management, support and development of Research in line with UCEM's Research Strategy. It outlines the forms of research and scholarly activity within UCEM.

UCEM recognises the value of research and scholarly activity in supporting academic excellence. It promotes and sustains research and scholarly activity that is consistent with the mission and strategic objectives of UCEM. It also contributes to meeting QAA's requirement that HEIs with taught degree awarding powers demonstrate that they are 'a well-founded, cohesive and self-critical academic community that can demonstrate firm guardianship of its standards' (QAA, 2013).

The UCEM Code of Practice on Research and Advanced Scholarship can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

The Code of Practice Research and Advanced Scholarship is part of UCEM's Research Strategy, which sets out UCEM's strategic research plans and activities for the period 2015 to 2019.

UCEM supplementary documents:

- Research Strategy
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
- Intellectual Property Rights Policy

2.1.14 UCEM Code of Practice: Boards of Examiners

The Code of Practice on Board of Examiners presents all matters relating to the scope and operation of boards of examiners applying to modules and programmes leading to an award by UCEM. The purpose of the Code is to make explicit UCEM's expectation for the conduct of boards of examiners taking into account external expectations, including defining the roles and responsibilities of all staff involved.

UCEM is responsible for the standards of its awards. Academic Board discharges this responsibility by delegating relevant powers to make decisions on marks, progression and awards to boards of examiners. For UCEM programmes there are two levels of boards of examiners, Module Boards and Progression and Awards Boards both with distinct responsibilities. Prior to the examinations being held, examination papers are considered at an Examination Scrutiny Board, to which the External examiners are invited to submit comments on the draft papers; they are not obliged to attend the meeting of the Scrutiny Board, but are welcome to do so if they wish. For 'legacy' programmes UCEM also operates a two-tiered system of Module Boards and Results Boards, with representation from the University of Reading at the latter.

Module Boards

A postgraduate and an undergraduate Module Board is held at the end of each semester, once all module assessment undertaken during the semester is complete and prior to the meeting of the Progression and Awards Boards. Their remit is to confirm and agree module marks awarded for summative assessment tasks. The Module Boards will receive moderation reports, consider recommendations from the Mitigating Circumstances Committee for the removal of late penalties and the granting of the status 'deemed not sat',

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review borderline candidates and also ensure that candidates with special educational needs have been dealt with appropriately.

Progression and Awards Boards

Postgraduate and undergraduate Progression and Awards Boards also are both held twice per year. The Progression and Awards Boards verify progression through a programme to awards, and where appropriate the classification of awards. The Board also makes decisions about discontinuation from a programme following expiry of all permitted attempts, and the Board will also decide on the award of any relevant prizes.

The Code of Practice chapter on Boards of Examiners can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

UCEM supplementary documents:

- Boards of Examiners Terms of Reference
- Mitigating Circumstances Committee Terms of Reference

2.1.15 UCEM Code of Practice: Equality and Diversity

The UCEM Code of Practice Equality and Diversity sets out UCEM's Equality and Diversity Policy. UCEM is committed to securing equal opportunities for all individuals; recognising diversity and eliminating unfair discrimination in the pursuance of its mission. UCEM recognises that all people are individuals, and it respects diversity and values all students, staff, and alumni. It believes individuals' different experiences; cultures and perspectives better enable UCEM to understand and add value to what it does. UCEM extends this commitment through a policy of widening participation across a diverse cohort of students and alumni from different cultures and backgrounds.

In exercising its policies, procedures and other functions UCEM will have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010. UCEM values equality and diversity, and believes that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual.

The UCEM Code of Practice on Equality and Diversity can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

UCEM supplementary documents:

- Policy on Religious Observance
- Grievance Procedure
- [Student Charter](#)
- Student Handbook

2.1.16 UCEM Code of Practice: Public Information

The Code of Practice Public Information outlines the framework UCEM operates to meet the QAA Expectations of the UK Quality Code Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision. The expectation of the Quality Code is that: *'Higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the learning opportunities they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.'*

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The information within the Code of Practice chapter applies to a range of stakeholders, including those interested in the public information published by Higher Education Institutions (e.g. QAA, HESA, HEFCE), prospective students, students, employers and professional bodies. UCEM also takes account of the requirements of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in the provision of information on customer protection law as it relates to applicants and students.

The UCEM Code of Practice on Public Information can be accessed via the [UCEM website \(click here\)](#).

UCEM supplementary documents:

- Management of Public Information

The above document is available internally via the UCEM intranet.

3. Academic Regulations

3.1 Academic and General Regulations for Students

The 'UCEM Academic and General Regulations for Students' is a document that sets out all UCEM regulations that apply to students, including programme Assessment, Progression and Award Regulations. These regulations represent a key means by which UCEM assures the standards of its awards and ensures fair and equitable treatment of all students throughout their studies.

The Academic and General Regulations for Students represent the highest written authority influencing the design, development and management of UCEM awards and provide the necessary academic framework to enable UCEM to confer degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards consistent in standards and approach with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

The regulations are subject to annual monitoring and re-approval by the Academic Board and may be varied in respect of individual programmes (as indicated in the programme specification) only with the express agreement of the Academic Board or one of its sub-committees. All students are expected to familiarise themselves with these regulations as they will govern their dealings with UCEM at all times.

From September 2016 onwards there are separate Academic and General Regulations for students studying on level 3 programmes.

A copy of the UCEM Academic and General Regulations for Students can be found on the UCEM VLE and on the [UCEM Website \(click here\)](#).

3.2 Assessment, Progression and Award Regulations

The Assessment, Progression and Award Regulations form an appendix to the Academic and General Regulations for Students and provide the detailed programme regulations for, respectively, postgraduate, undergraduate and level 3 programmes

The Assessment, Progression and Award Regulations include information on:

- Pass marks
- Mark classification
- Number of attempts
- Compensation
- Maximum registration periods
- Awards, intermediate awards and ancillary awards.

Regulations are reviewed annually and should be available on the VLE at least one month prior to the programme start date.

Assessment, Progression and Award Regulations for 'legacy' programmes are specific to each programme, although follow a standard template. It is the Academic Regulations Subcommittee's (ARSC) responsibility to ensure that the Regulations are reviewed and presented for annual re-approval.

All Assessment, Progression and Award Regulations will be presented to the Academic Regulations Subcommittee for approval. It is the responsibility of the Head of Academic Operations' (or, in the case of 'legacy' programmes, the Academic Programmes Coordinator) to finalise any changes requested by the subcommittee and to ensure that document is finalised for sign-off by the Chair. The approval of regulations is reported to QSEC and to the relevant Board of Studies.

If there are any significant changes to the Assessment, Progression and Award Regulations, it is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to arrange for a message to be posted on relevant VLE sites to notify students of the amendment and the reason(s) for it.

The regulations relating to each programme can be found on the VLE. UCEM also maintains a definitive archive of regulations on its internal Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement drive.

4. Programme Specifications and Module Descriptors

Programme Specifications are public documents which set out the intended learning outcomes of a programme and how these outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated.

UCEM Programme Specifications detail:

- Programme rationale
- Entry requirements
- Awards
- Study support
- Programme aims and learning outcomes
- Modules and assessment methods

All UCEM programmes have a Programme Specification which is subject to annual review and updating. Updated Programme Specifications should be available eighteen months before the commencement of the new programme year. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to ensure that the Programme Specification is reviewed and updated and presented to the Boards of Study for approval. It is also the Programme Leaders' responsibility to make any changes requested by the Boards of Study and to finalise the document for sign-off by the Chair of the Board.

UCEM Programme Specifications are available on the [UCEM Website \(click here\)](#) and on the VLE.

Module Descriptors describe in detail what is covered in each module of study.

UCEM Module Descriptors normally provide information on:

- Credit tariff
- Module level and learning outcomes
- Forms of assessment
- Module syllabus
- Module Leader

Module Descriptors are made available on the VLE. UCEM also maintains a definitive archive of all Module Descriptors on its internal Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement drive.

The Module Leader should review the Module Descriptor annually to ensure that it continues to reflect the content of the module. If there are any changes required, the Module Leader should liaise with the Programme Leader to update the Module Descriptor by following the programme amendment procedure set out in the UCEM Code of Practice on Programme Monitoring, Amendment, Review and Discontinuation.

5. Academic Governance

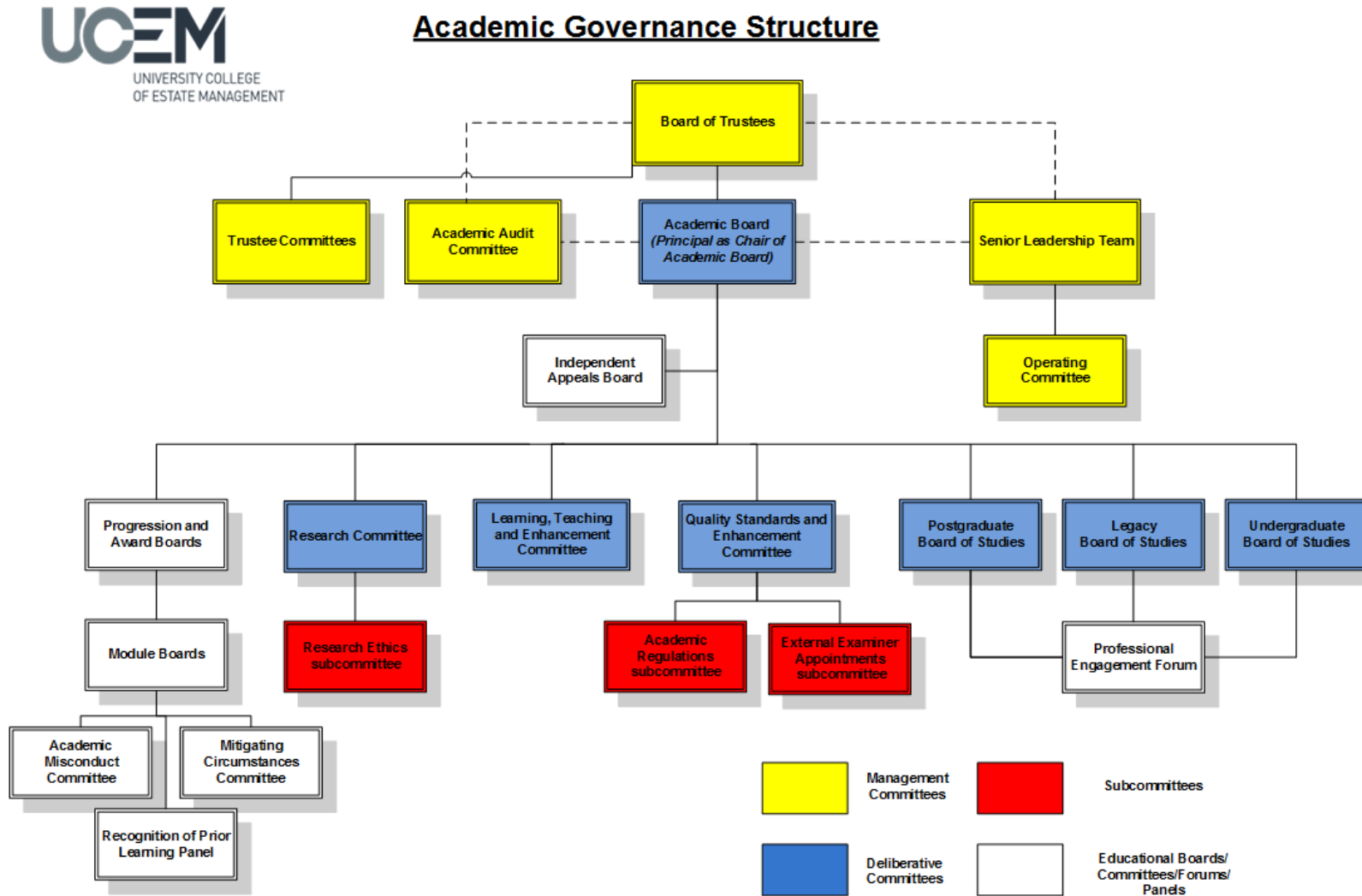
The governing documents of UCEM are its Royal Charter and Bye-Laws. The former sets out the objects and purposes for which UCEM is constituted, and the latter make arrangements for the governance and control of UCEM.

UCEM is governed and controlled by its Board of Trustees. The Principal, who is an ex-officio Trustee, acts as UCEM's Chief Executive and has overall responsibility for policy implementation, and for leading and directing UCEM's academic activities and internal management. In addition to this, UCEM has a well-established framework of committees to undertake academic decision making and apply academic standards to students' work across all courses.

UCEM maintains a definitive archive of the full terms of reference for all of its deliberative committees on the [Academic Governance Section of the VLE \(click here\)](#). This can be accessed by student representatives and staff.

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Academic Governance Structure Diagram



The UCEM Academic Infrastructure

5.1 Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees' main functions are to determine the educational character and mission of UCEM; to approve long-term plans for the development of UCEM and to approve annual operating plans and budgets for expenditure. The **Academic Audit Committee** functions as a subcommittee of the Board and undertakes an annual Academic Audit. The purpose of this is to enable the Board to be able to verify that the expectations of all stakeholders that the UCEM is continuing to function as *'a well-founded, cohesive and self-critical academic community that can demonstrate firm guardianship of its standards'* (QAA, 2008) are being met.

5.2 Academic Board

The Academic Board is UCEM's supreme academic authority and guardian of the academic quality and standards of its higher education awards. The Academic Board is a standing committee of the Board of Trustees and exercises powers vested in it by the Bye-Laws and Regulations, or as delegated by the Board of Trustees. The Academic Board monitors the work of five subcommittees: **Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee**, **Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee**, two **Boards of Studies** (postgraduate and undergraduate) and the **Research Committee**.

5.2.1 Quality Standards & Enhancement Committee (QSEC)

QSEC has responsibility for securing the standards of UCEM awards; reviewing the effectiveness of the appropriate strategies, policies and procedures. This includes the development and enhancement of the UCEM Code of Practice and supporting strategies, policies and procedures relating to academic standards. QSEC also has responsibility for the appointment of External Examiners, and for the appointment of external panellists from academia and professional practice and student or alumni representatives for validation and periodic review and re-validation events. The authoring, review and approval of regulations and the appointment of External Examiners are the respective responsibility of two subcommittees reporting to QSEC:

5.2.1.1 The Academic Regulations Subcommittee

The key purpose of this subcommittee is to produce, amend, review and evaluate all academic regulations. These regulations assure the academic quality of all programmes and ensure that all students are treated consistently and equitably; providing the processes for assessment, progression and achievement.

5.2.1.2 The External Examiner Appointments Subcommittee

The key purpose of this subcommittee is to review and approve nominations for appointment as External Examiners to programmes offered by UCEM by reference to the criteria laid down in the UCEM Code of Practice.

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5.2.2 Learning, Teaching & Enhancement Committee (LTEC)

LTEC oversees the development and implementation of the teaching and learning and assessment strategies across all programmes. The Committee provides advice on issues of curriculum enhancement. Examples of such advice include, strategy selection, study design, assessment, programme delivery, internationalisation, tutoring and learning support.

5.2.3 Boards of Studies

The Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Legacy Boards of Studies govern the key academic decisions relating to individual programmes. Their role is to evaluate and approve initial proposals for new programmes and amendments to content or regulations for existing programmes, to receive and approve reports arising from annual monitoring of programmes, modules and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and corporate training courses to review responses from validating university partners, and to monitor liaison with PSRBs in respect of individual programmes.

5.2.4 Research Committee

The Research Committee provides focus, leadership and monitoring for all UCEM's research activities. In this capacity its role is to develop a research strategy, to facilitate, monitor and record all research and to update the research policy. The Committee also has a key role in the reporting of the output from all UCEM research activity to a range of external stakeholders, who may include, inter alia, accrediting bodies, funding bodies and validating partners. The following subcommittee reports into the Research Committee:

5.2.4.1 Research Ethics Subcommittee

The key purpose of this subcommittee is to oversee, promote and enforce good ethical practice in research undertaken by both UCEM staff and students.

6. The Role of the Academic Quality Unit (AQU)

The AQU is responsible for supporting the oversight of the quality and standards of UCEM awards and the student experience. It does this via co-ordinating the development of a framework of documentation detailing the processes and procedures as signposted within this document. AQU is also responsible for managing external quality assurance relationships with validation partners, QAA and PSRBs, working with appropriate UCEM departments and sections.

In order to undertake its role AQU recognises that it needs to work closely with colleagues across the University College. AQU is therefore committed to providing support to all UCEM staff involved in quality processes to ensure that UCEM quality and standards are maintained and where possible enhanced.

As part of this, AQU provides sessions targeted at all staff providing an introduction to quality assurance in higher education. AQU also arranges bespoke training, involving external presenters where relevant. AQU is also open to suggestions of any quality assurance/enhancement-related training that colleagues feel is required; any requests should be sent to AQU@ucem.ac.uk

The AQU also provides training information and other useful resources on its internal [SharePoint site \(click here\)](#).

Glossary of Terms

A 'live' UCEM glossary of terms can be accessed via the [VLE \(click here\)](#) under the Induction Module.