

INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES (PSRBs)

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[Reports from PSRB database \(P&MI website\)](#)

December 2008 update

- Terminology and nomenclature changes

September 2011 update

- Revision to section 6 to incorporate the FADC annual report highlighting significant issues in the respective faculties
- Revision to section 7 to reflect the new Continuous Monitoring and Improvement process

INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES (PSRBS)

1 Scope

- 1.1 The University vision 'to be the UK's leading University for World Class Professionals' (2020 Vision) is based on a strong commitment to professional and vocational education with many of its awards recognised by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. It recognises that one of the characteristics of being a University for World Class Professionals is to 'produce annually a large number of professionally qualified graduates who were highly employable'. The University currently engages with approximately 60 PSRBs.
- 1.2 This Code takes into consideration the findings of the Higher Education Regulation Review Group report (HERRG 2008)¹. It supports the Principles of Good Regulation and the case for easing the burden of regulation on universities. This Code recognises that progress to ease the burden is being made as PSRBs sign up to the Higher Education Concordat but as HERRG (2008) identifies there is further work to do. Section 5 of this Code identifies procedures to facilitate consistency of regulation on programmes with PSRB-recognised awards. This Code is intended to articulate engagement with PSRBs and applies to the management of all taught programmes leading to PSRB-recognised awards.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 In its 2020 Vision, the University makes a commitment to offer curricula and associated learning opportunities that are informed by research, scholarship, enterprise and employability. Specifically, these will:
- Be informed by engagement with employers, professional and statutory bodies and pedagogical research; and
 - Where appropriate, be based on collaboration with other education institutions, employers or professional associations.
- 2.2 The purpose of this Code of Practice is therefore to ensure that:
- appropriate mechanisms are used by programme teams and departments in their discussions with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, particularly where academic policies and resources are at issue.
 - the University has the opportunity to verify in advance any information provided to external bodies.
 - the University is able to assure itself that the approval, monitoring and review requirements and processes of PSRBs are met whilst preserving the requirements of the University's systems, procedures and regulations.

¹ HERRG (2008) The Better Regulations of Higher Education and the work of HERRG in 2007/08

- the University, which is ultimately responsible for the programmes accredited by PSRBs, is kept fully aware through established routes, of the current status of all such programmes and of any potential changes as they are developing.
- the University, in its engagements with PSRBs has appropriate opportunities to identify and transfer good practice.
- the University maintains central oversight to support its commitment to the enhancement of the quality of the student learning experience.

3 Principles

- 3.1 The first principle on which the Code of Practice is established is one of partnership with the PSRB to enable MMU to deliver programmes leading to a professional qualification and in some cases, a licence to practise.
- 3.2 Whatever the nature of the engagement with the PSRB, their views and reports provide a very important external perception of the quality of the University's programmes in those subject areas. Issues raised by PSRBs make a valuable contribution to the assurance of quality and are required to be addressed consistently not only in the regular communications with PSRBs at programme level but also at programme approval and review and through the annual monitoring exercise by programmes, departments/schools and Faculty Academic Development Committees (FADCs).

It is important that engagement with PSRBs is systematic so that the University, centrally and in its faculties, is kept fully aware of the nature of interactions between the departments and their relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. The University will then be able to:

- monitor the outcomes of PSRB engagements
- address any requirements or conditions which PSRBs may stipulate
- become aware of and transfer good practice
- maintain a database of approved/accredited programmes

4 Definitions

4.1 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) is used to denote organisations which are authorised to accredit, approve or recognise specific programmes in the context of the requirement for professional qualification. Some such organisations have a prescribed statutory or regulatory responsibility to accredit, approve or recognise programmes and/or determine the academic standards and professional or vocational components of such programmes.

4.2 Types of link

4.2.1 Accreditation

The term 'professional accreditation' covers all the means by which PSRBs officially approve, monitor and review relevant programmes. In some areas this may involve a series of regular formal visits to the department concerned whilst in other areas the interactions may be less regular, more informal or largely conducted through correspondence.

4.2.2 Exemption

The term 'exemption' describes the process by which the PSRB reaches a judgement that successful completion of a programme of study enables exemption from professional body requirements.

4.2.3 Recognition

The term 'recognition' describes the process by which the PSRB reaches a judgement that a programme of study achieves the professional body's aims.

4.2.4 Prescription

The term 'prescription' describes the process by which the PSRB agrees that a particular qualification or award of the university meets the criteria of an award, or set of awards, that allow the holder to be registered as a practitioner subject to and protected by Statutory Regulation.

4.2.5 Validation

The term 'validation' describes the process by which the PSRB reaches a judgement on the suitability of a programme of study to be recognised or continue to be recognised as meeting the necessary academic and professional standards for the award of a degree.

4.2.6 Licence to Practise

The term 'licence to practise' describes the process by which authority is conferred by a PSRB to carry out professional work in the sphere regulated by that PSRB.

4.3 Professional Practice

Professional practice is a structured learning opportunity for the development of transferable or specific skills which, in conjunction with other elements of the programme of study, are applied within a practical or vocational context. Such learning may be recognised through 'P Credits' or alternatively may be subsumed within the structure of academic credits that define the programme. The assessment of such applied learning and skills may be undertaken directly, through academic units or externally by a relevant, accrediting PSRB.

5 Procedures for Engagement with PSRBs

5.1 Different PSRBs vary considerably in their procedures, arrangements, timescales and interactions with the University in terms of both formality and level.

5.2 Programme leaders are primarily responsible for ensuring PSRB requirements for accreditation, particularly in relation to curriculum and resources, are adhered to. They should undertake an assessment of the extent to which programmes meet the PSRB requirements and identify any issues to the appropriate Head of Department (HOD), or their equivalent, as early as possible in order that appropriate action can be taken. This may include differences between the PSRB regulatory requirements and the University regulations, which should be articulated in Programme Approval, Review and Modification (PARM) documentation (see 5.6 below).

5.3 Engagement with PSRB at Approval and Review

Where there is an engagement between a PSRB and a University faculty or department then the arrangements for engagement and nature of that engagement shall be recorded in the draft Programme Specification for consideration by the PARM Panel. It will set out the period of currency of the engagement; set out the form of engagement; any previously approved variations from the University regulations and copies of the relevant PSRB regulations that are in current force.

Where the PSRB or Programme Leader identifies a need to review or change regulations and/or procedures between established review dates then approval must be sought from FADC and Academic Development Committee (ADC) and noted in the relevant Programme Log and the Programme Specification.

Deans of Faculty and Heads of Department (or their equivalent) are responsible for ensuring that consultation, and where appropriate, negotiations, with PSRBs, take place prior to approvals and reviews to seek as high a degree of commonality of approach as is achievable. Final authority for variations of regulatory matters lies with ADC, or its relevant

sub-committee, and is exercised through the normal PARM procedures (see 5.6 below).

The Faculty Quality Administrator is responsible for providing administrative support and guidance and liaising with CASQE, as appropriate.

5.3.1 Joint MMU/PSRB Event

In those cases where a joint MMU/PSRB Event is planned or where the programme leads to a professional award only, the Programme Team/Faculty is expected to liaise with the relevant professional body at an early stage during the approval in principle process in order to provide the opportunity for appropriate representation on the panel and to ensure that the University aligns its procedures and timescales to any professional requirements.

The professional body must have confidence in the University's approval processes and should be fully involved in setting the agenda for the visit/event.

At Panel Events there must be consensus on the outcome of the event. Panels may, however, have joint or separate MMU/PSRB conditions.

Where appropriate, the professional body will arrange for its own report of the event to be prepared in addition to the MMU PARM Report.

5.3.2 PSRB Accreditation

5.3.2.1 By Event

In those cases where the PSRB operates its own separate and distinctive arrangements, the HOD, or their equivalent, should notify their Dean and Faculty Quality Administrator of visit dates and other key events as soon as they hear of them.

The Faculty Quality Administrator should liaise with CASQE, as appropriate.

5.3.2.2 By Submission of Documentation

In some cases the PSRB will not visit MMU and will consider accreditation of a programme through the submission of documentation. This documentation must

be scrutinised and approved through FADC prior to its submission to the PSRB.

5.4 Outcome of Events and Follow-Up

Following receipt of a PSRB accreditation report (this may be in the form of a letter), the report and, where appropriate, the associated Action Plan, with comment from the Head of Department (or equivalent) and Dean of Faculty, should be submitted to FADC. The Head (or equivalent) will, where necessary, forward the University's considered response to the PSRB, including any information submitted in fulfilment of conditions. FADC should monitor the approval status of the programme and any action taken in fulfilment of conditions, including any outstanding conditions. The Faculty/Campus Quality Administrator will be responsible for updating the University's PSRB database to reflect the outcome of the engagement.

5.5 Minor modifications to programmes

Where proposals for minor modifications to a programme must be referred to the PSRB for approval or comment, in addition to University procedures, it is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to ensure compliance with those requirements. The University's Minor Modifications procedures accordingly remind Programme Leaders of the need to consult with those PSRBs or potential PSRBs which are stakeholders in the programme(s) to be modified. Guidance for programme teams should be provided by Faculty Quality Administrators who may confer as appropriate with CASQE in order to clarify what consultations are required rather than merely desirable.

A record of PSRB responses to minor modification proposals should be maintained by programme teams as a reference point when formulating further proposals.

5.6 Procedures for applying for variations or exemptions from University Regulations

5.6.1 Requests for new/additional variations or exemptions

All of the University's taught programmes are expected to operate in compliance with the University Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes of Study or Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Programmes of Study. Requests for variations or exemptions from MMU regulations should be sought at the earliest opportunity in the PARM process.

Where reasons for regulatory exemption derive from the requirements of a PSRB, and where, for example, a PSRB has established a programme in such a way as to ensure that the PSRB alone is able to take responsibility for and maintain control of programme regulation, the Programme Team must provide

details at the earliest opportunity to CASQE so that ADC, or its relevant sub-committee, may be consulted as part of the approval process.

In any such submission requesting variations or exemptions from the University Regulations, Programme Teams are required to:

- Provide evidence, which may be in the form of a letter from the PSRB, of the specific PSRB Guidance or Section of their Regulations that requires a variation to the University's Regulations;
- Provide information on any discussions held with the PSRB regarding the possibility of achieving some form of reconciliation between the PSRB regulations and the University Regulations;
- Articulate the relationship between the PSRB requirements and the University Regulations clarifying from which University Regulations variations are required.

5.6.2 Existing variations or exemptions

If a programme which is being reviewed already has a variation or exemption approved by the University, and there is no change to the nature of the variation/exemption in the programme presented for consideration at the PARM event, then University approval need not be re-sought. The Programme Specification should, however, include a statement to confirm that the approval has previously been granted.

5.7 Procedures for resolving regulatory differences between the University and PSRB

As a matter of good practice programme teams should take into consideration differences that may exist between the University and PSRB regulations and ensure that wherever possible the curriculum and assessment designs are able to accommodate such differences. Where differences cannot be accommodated, the programme team should initially seek clarification from the PSRB regarding interpretation of the relevant guidance or regulation. If it is established that the differences still cannot be resolved, then the programme team should refer the matter to FADC, stating clearly the specific PSRB Guidance or Section of their Regulations that requires a variation to the University's regulations. Preferably this process should be completed prior to the approval event.

5.8 Procedures for Collaborative Provision Arrangements Links

The University may enter into collaborative arrangements with partner organisation(s) in order to make its awards, programmes or aspects of its provision more widely accessible. In some cases the collaborative provision may involve programmes linked with PSRBs. The University's

processes for collaborative provision are founded on the same principles as the quality assurance arrangements for mainstream provision (as defined in the Academic Regulations and Procedures Handbook (ARPH)).

The University must inform any PSRB, which has links with a programme that is the subject of a possible or actual collaborative arrangement, of its proposals and of any final agreements which involve the programme. The status of the programme in respect of PSRB recognition should be made clear to prospective students.

6 Institutional Overview

6.1 PSRB Database

Information on MMU's links with PSRBs is collected in an institutional database maintained by Faculty Quality Administrators; reports are available to MMU staff through QLS on the Management Information website at: <http://www.mid.mmu.ac.uk/midas/default.htm>. Programme Leaders are required to report to FADC on the current status of PSRB links, including details of PSRB visits, reviews, the outcome of accreditation requirements and recommendations and any significant communication, as these arise. Faculty Quality Administrators are responsible for updating the database.

6.2 Institutional Report on PSRB Engagements

An annual institutional report on PSRB engagements will be submitted to ADC's Academic Standards sub-committee during the spring term. The report will be produced by CASQE and will include a summary of PSRB outcomes, matters of institutional significance, examples of good practice and recommendations for enhancement. The institutional report will be informed by data extracted from the database and a brief report from each FADC highlighting significant issues in the respective faculties.

7 The Continuous Monitoring and Improvement process

As part of the Continuous Monitoring and Improvement process, Programme Teams are required to report on PSRB engagements. In those cases where the PSRB has its own annual monitoring arrangements, the Programme Team is encouraged to attach to the relevant Continuous Improvement Plan the monitoring document submitted to the PSRB.

8 Staff membership of PSRBs

It is recognised that the policies and practices of Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies develop over time, and the University acknowledges that its staff can make important contributions to such developments. It is also important that staff are suitably experienced in the processes utilised by the various Bodies. Staff are expected to keep up to date and alert to relevant PSRB developments. They should communicate with colleagues and particularly with their Head of

Department or equivalent any such developments which may have implications for the University's programmes both specifically and more generally. The University thus specifically encourages its staff (where this is appropriate) to take an active part in such Bodies, informing relevant discussions both within such organisations and within the University, contributing to the development of procedures and practices, and taking part in validation and other events. This, inter alia, is emphasised in the annual Professional Developmental Review process.

Where staff membership of a PSRB has potential for conflict of interests with MMU procedures this must be reported to the HOD. Any conflicts which cannot be resolved at departmental level should be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience).

9 Flow Chart: Engagement with a PSRB which falls outside PARM activity

