I N T E R N A L   M E M O R A N D U M

To: HE Managers and Coordinators and Partner Course Leaders

cc: Link Tutors, UW Senior Institute Partner Representatives, Quality Leads, Jennifer Zandbeek (Head of Academic Quality), Melanie Jarman (Deputy Head of Academic Quality), Teresa Nahajski, Sara Gibbon, Jennifer Marsh, Nicola Rawlings, Richard White, Charlotte Taylor, Marie Stowell, Louise Jones, Maureen Beckwith

From: Dr Sue Cuthbert, Head of Collaborative Programmes   **Date: 27th July 2018**

Academic Policy Development 2017/18

I am writing to update you in relation to policy and procedure developments that have been agreed through the University's Academic Board/Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC)/Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (LTSEC) and Academic Regulations and Governance Committee over this academic year and will come into operation next academic year (2018-19), if they are not already in use. You may well be familiar with a number of these through discussion in other forums. I would be grateful if you could ensure that all staff delivering courses in your partnership with the University are aware of these details and changes and that arrangements are in place for their dissemination and implementation. In particular, please can you forward to all relevant Course Leaders as they need to ensure they are up-to-date on policy requirements, regulatory changes, etc.

Revised policies/procedures are being uploaded to the webpages as soon as practicably possible and are 'hyperlinked' through this document. A comprehensive listing of all current academic policies and associated documents is available (or will be shortly) on the AQU webpages. If you have queries or cannot locate a copy of a particular policy, please contact Teresa Nahajski, Academic Quality Unit (Tel: 01905 855001, email t.nahajski@worc.ac.uk). If you have any uncertainty as to whether and how a change included here impacts on collaborative provision, please consult with the Link Tutor in the first instance or contact Melanie Jarman, Deputy Head of Academic Quality (Tel: 01905 542822, email m.jarman@worc.ac.uk) or myself, Sue Cuthbert, Head of Collaborative Programmes (Tel: 01905 855599, email s.cuthbert@worc.ac.uk). The University Link Tutor for your individual course(s) and other staff in the University Institutes (soon to be Schools) with whom you work will also be able to provide on-going support and advice.

Can I draw attention to the following, which require specific implementation by all Institutes/Schools and consideration in relation to how they apply to their partner organisations/collaborative provision:

- revisions to the University Assessment Policy which it is recommended are discussed at School level and at course level with partners
- implementation of the University Student Attendance Policy which expects staff to maintain registers and to monitor student engagement/attendance
- a revised Partnership Periodic Review process to be implemented from 2018-19

The list of current academic policies is accessible via the AQU website - University Regulatory Frameworks, Quality and Learning and Teaching Policies as at July 2018.

The 'Annual Operational Checklist for Collaborative Provision' is in the process of being updated in light of current policy and will be available via the AQU Partnerships webpage. It provides an *aide*

memoire to assist the development of the operational relationships between both partners, enable them to schedule, co-ordinate and record regular activities that should occur each year in the delivery of a programme, including monitoring and enhancement, and identify and clarify responsibilities across the partnership for specific actions. The focus is at award/course level. It is intended as a prompt for discussions between relevant UW and partner staff for a particular course, typically the University Link Tutor and the Partner Course Leader and Team.

The Partner Staff Development Day will take place at the University's Arena on Tuesday 11th September 2018. Please can I ask that you support and encourage your staff who work with the University's collaborative provision to attend this event? The programme has been emailed separately (see email from Nicola Rawlings 12th July 2018). This will include an update on any regulatory changes and processes, a quality policy update, changes to the assessment policy and implications for practice, library developments and supporting the 'Learner Journey' and a workshop on innovative practice in academic skills development.

Wishing you a good summer break and all the best for the forthcoming academic year.

Dr Sue Cuthbert
Head of Collaborative Programmes

1. Regulatory and Policy Matters

[Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#)

There has been a change to the requirements for **progression from level 5 to level 6 on full Honours degree programmes** (NB this does not apply to progression from a Foundation Degree or HND to 'Top-Up' where the successful completion of the Level 5 award is required).

> Students at Level 5 will be permitted to progress to Level 6 when they have passed at least 210 credits including at least 90 credits at Level 5.

In practice this means students must have passed all level 4 modules (or substituted level 5 modules) before progressing to level 6.

In addition the regulations have been changed to permit the **phasing out of February (Semester 1) exam boards**. This means that in 2019 February exam boards will no longer consider level 4 modules, and therefore all grades for level 4 modules will be provisional until the summer exam board meeting. It is planned that as February boards are phased out they will be replaced with formal progress review meetings to review student grade profiles, and follow-up students who are not in 'good standing'. There is still provision to hold mid-year exam boards where these are required.

[Research Degrees Regulatory Framework](#)

Key changes include:

Composition of a supervisory team
In recognition that the number of research degree completions are not a good measure of supervisory 'experience', there has been a change to the composition of supervisory teams. The RRF now simply states that 'collectively, the supervisory team will have relevant subject and methodological expertise to support the project as well as knowledge of the pathway they are supervising'.

Composition of an examination team
There has been a change to the automatic requirement for 2 external examiners for UW staff being examined for MPhil or Doctoral awards. As it is possible for a student to carry out work as professional, academic or research staff and have no contact with a potential internal examiner, 'independence' will now be considered on a case by case basis.

Student Attendance Policy
Expecting policy to be made available via https://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/649.htm

The purpose of the policy is to provide a clear statement to students of the University's expectations with regards to attendance (reflecting the TCRF), and also to ensure all staff understand their responsibilities with respect to monitoring student attendance and engagement. Partner courses are not required to use the University's electronic registers if they have alternative ways to monitor attendance.

Please also note, where partners have been adapting or utilising the University's **'student retention protocols'** these have been updated for 2018-19. The intention of the protocols in the first four weeks of the academic year is in identifying any students who have not registered or returned to their course, enabling the University to make accurate returns to HESA on student numbers. Where partners identify such students, they should alert Registry Services (through the Assistant Registrar - Student Records) as soon as possible with evidence to support the decision so that students can be withdrawn.

University [Assessment Policy](#)

The Assessment Policy has been updated to include:

  a. revised Assessment and Feedback Principles (section 3)
  b. revised word count policy (section 5)
  c. revised policy on standardisation and moderation (section 12)
  d. revised policy relating to regulations for Independent Studies and Project modules (at Level 6) with respect to
     i. standard cross-University hand-in date
     ii. policy in relation to mitigating circumstances and requesting extensions to hand-in date applies to both
     iii. electronic submission plus hard copy if required
  e. good practice on the management of Independent Studies and Project modules - for approval and endorsement (section 14 and Appendix 2).

It is recommended that all these revisions are discussed with the Link Tutor and through staff and course committee meetings at the start of next academic year (2018-19).

[Policy statement on the use of Turnitin®](#) - revised

The University supports the use of Turnitin for the electronic management of assessment, enabling students to submit work electronically, marked and moderated online. The use of Turnitin to help students understand the principles of academic integrity and referencing remains a key element of the policy.

[Policy and Procedures for Approving Public Information and Marketing Materials for University of Worcester Collaborative Partnerships and Provision](#)

This policy was reviewed and updated to reflect CMA and HEFCE/QAA good practice guidance. The policy provides a comprehensive statement of the principles, processes and relative responsibilities that govern the approval of partner core public information and marketing materials (including print, electronic and web-based material) and their use in promotional activities for collaborative provision and associated partnerships approved by the University of Worcester. It should be read in conjunction with the University's:

[Policy on Provision of Information for Prospective Students](#)

This policy sets out the principles for providing and approving good quality course information for prospective students to enable them to make informed decisions about what and where to study. It takes account of the guidance provided by the Competition and Marketing Authority (2015) as well as the good practice guidance developed by HEFCE and QAA. This policy needs to be taken into account by all staff involved with recruitment of students and new course approvals. A [template](#) is available for providing draft text which is then approved through the Academic Planning and Portfolio Group (previously Course Scrutiny Group - CSG).

[Admissions Policy](#)

The annual updating of the Admissions Policy has seen a significant update to the section on applicants with criminal convictions, and also to the section on entry profiles. The latter indicates the establishment of an Admissions database to hold a definitive record of all formal entry requirements including UCAS tariff points. The latter are now agreed and approved by the Recruitment Strategy Group. Formal entry requirements other than UCAS tariff points are agreed by the Academic Portfolio and Planning Group (formerly CSG) and approved through course approval – any changes must be approved through the minor modifications procedures. Partners

must ensure that any references to entry requirements on their own publicity materials and websites are aligned with those that have been formally agreed and approved.

Introduction of an unconditional offer scheme [*Weblink to follow]*

Following careful consideration and against a background where our competitors are increasingly making unconditional offers, the University is introducing such a scheme for
high achieving applicants who are able to demonstrate excellent previous academic performance along with high predicted grades and evidence that they will excel in their chosen degree programme, and who make the University their firm/first choice.

Course Design Matters

Level 4 and Level 6 of degree programmes

It was agreed during the year that level 4 would be designed to provide for the majority of students to take a prescribed set of subject related modules with the opportunity to substitute 15 or 30 credits with optional modules offered by the Language Centre.

It was also agreed that level 6 would include some element of taught cohort based experience, either through a mandatory taught module or through a minimum of four taught sessions scheduled within the Independent Studies/Project module. This is intended to support cohort identity and the effective management of preparing for Independent Studies/ Projects and in relation to management of NSS and Graduate Outcomes Surveys etc.

2.   Learning and Teaching Matters

Guidance for staff on making feedback to students more effective: style guide [*Weblink to follow]*

Providing feedback on assignments is one of the most time-consuming things tutors do. Extensive research shows that it can also be one of the most influential things tutors do to improve student learning. However, this relies on the students engaging with the feedback. Student survey outcomes are dependent on all students understanding the validity, reliability, and consistency of the approach to providing feedback. This style guide will be available for the start of the new academic year and aims to provide guidance so that time spent marking has a positive impact.

Good Practice Principles for the Management of Project and Independent Study modules
[*Weblink to follow]*

This outlines a set of principles for the effective management of Independent Studies and Level 6 Project modules, together with indicative responsibilities of students and of supervisors and an indicative list of content for Independent Studies /Project Guides.

Electronic Management of Assessment Resources and Guidance

The Learning and Teaching Technology Unit have produced a range of resources and guidance materials for staff and students on using Turnitin® and Blackboard for the electronic management of Assessment.

Code of Practice for Student Academic Representation
Document will be made available by Students' Union in due course
There is an expectation that all partners will have a system of student representation for their collaborative courses and that this aligns with the core principles of this Code of Practice. Key changes proposed within the Code of Practice include:

- introduction of Academic Representation Oversight Committee (AROC), a joint UW and SU committee to oversee the system
- smaller more engaged number of student representatives linked to size of course
- increase in number of School/Institute representatives
- greater emphasis on School support for student representatives
- inclusion of PGR students.

3. **Academic Quality Processes**

Guidance and Process for the University Approval of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships approved for delivery by the University or its partners are subject to the existing Course Planning and Approval processes, academic regulations and policies. The purpose of this guidance is to set out the additional requirements and process for approval of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships utilising University of Worcester awards. The guidance identifies supplementary documentation and considerations in the planning, design and approval process to ensure that the programme meets the requirements of the requisite Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan and assures the standards and quality of the higher or degree-level apprentice experience.

Revised and Updated Partnership Periodic Review Process [*Weblink to follow]*

The redesigned Partnership Periodic Review process aligns with Institutional objectives for an outstanding education experience, whilst also ensuring a focus on the effective management of academic standards and quality, as required by the UK Quality Code and Office for Students. It has been designed to reduce overall burden, with the Review combining the partnership and individual course reviews and 're-approves' the partner to continue delivering the courses (every 6 years). It aims to explore and provide assurance that the partnership (and thus the courses) is operating in accordance with the terms of the Partnership Agreement. Prior to the expiry of a Partnership Agreement, the University will review the partnership arrangement, revisit the due diligence, and fully appraise the management of the student experience and the courses that are delivered through the partnership.

Training and development sessions will take place, prioritising the partners and Schools that are due to undertake partnership periodic review in 2018/19. Further guidance and templates will also be developed.

Policy on approval of Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Collaboration

Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Collaboration are statements of co-operation between the University and an external educational organisation, indicating the intentions of the parties to co-operate and develop relationships for the purpose of academic activities in order to further mutual objectives. These are not intended to be legally binding documents. There are formal processes for requesting, approving and recording Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Collaboration at University level.

The revised Policy and Procedures for the Approval of Memorandum of Understanding and Memorandum of Collaboration provide:

i. Memorandum of Understanding and Memorandum of Collaboration Proposal template
ii. Memorandum of Understanding staff student exchange template
iii. Memorandum of Understanding standard template
iv. Memorandum of Collaboration standard template.

Course Closure, Suspension and Major Change Policy and Procedures for Course Closure, Suspension and Substantial Change – see section on webpage http://www.worcester.ac.uk/aqu/655.htm.

In order to reflect our obligations under student protection legislation, we developed policies and procedures in relation to the above, which were approved in January 2017. The procedures seek to protect the interests of applicants and students by ensuring clear and transparent processes for the management of course closure, suspension or substantial change. The procedures align with the University Terms and Conditions for Applicants, and are also intended to help members of the University and its partners meet their legal responsibilities.

Policy on the Management of Placement and Work-Based Learning
See section Placement and Work-based learning on the AQU website via
http://www.worcester.ac.uk/aqu/658.htm
This policy and associated documentation and guidance seeks to promote good practice and ensure that the University meets its responsibilities with regard to managing the quality of the student learning experience as well as student safety and wellbeing in the context of placement or work-based learning as part of a programme of study. It is an essential reference point for all staff in Institutes, course and professional service teams and collaborative partners that are involved in, or responsible for, **placement and/or work-based learning (WBL) which is integral to a programme of study (courses or modules) at undergraduate or postgraduate level**. A **Placement Approval Checklist** was added in March 2017 to summarise key stages and documentation in the placement approval process. The two Placement and WBL Audit Records have been updated to align with the Policy and are published on the AQU website.

A reminder that the status of Registered Lecturer is given as formal recognition that an individual employed by a partner is sufficiently and appropriately qualified and experienced to teach, assess and support students on a specific University approved collaborative course delivered through an approved academic partnership. The **Registered Lecturer Policy** makes clear the expectations, application and approval process and entitlements. The **CV Application Form** is used for all partner staff at the point of new course approvals and periodic reviews and for the approval of any new staff joining a team following initial course approval. HE Managers will receive a request for updating and confirmation of their list of registered lecturer staff prior to commencement of teaching in academic year 2018-19. This includes notification of staff that are no longer teaching on a University course, new or existing partner staff joining a course team for the first time or existing registered lecturers who are taking on teaching responsibilities for an additional course. If you have any queries regarding the registered lecturer process, please contact Charlotte Taylor (email charlotte.taylor@worc.ac.uk or Tel: 01905 54 2126).

Lastly, a reminder that all courses must make arrangements for **Course Management Committees (CMC)** which should meet at least twice per academic year during timetabled periods to facilitate attendance of student representatives. Meetings should result in brief minutes and action points. The CMC is responsible for monitoring implementation of the course enhancement plan. All collaborative provision should have student representatives who are members of the CMC.