



Programme Amendment and Discontinuation

Procedure

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Programme Amendment and Discontinuation

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Programme Amendment and Discontinuation

1. Introduction

This document sets out the procedures for module and programme amendment and discontinuation. The procedure should be read in conjunction with the Programme Monitoring and Review Procedure. The procedure is designed to meet the expectations for standards and core practices as set out in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education \(opens new window\)](#).

2. Module programme amendment

As outlined in the Programme Monitoring and Review Procedure, it may be necessary to make amendments to modules and programmes as a result of enhancements identified as part of Programme Review or to reflect external factors such as changes to [QAA Subject Benchmark Statements \(opens new window\)](#), [Ofsted inspection framework \(opens new window\)](#) or changes introduced by an accrediting professional body. Any changes must be fully documented and follow the procedure set out below. Changes to programmes must not be advertised or implemented until the programme amendment procedure is successfully completed.

Module and programme amendments are considered by different routes depending on the type and/or volume of amendment. Amendments are divided into the categories of editorial, minor and major as detailed below with examples of what falls into each of the three categories. The level of change will dictate the process for approval of the change and what level of signoff of the change is required.

The categories also include information about whether applicants and/or students will need to be informed or consulted over the proposed change which are defined as follows:

- Unlikely – In most cases it will not be necessary to inform applicants or students.
- Possibly – There are circumstances where applicants and prospective students should be informed/consulted. Please seek guidance from the Academic Quality Unit (AQU).
- Yes – Applicants and students should be consulted or informed/consulted about the proposed/approved change.

Students will be informed of a change only after it has been approved. In contrast, consultation will occur prior to final approval. The period for students to provide responses to the consultation must be no shorter than 2 weeks.

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The University operates a window each year where changes can be requested; changes outside of this window will only be approved if they are clearly in the best interests of students and following consultation with students and applicants, if required. The window will **run between 1 September and 31 January** in each academic year for autumn implementation. Any changes that are required outside of this window must be discussed with the Dean – School of the Built Environment and a full written case as to why the change must be made outside of the change window must be provided.

When making amendments it is important that consideration is given to:

- the impact on students and applicants including those with specific protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act 2010;
- compliance with Competition and Markets Authority Consumer Law;
- timelines for implementation and the impact the changes will have on other University of the Built Environment programmes and modules;
- University of the Built Environment [Terms and Conditions of Contract \(opens new window\)](#); and
- University of the Built Environment [Student Protection Plan \(opens new window\)](#).

2.1 Editorial changes

The following categories of minor modification may be approved by the **programme leader(s)** concerned:

Example of editorial amendment	Applicants & students to be informed / consulted?	Additional notes
Amendments to address typographical errors, clarify wording or inconsistencies or to amend module codes.	Unlikely	Only inform if the error has the potential to mislead applicants or students.
Amendments to a programme specification to incorporate items approved under sections 3.2 and 3.3 below.	Unlikely	
Alterations to module descriptors to update topics, staff details or other module resources.	Unlikely	

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The above is not a definitive list of editorial amendments. Any other similar amendments should be discussed and agreed with AQU. Amendments to a programme specification to incorporate items approved under sections 2.2 and 2.3 below can be approved by AQU.

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2.1.1 Process for making editorial amendments

Programme/Module Leader prepares **Form S Programme Change Form** within the programme change window of **1 September – 31 January** outlining the amendments required.



Programme/Module Leader updates the module descriptor using track changes to show the changes required.



Programme/Module Leader submits completed and signed Form S and updated module descriptor to AQU.



AQU checks and records changes requested and liaises with Projects and Delivery Performance Directorate to confirm capacity for implementation of these changes. AQU arranges for the changes to be signed off by the **Dean of School or Deputy Dean**



Following signoff, **AQU** to accept all changes in the module descriptor and to ensure that the updated version is saved in the appropriate repositories and email to relevant teams (including VLE admin; SITS; Module Leader; Registration Team). AQU also ensures that the signed Form S is saved and logged and organises any resulting updates to Programme Specifications or University of the Built Environment website.

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2.2 Minor amendments to an approved programme

The following categories of modification require approval by the relevant Dean of School or the Deputy Dean:

Example of minor amendments	Applicants & students to be informed / consulted?	External Examiners to be informed / consulted?	Additional notes
Addition of an individual option module within the programme that does not affect mapping against programme learning outcomes or PSRB accreditation.	Possibly	Yes	Students selecting their option modules should be notified of the availability of a new option module.
Deletion of individual option module within the programme that does not affect mapping against programme learning outcomes or PSRB (See section 3.4 Module suspension or closure if this deletion will cause the module not to be attached to any programme).	Yes	Yes	There should be consultation around the removal of the option module and student feedback should be reviewed in order to mitigate the impact of this change. External Examiners should also be consulted.
The addition of or changes to the learning outcomes of a module within a programme that do not affect mapping against programme learning outcomes.	Yes	Yes	Students should be notified of this change. External Examiners should be consulted.
Changes to the assessment methods or weighting for module.	Yes	Yes	If the information is available to applicants, they should be notified of the change. Students should be notified of the change.

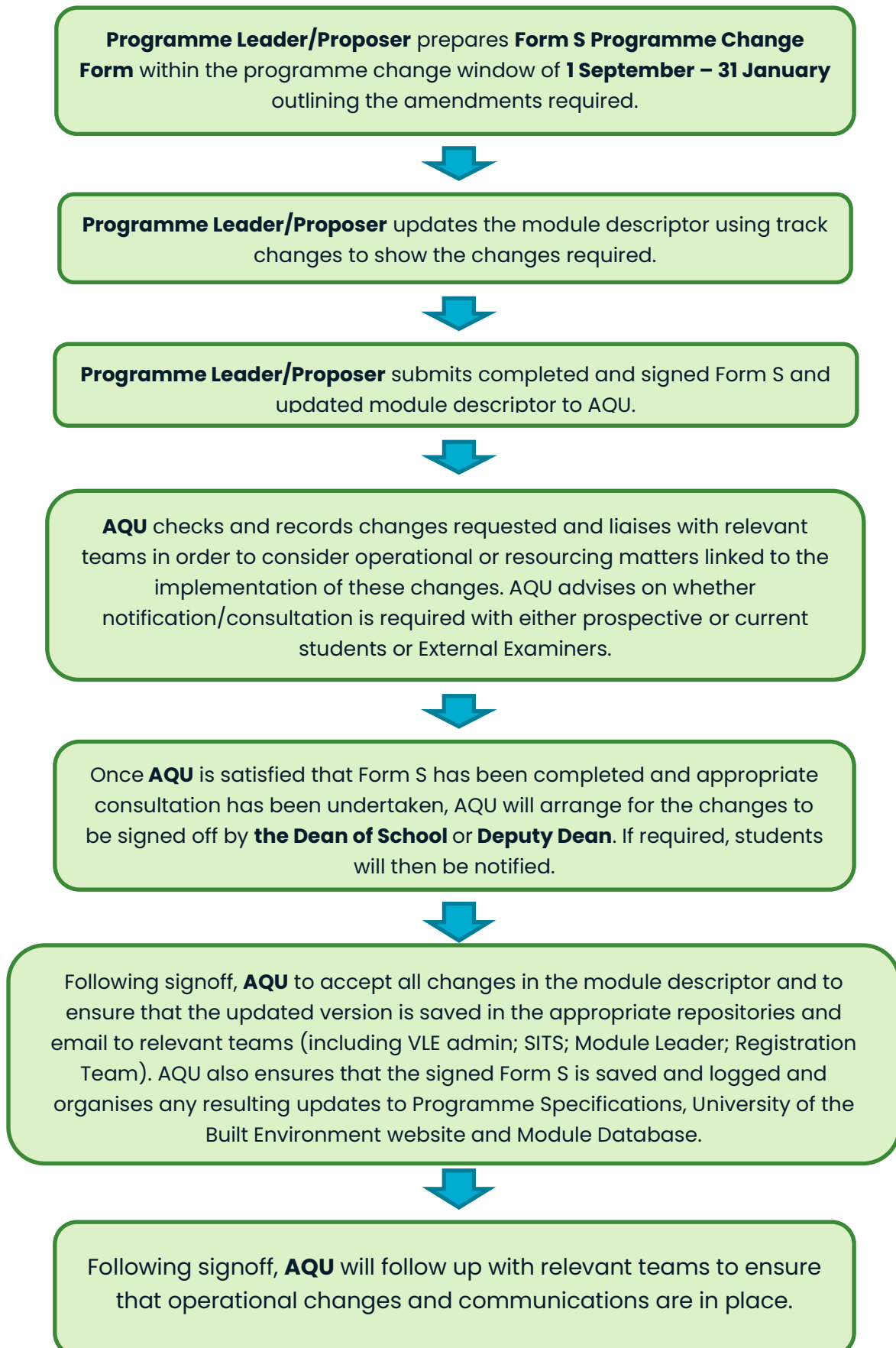
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Example of minor amendments	Applicants & students to be informed / consulted?	External Examiners to be informed / consulted?	Additional notes
			External Examiners should be consulted.
Changes to the title of a module.	Yes	Yes	If the information is available to applicants, they should be notified of the change. Students should be notified of the change. External Examiners should normally be consulted.

The above is not a definitive list of minor amendments. Any other similar amendments should be discussed and agreed with AQU.

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2.2.1 Process for making minor amendments



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AQU is responsible for monitoring the cumulative impact of all changes to a programme and where a series of minor changes exceeds 25% of the total programme credit it will be treated as a major amendment and may trigger a revalidation of the programme (see section 2.3 below).

2.3 Major amendments to an approved programme

The following categories of amendment require review by the Academic Regulations and Specifications Subcommittee prior to final approval and signoff by Academic Board. The changes below are major, and their implementation will require input from, and may affect, many areas of the organisation, as well as applicants and students. Therefore, staff are encouraged to begin the amendment process as soon as possible prior to the desired implementation date.

Example of major amendments	Applicants & students to be informed / consulted?	External Examiners to be informed / consulted?	Additional notes
A change to the title of a programme.	Yes	Yes	Consultation is required with students, applicants and External Examiners and feedback reviewed to mitigate any adverse impact on students.
The addition of a new pathway within an existing programme.	Yes	Yes	Notification to students and External Examiners.
Changes to the means of delivery affecting either all students or a proportion of them (e.g. those within a particular geographical area).	Yes	Yes	Consultation is required with students, applicants and External Examiners and feedback reviewed to mitigate any adverse impact on students.
The deletion of a core module within a programme that may	Yes	Yes	Consultation is required with

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Example of major amendments	Applicants & students to be informed / consulted?	External Examiners to be informed / consulted?	Additional notes
affect mapping against programme learning outcomes and/or any PSRB accreditation.			students, applicants and External Examiners and feedback reviewed to mitigate any adverse impact on students.
The addition of one or more previously un-validated option modules.	Yes	Yes	Notification to students and applicants. Consultation with External Examiners.
The deletion of a group of option modules at one time that do not affect mapping against programme learning outcomes and as long as this does not affect accreditation or pathways accreditation unless this accreditation is no longer available.	Yes	Yes	Consultation is required with students, applicants and External Examiners and feedback reviewed to mitigate any adverse impact on students.

The above is not a definitive list of major amendments. Any other similar amendments should be discussed and agreed with AQU.

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2.3.1 Process for making major amendments

Programme Leader/Proposer liaises with Dean of School , or Director of Apprenticeships, over the proposed change and then prepares Form S Programme Change Form, **six months** prior to the closure of the programme change window on **31 January**, outlining the amendments required.



Programme Leader/Proposer submits Form S to AQU and works with AQU to ensure that appropriate consultation is undertaken with students, applicants, External Examiners and other stakeholders such as Professional Statutory and Regularly Bodies. AQU liaises with Projects and Delivery Performance Directorate to confirm capacity for implementation of these changes.



Programme Leader/Proposer and **Dean of School** review the responses to the consultation and add this to the documentation provided as part of Form S. A decision may be taken at this point to convene a panel to review and approve the proposal depending on the complexity of the proposal and the responses received.



AQU submits the form S and accompanying documentation to the Director of Academic Quality for initial review before submission to Academic Board for approval.



Following signoff, **AQU** to accept all changes in the module descriptor and programme specification and to ensure that the updated version is saved in the appropriate repositories and emailed to relevant teams (including VLE admin; SITS; Module Leader; Registration Team). AQU also ensures that the signed Form S is saved and logged and organises any resulting updates to University of the Built Environment website and Module Database.

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AQU will monitor the cumulative impact of all changes to a programme. In the event of a series of minor and major changes collectively affecting more than approximately 25% of the total programme credits, any further proposal for amendment may require the programme to be reviewed and revalidated, following discussion with the Pro Vice Chancellor (Education).

3. Module, programme/ apprenticeship programme award discontinuation

Programmes/apprenticeship programmes, awards and modules may be either temporarily suspended for a defined period of time or permanently discontinued.

Discontinuation of a programme/apprenticeship programme normally starts with a decision to suspend recruitment thus allowing students already enrolled on the programme to complete within the normal timeframes or transfer to another programme.

Any decision to discontinue a programme/apprenticeship will ensure that student interests are considered, and that appropriate student consultation is undertaken. Consideration will be given to whether the plans for closure will disproportionately impact students with protected characteristics. The programme run-out will be undertaken in line with the University's [Student Protection Plan \(opens new window\)](#) to ensure that individual students are not disadvantaged.

The Student Protection Plan states that in the event of a programme closing a student support plan will be put in place which details how student interests will be protected in line with the institutional student protection, what risks are associated with closing the programme and how the risks will be mitigated, the student and stakeholder communication strategy and any changes to programme management and delivery arrangements during the runout. Oversight of the implementation of the student support plan rests with the University's Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee (QSEC).

Authority to either to temporary suspend recruitment or to permanently discontinue a programme rests with either the Academic Board, for academic grounds, or the Principal, who has authority to discontinue a programme on grounds of financial viability or resource availability, following consultation with the University Executive.

The decision to discontinue a programme on financial grounds must be reported to the Academic Board. Decision to close or suspend a programme must be undertaken in a timely manner with consideration to whether offers have been made and accepted by applicants. Decisions taken late will impact on applicants' ability to find suitable alternative programmes and the applicant may be eligible to claim financial compensation.

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3.1 Where several programmes are closing this should be reported to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (University Secretary) so that consideration can be given as to whether this is a reportable event under Regulatory advice 16: Reportable events and the Office for Students must be notified. Suspension of recruitment

Where several programmes are closing this should be reported to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (University Secretary) so that consideration can be given as to whether this is a reportable event under Regulatory advice 16: Reportable events and the Office for Students must be notified. Suspension of recruitment

To request suspension of recruitment on a programme the **Dean of School** must complete **Form V Request for Programme Closure or Suspension of Recruitment**. It must be made clear on the form that the request is to suspend recruitment. The form must make clear when the last full intake and last entry onto the programme will be and provide a clear rationale and wider institutional implication of the suspension of recruitment. The consultation section must be completed detailing what internal and external consultation has been undertaken.

Once the form is fully populated it should be submitted to AQU who will arrange for the following approvals to be sought:

- Dean of School
- Chair of QSEC
- Pro Vice Chancellor (Education)
- Chair of Academic Board

Once all the above approvals have been sought AQU will arrange with relevant teams to implement the suspension of recruitment. AQU will also notify External Examiners and relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

Recruitment will only commence again once **Form W Request for Recommencement of a Suspended Programme of Study** has been completed and approved to overturn the decision to suspend recruitment.

Following the approval to suspend recruitment, the programme must be removed from the website and communications sent to any prospective students or applicants at the earliest opportunity and with their options in regard to transferring their application to another programme.

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If an applicant does not wish to continue with their application, they should receive a full refund of any tuition fees paid. Applicants that have been made offers but not accepted can be contacted to state that the offer is withdrawn.

3.2 Request for programme/apprenticeship programme closure

There are a variety of reasons why a decision may be made to close a programme, including:

- A decline in student demand making the programme no longer financially viable;
- Changes to funding so that a programme is no longer eligible for student financial support;
- Resource availability for example Key staff leaving the institution;
- Changes to institutional strategic priorities;
- A new programme is being offered which replaces the existing programme;
- Concerns around the quality and standards of provision; and
- Closure of a collaborative arrangement.

Authority to close a programme/apprenticeship programme rests with either the Academic Board, on academic grounds, or the Vice Chancellor, who has authority to discontinue a programme on grounds of financial viability or resource availability please see the full processes set out below.

3.2.1 Request for closure on the grounds of academic viability

A decision may be made to close a programme on the grounds of academic viability this could be for example where a new programme has been validated to replace it or where there are concerns around the quality and standards of provision. Requests for closures on academic grounds must follow the process set out below.

The proposal must include a clear rationale for the closure; include details of any arrangements to phase out provision or transfer students to alternative programme, must include information on how the quality of provision will be protected in the run-out and evidence of consultation with students, staff, and External Examiners.

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Request to close a programme on academic grounds may originate from the **Annual Programme Review process** which reports into **QSEC**, or concerns that QSEC has around quality and standards.



A **Form V Request for Programme Closure or Suspension of Recruitment** must be completed and signed by the **Dean of School**.



The Form V Request for Programme Closure or Suspension of Recruitment is reviewed and endorsed by **QSEC** and signed by the **Chair of QSEC**.



The Form V Request for Programme Closure or Suspension of Recruitment is reviewed and approved by **Academic Board** and signed by the **Vice Chancellor**. If the decision is to close the programme the Academic Board will request for the completion of the **Student Support Plan which will be monitored by QSEC**.

3.2.2 Request for closure on the grounds of financial viability or resource availability

A decision may be made to close a programme on the grounds of financial viability for example if there has been a decline in student numbers or in the event that the University no longer has the resources available to run the programme. Requests for closure on financial viability or resource availability must follow the process set out below. As part of this process a clear rationale must be made as to the reasons for closure.

Request to close a programme/apprenticeship programme on the grounds of financial viability or resource availability.

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Vice Chancellor presents details of the proposal to the **Senior Leadership Team** for discussion and review. Advice must be considered from **Pro Vice Chancellor Education and Students** as to how the interests of any remaining students will be protected.



Based on the discussions and information provided the **Vice Chancellor**, in consultation with the Executive, makes a decision as to whether to close the programme.



The **outcome is reported to Academic Board**. If the decision is to close the programme the Academic Board will request for the completion of the **Student Support Plan which will be monitored by QSEC**.

3.2.3 Student Support Plans for Programme Closure

Following the request for programme closure using **Form V: Request for Programme Closure or Suspension of Recruitment with Student Support Plan** Appendix A Programme Closure Student Support Plan must be completed.

The Programme Closure Student Support Plan details the convening of a Programme Closure Group consisting of the Programme Leader, representative from AQU, a representative from Academic Operations, Student Programme Representative and a representation from Admissions and Student Registration. The Programme Closure Group must meet a minimum of once a semester to ensure the effective run-out and closure of the programme. The form instructs for consideration to be given to:

- Ensuring that the programme closed in line with University of the Built Environment's Student Protection Plan.
- Identifying risks and detailing how these risks will be mitigated.
- Student communication strategy.

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- Communication strategy for other stakeholders including staff, External Examiners, collaborative partners, employers and PSRBs.
- Whether there will be any changes to programme management and delivery arrangements during the run-out.
- Student cohort tracking.
- Student feedback and complaints.
- Refund and compensation arrangements.

The Programme Closure Group reports into QSEC following each meeting so that QSEC can monitor the effective run-out and closure of programmes to ensure that students are continuing to receive a good quality student experience and that academic standards are not impacted.

3.3 Programme closed

When all remaining students have exited from a closing programme **Form W Programme Closed Form** will be completed detailing that there are no students remaining and the programme is closed. This form is reported to QSEC and Academic Board and then communicated to relevant internal stakeholders and relevant PSRBs.

3.4 Module suspension or closure

A decision may be taken to suspend or close an individual module. Authority to suspend or close a module rests with the Pro Vice Chancellor Education and Students and must be reported to LTEC, QSEC and Academic Board.

4. Benchmarking/References

4.1 Related policies

This chapter should be read in conjunction with the following University of the Built Environment documents

University of the Built Environment Programme Development and Validation Procedure

University of the Built Environment Programme Monitoring and Review Procedure

[University of the Built Environment Student Protection Plan \(opens new window\)](#)

[University of the Built Environment Refund and Compensation Policy \(opens new window\)](#)

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[University of the Built Environment Diversity, Equality and Inclusion statement \(opens new window\)](#)

4.2 Reference documents

[Competition and Markets Authority \(2023\) UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law – Helping you comply with your obligations \(opens new window\)](#)

[Ofsted \(2023\) The education inspection framework \(opens new window\)](#)

[QAA Subject Benchmark Statements \(opens new window\)](#)

[QAA UK Quality Code Guidance \(2024\) \(opens new window\)](#)