For EQC

3 February 2021

Access restrictions: Open

From: Yewande Akindele, Head of Quality and Academic Development

Subject: City’s Quality Enhancement Review for University of London Report 2019/20

Status: For noting

Author(s): Yewande Akindele, Head of Quality and Academic Development & Georgia Moustaka, Quality and Standards Officer

Sponsor Prof David Bolton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each year, University of London Institutions are required to submit a Quality Enhancement Review report summarising key developments over the past academic year. The report focuses on key changes made to academic regulations and quality assurance processes as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The reports from the University of London Institutions are considered by the University of London Academic Quality Advisory Committee.</td>
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<th>Action(s) required from the Committee:</th>
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<td>EQC is asked to:</td>
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QUALITY ENHANCEMENT REVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Member Institution/Central Academic Body (CAB)</th>
<th>City, University of London</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic year under review</td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author of this response</td>
<td>Yewande Akindele (Head of Quality &amp; Academic Development)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Member Institution/CAB committee considering review report</td>
<td>Educational Quality Committee</td>
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This proforma has two parts:
- **Part 1** asks for summary factual information, mainly about any changes to the Member Institution or CAB’s quality arrangements or regulations
- **Part 2** asks for information about current issues and priorities for academic quality enhancement.

### PART 1: INFORMATION UPDATE

**Have there been any SUBSTANTIVE changes in any of the following in your Member Institution/CAB? If so, please attach copies of current document, or provide a web link to where they may be found.**

1. **Academic Regulations (Taught)**
   - Changes? Yes [x] No
   - Web-link: 
   - Attached – Please see attached Yes [x] No

2. **Research Degree Regulations**
   - Changes? Yes [x] No
   - Web-link: [https://www.city.ac.uk/about/governance/constitution/senate-regulations](https://www.city.ac.uk/about/governance/constitution/senate-regulations)
   - Yes [x] No

3. **Programme Quality Assurance Procedures (e.g. for approval, monitoring and review)** For both taught and research programmes
   - Changes? Yes No [x]
   - Web-link: [https://www.city.ac.uk/about/governance/student-policies-and-regulations](https://www.city.ac.uk/about/governance/student-policies-and-regulations)
   - Or Electronic copy attached. Yes No

4. **Procedures for considering reports from External Examiners for taught programmes**
   - Changes? Yes No [x]
   - Web-link: [https://www.city.ac.uk/about/governance/student-policies-and-regulations/external-examining](https://www.city.ac.uk/about/governance/student-policies-and-regulations/external-examining)
   - or electronic copy attached Yes No

5. **Procedures for consideration of the Joint Reports of Examiners of candidates for Specialist Doctorates and the degrees of MPhil, PhD, MPhil Stud and MD(Res) and for taking action on them.**
   - Changes? Yes No [x]
   - Web-link: [https://www.city.ac.uk/research/city-doctoral-college](https://www.city.ac.uk/research/city-doctoral-college)
   - or electronic copy attached Yes No

### COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

Does the Member Institution/CAB offer any taught or research degrees collaboratively, either with other organisations or with other members of the University federation?

- Yes [x] No

If yes, please indicate where the current (dated) Member Institution or CAB Register of Collaborative Provision may be found:

An electronic copy of current CP register is attached.  

REGULATION 1 (applicable to awards of the University of London only)  

**NB:** Regulation 1 requires that procedures take account of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education. It includes additional requirements, beyond The Quality Code, in respect of awards which may be conferred and in respect of collaborative provision.

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the Member Institution/CAB confident that its procedures and the specification of its programmes comply with Regulation 1 of the University of London?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did the Member Institution/CAB make any University of London awards?</td>
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EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS (applicable to awards of the University of London only)

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>n/a</th>
<th>No</th>
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<td>We confirm that all examination boards had input from at least one External Examiner.</td>
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<td>All External Examiners confirmed the appropriateness of standards and sector comparability of student performance of the awards at each level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All External Examiners confirmed the appropriateness and due conduct of the processes for assessment and the determination of awards.</td>
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If you answered ‘No’, please provide details:

PART 2: ENHANCEMENT PLANS  
*Please respond in relation to both taught and research degree programmes wherever possible.*

1. What key changes have been made to academic regulations and quality assurance procedures as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic? Which, if any, will remain in place for the future?

**Academic Year 2019/20**

On 26 March 2020, in view of the urgent need to make contingency arrangements for the University to continue its activities during the Coronavirus pandemic, the President invoked Ordinance B.1.3. which enabled the suspension of Senate regulations and permitted the application of the Contingency Senate Regulations for 2019/20. (see attached)

The Contingency Regulations sought to provide a framework to allow progression and/or award during the affected period where the integrity of the assessment process was compromised by unforeseen circumstances (not otherwise accounted for in the Regulations) or where the application of the Regulations would unfairly disadvantage a group of students.

As well as the creation of a Working Group, to support the work, the Associate Deans for Education, Head of Academic Services and the Students’ Union were all consulted in the development of the contingency regulations.

The regulatory changes took account of the decisions made by the Working Group, such as:

- Alternative Assessments and Safety Net Principles
- Programme Amendments: Online Teaching and Alternative Assessments 2019/20
- Suspension of the Extenuating Circumstance process and the implementation of the Supporting Your Academic Success Process (SYAS);

The President approved the ‘Contingency Senate Regulations for Assessment and Conferment of Awards 2019/20’ on behalf of Senate. The approved Contingency Regulations were made available to relevant Committees and Senate, communicated to staff members and students and incorporated into the Assessment Board Guidance for 2019/20 Senate.

A full summary of the overarching framework for the Contingency Regulations and the Contingency Regulations in detail are set out in Paper 1 ‘Contingency Senate Regulations for Assessment and Conferment of Awards 2019/20’ attached.

**Academic Year 2020/21**

The University is now in a position to put the usual Regulations back in place. The Contingency Regulations and Safety Net Principles which were put in place whilst the University was adjusting at the start of UK lockdown in March, came to an end on 26 October 2020.
It has been necessary to review specific student regulations and policies to underpin the different style of educational offer and student experience that we plan for 2020-21 in the context of Covid-19. As part of this work, City has now updated its Extenuating Circumstances (EC) Policy for taught programmes.

The new policy is a hybrid of the Supporting Your Academic Success (SYAS) process and the old EC Policy which seeks to support students with circumstances that are affecting their studies in a way that is responsive to and realistic about the current on-going global situation and pandemic. The new process now allows EC Claims Without Evidence to be accepted on the basis of a valid rationale and includes a new EC Claim with Self-Certification.

2. Taking into account the guidance provided by the OfS and the QAA, what steps have been/are being taken to assure academic quality and standards?

The University has taken careful consideration regarding how our responses to the pandemic has and will continue to affect all students and, in particular, those who might be most vulnerable to disruption.

All reasonable efforts to provide alternative teaching for students that is broadly equivalent to our usual arrangements was made. Transitioning to online delivery was implemented for the majority of our programmes quickly and with minimal disruption. Special considerations had to be made and implemented to support learners on programmes with Professional Body (PSRB) implications, placements, laboratory, practical or other specialist elements.

The University Communications Team in liaison with Student and Academic Services developed a robust Plan which ensured that regular and clear communications went out to our students. These communications provided key information regarding the University’s response to the pandemic and included details on how remaining or ongoing teaching was to be delivered. Student feedback indicated that these communications were positively received and a similar approach has been taken for 2020/21.

Additionally, the implementation of a self-declaration form during the suspension of our Extenuating Circumstances Regulation has supported our students to inform us of their circumstances (including those affected by coronavirus, students who are self-isolating, those with issues accessing remote learning etc.) and ensured that students received support where needed.

The Contingency Regulations and the Safety Net Principals were put in place to ensure that all reasonable efforts to enable students to complete their studies where made. Revised Assessment Board Guidance and additional scrutiny where also applied to ensure our assessment process were fair and robust. As well as to ensure that our students’ achievement was reliably assessed and that qualifications were awarded securely.

Other transitional and longer-term requirements are also currently being identified and mitigated to ensure clear regulatory guidance is provided. Additional regulatory training and guidance to support the transitional period will be made available to schools where necessary.

Council and Senate agreed that continuing to prioritise our work to achieve the best possible online and blended learning experience and enhancing actions from student feedback is essential. In this context, a proposal from Education and Students Committee for revised governance arrangements to oversee the educational offer and student experience and to provide quality assurance in line with Sector guidance was endorsed.

3. Briefly summarise any principal enhancement activities/goals for the future. These could, for example, be arising from student feedback, data/metrics and/or national developments.

A brief summary of some of our principal enhancement activities/goals for the future include:

- Ongoing work to improved personal tutoring and wider student support.
- Ongoing work to review and improve Assessment and Feedback practices including the clarity of assessment criteria and the quality of feedback to students.
• Ongoing engagement with University initiatives to improve student experience and satisfaction. Initiatives focused on placement/practice experience, progression, race equality, and employability.
• Moving from paper based to online Module Evaluation Surveys to accommodate remote working and encourage student feedback.
• Ensure, where appropriate use of Zoom and Microsoft Teams for lectures following positive student feedback.
• Holding, where appropriate, 24-hour exam windows following positive student feedback which indicated that these provide a failsafe against IT issues and cultivate lower levels of stress during exam periods.
• Where appropriate, use of the 'Staying in Touch' approach for student communications. Following positive student feedback on the availability of regular contact with lecturers and personal tutors.
• Moving from PHD RAP information system to the implementation and use of PHD Manager to improve the student experience.
• Ongoing work to review ‘Programme Periodic Reviews’ to reflect the impact that remote working has had on learning and teaching.