

**EQPO Quality Assurance Calendar**

**Introduction**

This document describes those points of the academic year, common across the university, which are critical for quality assurance (QA) and enhancement. It incorporates processes managed by EQPO which contribute to meeting the UK Quality Code[[1]](#footnote-2) and the Office for Students (OfS) conditions of registration relating to quality[[2]](#footnote-3).

There are other QA processes across the university outside the remit of EQPO which are detailed in the university Quality Assurance Framework[[3]](#footnote-4). It sets out the university strategy, support teams and procedures in place to monitor the quality and standards of undergraduate (UG) courses, postgraduate taught (PGT) courses and postgraduate research (PGR) programmes and the expectations for departments, faculties and the university.

Many of the QA processes in the calendar have consumer rights implications. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has guidance[[4]](#footnote-5) to higher education providers to ensure relevant processes, and any changes to those processes, protect consumer rights. This is not only important when drawing up regulations and specifications for new courses but also in protecting existing students when modifications are made.

The calendar is intended to ensure consistency in the core activities across university departments and faculties. The activities described in the calendar are those by which a department or faculty can assure itself that it:

* sets and maintains threshold academic standards;
* manages the quality of students' learning opportunities;
* enhances students’ learning opportunities;
* manages the quality of its information about learning opportunities.

The calendar below, the QA Frameworkand the university’s QA policies and guidance documents[[5]](#footnote-6)identify those processes which (along with the parallel work in colleges) underpin the QA arrangements for the

collegiate university. They demonstrate the university’s commitment to taking a strategic approach in managing quality and academic standards.

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| **When** | **QA Activity**  | **UK quality code sector agreed principle(s)**[[6]](#footnote-7) |  **Support information** | **Main points**  | **Reporting and other requirements**   |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Michael-mas Term | Review of external examiners’ reports  | Engaging in external review and accreditation; Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision; Designing, developing, approving, and modifying programme; Teaching, learning and assessment. | [Examiners for all Taught Courses | Education Quality and Policy Office](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/policy-index/examiners) | Concerns raised in EE reports relating to: * academic standards
* assessment procedures
* marking and classing criteria
* student performance
* curriculum
* course structure and assessment

diversity   | * EE report to department and EQPO.
* Department sends responses to EEs.
* EQPO checks feedback loop to students and other stakeholders has been closed
* Note any points for incorporation in the following year’s examination processes or suggested enhancements to practice
* Provide reports (redacted as appropriate) for discussion at Teaching, FB and DC committees as appropriate.
* Ensure reports (redacted as appropriate) are made available to all students
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| Michael-mas Term | Programme Specifications | Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes; Recruiting, selecting and admitting students. | [Programme Specifications | Education Quality and Policy Office](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/ensuring-quality/quality-processes/programme-specifications) | To be reviewed annually[Template form](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk%2Ffiles%2Fprogramme_specification_-_new_template_2024.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) available to ensure all required areas are recorded.Accuracy of programme specifications is the responsibility of Faculty Boards (postgraduate courses are delegated to Degree Committees); material updates should be formally approved by one or the other.Programme Specifications are publicly available and often accessed by potential employers and other HEIs.Final versions are available on the CamData site [here](https://www.camdata.admin.cam.ac.uk/programme-specification-archive); uploaded early Lent term for the following academic year. |
| Michael-mas Term |  Student Elections and Representation  | Engaging students as partners; Supporting students to achieve their potential; Operating concerns, complaints and appeals processes | [Student elections | Cambridge students](https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/student-elections) | Student rep inclusion in department/ faculty level meetings, e.g. FB, Teaching Committee, etc.Locally elected student reps should be referred to the Student Union for training and peer support.Departments/faculties should regularly and formally review the opportunities for student representation and involvement. |
| MT and through-out the year as required  | Provision of information to external examiners  | Engaging in external review and accreditation; Teaching, learning and assessment; |  [Examiners for all Taught Courses | Education Quality and Policy Office](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/policy-index/examiners) | Ensure EEs are provided with the information required to fulfil their role, particularly ensuring that new EEs are provided with introductory material as appropriate.  | * On appointment and at start of each academic year ensure external examiners receive an explanation of exam board arrangements and expectations for fulfilment of their role.
* Throughout the year, according to assessment and exam board schedule, provide all materials for scrutiny in a timely fashion.
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| Lent Term | PGT Prospectus | Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes; Recruiting, selecting and admitting students. | [GAOBase - DevOps Division Guidebook](https://guidebook.devops.uis.cam.ac.uk/services/gaobase/) | Course information for prospectuses updated annually to ensure it is accurate and current.Ensure all approved [co](#Bookmark3)urse modifications are incorporated into course information, that course length is correct and ensures students keep residence requirements [Terms of study | Cambridge students](https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/new-students/manage-your-student-information/graduate-students/terms-study).CAO will contact faculties and departments annually to update UG prospectus. | * Course information to be approved by FB.
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| Easter Term and ongoing through-out year | Consideration of PTES, PRES and NSS outputs  | Using data to inform and evaluate quality; - Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision; Engaging in external review and accreditation;  | [University-wide surveys | Education Quality and Policy Office](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/ensuring-quality/quality-processes/surveys)[National Student Survey (NSS) 2024: 1.1 Read Me - Tableau Server](https://tableau.blue.cam.ac.uk/#/site/InformationHub/views/NationalStudentSurveyNSS2024/1_1ReadMe?:iid=2) | Quantitative data published on Tableau, qualitative data sent to key contacts in each department/ faculty/ college.Consider overall satisfaction at course level, as well as responses to other questions (especially those re assessment, feedback and course organisation) compared to university averages. | * Note and report to department/ faculty committees on any enhancements suggested by the data.
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| Long vacation  | Nomination of examiners and assessors and appointment of chairs of examiners  | Teaching, learning and assessment; Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes. Engaging in external review and accreditation. |  [Information for Examiners](https://universityofcambridgecloud.sharepoint.com/sites/AD_ExamOperationsandMitigatingCircumstances/SitePages/Information%20for%20Examiner%27s.aspx) | Nomination of Tripos examiners must be made by the division of Michaelmas term.Examiners are appointed by the General Board; assessors are appointed locally. | * Ensure examiners are [eligible for appointment.](https://universityofcambridgecloud.sharepoint.com/sites/AD_ExamOperationsandMitigatingCircumstances/SitePages/Information-on-Appointment-of-Examiners-and-Assessors.aspx)
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| Long Vacation  | Revision and updating of material in course handbooks and websites  | Information for students which is ‘fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy;’ Maintenance of standards Definitive records.  |  | Ensure minimum duplication of information on departmental website with that on central websites. Ensure Directors of Studies Committees are informed of updates.Faculty and Department libraries should ensure reading list texts are available in some form. |
| As required | Education Monitoring and Review(undergoing review) | Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards; Using data to inform and evaluate quality; Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision; Engaging students as partners; Operating partnerships with other organisations. | [Education Monitoring and Review (EMR) | Education Quality and Policy Office](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/ensuring-quality/quality-processes/emr) | Each course undergoes review every two years.The standard or offset model and review timelines are set by the School/ ICE to align with School/ ICE planning processes.EMR is a light touch, risk based, and data driven but robust framework. | * Consult the [EMR guidance document](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk%2Ffiles%2Fguidance_final_for_mt2024.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) to understand the requirements of the EMR process.
* Use the appropriate EMR form to assist in completing the process.
* School level summary written by EQPO and submitted to ASEC.
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| As required | New Taught Course Approval | Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards; Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes | [New taught course approval | Education Quality and Policy Office](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/new-modified-courses/new-taught-course-approval) | Clarify timetable at an early stage. New PGT courses require at least a two-year lead in and new Tripos three years minimum.All new taught courses must be formally approved by ASEC before they can be advertised. New Triposes or awards new to the university may require approval by the General Board or GBEC. | * Engage EQPO liaison officer early on in the process.
* Faculty Board and School approval required.
* [New Course Approval form](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk%2Ffiles%2Ftaught_new_course_approval_23-24_6_2.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) and appendices submitted to ASEC for approval .
* PGT courses must be approved at ASEC's April meeting (at the latest) to commence the academic year after next; Triposes have a lead time of at least three years.
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| As required | Modifications of all Current Courses  | Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards; Using data to inform and evaluate quality; Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision; Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes. | [Taught course modifications | Education Quality and Policy Office](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/new-modified-courses/taught-course-modifications) | Ensure an understanding of the timetable for approval of regulation changes at: * Faculty/department level
* EQPO
* ASEC /GBEC

College committees should also be consulted.Ensure [CMA guidance](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/cma_guidance_dec_2023_clean.pdf) on consumer rights is adhered to for current and prospective students. | * Identify level of modification and approval process by consulting [Taught Course Modification Framework](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/course_modification_framework_22-23.pdf)
* Applications to ASEC must include:
* Faculty Board approval
* Consultation, particularly with student groups
* Revised programme specification and course regulations
* Secured funding for additional resource requirements
* The April ASEC meeting is the latest to approve modifications for the next academic year.
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| As required | Review of PSRB accreditations  | Engaging in external review and accreditation; Operating partnerships with other organisations; Supporting students to achieve their potential. | [framework for\_accreditation\_management.pdf](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/framework_for_accreditation_management.pdf) | Check status of PSRB accreditations Ensure that preparations for review or renewal of accreditations are made in good time. Ensure that published information (university or PSRB owned) is accurate.Ensure timely response and action plan on PSRB feedback (to PSRB if required). | * EQPO should receive a report of each department/ faculty active accreditations and a note on any changes made during the preceding year.
* All PSRB submissions and reports approved at GBEC.  GBEC may also ask for updates at a specified time (usually 12 months) after the initial visit).
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| As required | Statutes and Ordinances | Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards; Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes; Operating concerns, complaints and appeals processes. | [Statutes and Ordinances: : University of Cambridge](https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/) | Constitutional framework whereby the university governs its affairs; statutes are binding unless inconsistent with legislation.Ordinances are detailed regulations and procedures enacted by Grace of the Regent HouseChapters III, IV, V and VII detail rules and procedures directly related to courses.Ensure the ordinances related to your course are understood and adhered to. These will assist in the framework for programme specifications.Any proposal to amend course ordinances/regulations must be made via EQPO. Your liaison will be able to advise.Amendments to statutes and ordinances are published in the Reporter during the year. |
| As required | Consideration of revised Subject Benchmark Statements  | Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards; Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision; Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes; Teaching, learning and assessment | [Subject Benchmark Statements](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements) | Revised (and new) subject benchmark statements are published periodically on the QAA website.  | Ensure consideration by the appropriate departmental committee and discuss any changes or enhancements to the course as a result. |

1. [UK Quality Code](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [Regulatory framework for higher education in England - Office for Students](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [Section 1- The Quality Framework - Introduction and Principles](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/qa_framework_final_version.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [cma\_guidance\_dec\_2023\_clean.pdf](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/cma_guidance_dec_2023_clean.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. [Education Quality and Policy Office |](https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. [UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024 - Sector-Agreed Principles](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/uk-quality-code-for-higher-education-2024-sector-agreed-principles.pdf?sfvrsn=6da5b881_11) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)