Preface

This briefing paper has been prepared for the University’s Institutional Review to be conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education between December 2011 and February 2012. It has been widely circulated for comment within the institution. A draft of the document was presented to both Taught Student Education Board and Graduate Board in June 2011 and a revised draft was distributed to schools for comment over the summer vacation and formally via the Faculty-level committees in October. Students have been given access to the document and their views canvassed via their representatives on these committees. The final version was endorsed by Senate on 12 October 2011 and it is available to all staff and students on the University’s website.

The briefing paper has been structured to take account of the guidance set out in Annex 3a of the IRENI Handbook for Higher Education Providers, March 2011 (and the August 2011 update). It seeks to describe and to provide evidence in support of: the University’s procedures for assuring the academic standards of its awards; the processes for ensuring and enhancing the quality of student learning opportunities; and the means by which the University ensures the accuracy and completeness of information provided by the institution for public consumption. It is intended to provide a reflection by the University as a whole on the effectiveness of these processes and procedures and their likely future development. This paper together with supporting documentation will provide the basis for further discussion and expansion during the review process.

The briefing paper identifies the evidence that the institution is relying upon to substantiate the claims made in the text. References to this evidence are provided in the form of footnotes which facilitate access to the relevant web pages or documents via hypertext links. Some of the links refer to trails of evidence; for example, a series of documents or extracts from committee minutes which illustrate the development of a policy or the operation of a process. A small number of hypertext links have been inserted in the body of the document where additional evidence has been identified late in the development of the paper. Links to the main University committee papers for the last two sessions are also provided at the end of the document. Further evidence will be available to the Review Team upon request at the time of the institutional visits.

This briefing paper is available in two formats: a plain text version and a version containing hyperlinks to the evidence base.

THIS IS THE PLAIN TEXT VERSION
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SECTION 1  Brief description of the Institution

Mission

1. The University of Leeds received its Charter as an independent university in 1904 and is now one of the largest research intensive British universities offering a broad range of programmes of study. During the current academic year 27,640 full-time and 3,280 part-time students are studying on a total of 546 undergraduate and 299 postgraduate award-bearing taught programmes of study. The University has nearly 8,000 staff and 2140 research postgraduate students.

2. The University strives to create, advance and disseminate knowledge and to develop outstanding graduates and scholars who are able to make an impact upon global society. This long-standing ambition is embodied in the University’s Strategic Plan\(^1\) and Strategy Map\(^2\)

"By 2015 our distinctive ability to integrate world-class research, scholarship and education will have secured us a place amongst the top 50 universities in the world."

The University is committed to the concept that, for all of its students, learning will be at an acceptably high and stimulating level only when it systematically develops students’ capacity for independent, flexible thinking through the integration of teaching and learning with research of international quality.

3. In 2009-10 we refreshed our Strategy Map and included explicit reference to the experience of postgraduate research students in order to acknowledge the contribution of this group of students to the research culture and performance of our institution. This emphasis is being supported by appropriate strategic initiatives.\(^3\)

4. In 2011, when our previous five-year Learning and Teaching Strategy\(^4\) expired, the University decided that in the interests of clarity and consistency it was more appropriate to align our learning and teaching strategy explicitly with the Strategy Map, rather than to develop a new, separate document. Consequently, it is now articulated through the strategic theme: ‘inspire our students to develop their full potential’.

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\(^1\) University Strategic Plan  
\(^2\) University Strategy Map  
\(^3\) PGR Project  
\(^4\) 2006-11 Learning and Teaching Strategy
Major changes since the last Audit

5. The University has continued to evolve and develop since the 2008 Institutional Audit in order to position itself to achieve its ambitions as well as to ensure it can confidently meet the diverse external challenges facing all UK HEIs. The main changes include:

- a refreshed Partnership agreement describing the mutual expectations of all members of the University community;\(^5\)
- development of LeedsforLife as an entitlement for all students to support employability and skills development by integrating curricular and co-curricular activity;\(^6\)
- enhancement of student engagement and representation at all levels;\(^7\)
- a major review of Student Services and student-related processes;\(^8\)
- transfer of responsibility for joint honours programmes to schools;\(^9\)
- initiation of a major Curriculum Enhancement Project;\(^10\)
- initiation of a Postgraduate Research Experience project;\(^11\)
- investment in a new programme and module catalogue;\(^12\)
- development of the estate with new buildings; for example for Law, Earth & Environment, Performance and Cultural Industries and Communications Studies;
- appointment of a Dean for Postgraduate Research Studies;\(^13\)
- Faculty protocols for research degree arrangements fully embedded within the University Code of Practice;\(^14\)
- processes for ethical review and monitoring procedures embedded within the arrangements for research degree students;\(^15\)
- the publication in session 2008-9 of a revised Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students Engaged in Teaching (currently under review).

6. The University has continued to rationalise its collaborative provision portfolio.\(^16\) Our exit strategy from accredited taught provision is now well advanced and there has been

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\(^5\) The Partnership
\(^6\) LeedsforLife
\(^7\) Student representation and engagement
\(^8\) Student Services Review
\(^9\) Cross-disciplinary review
\(^10\) Curriculum enhancement project
\(^11\) PGR project report
\(^12\) UPMC project
\(^13\) Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies
\(^14\) Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures and faculty protocols
\(^15\) Ethics procedures for research degree students
\(^16\) Register of Collaborative Provision
no recruitment to University of Leeds taught degrees by this route since 2010. The University continues with collaborative arrangements with regard to research degree arrangements at York St John University and at Leeds Trinity University College. Withdrawal from all affiliated taught provision has been successfully completed. The University complies with a formal typology of collaborative provision arrangements which excludes accreditation, validation and franchise arrangements.\textsuperscript{17}

7. The overall operating framework for quality assurance has been maintained based upon the following principles:

- all members of the University community, i.e., academic, professional support staff and students, share responsibility for assuring and enhancing the quality of the student experience and for maintaining academic standards;
- students are encouraged to participate actively in all quality assurance and quality enhancement activities;
- external requirements and expectations are reflected in our policies and activities;
- review procedures are designed to ensure appropriate proportionality and to facilitate the enhancement of provision as well as monitoring compliance with policies and procedures.

\textit{Key challenges the institution faces}

8. The challenges facing the University of Leeds are similar to those facing other large research intensive universities. We are aware of the need to ensure that we continue to provide a high quality experience for our students based on programmes which meet (and ideally exceed) external requirements and remain highly valued by all stakeholders. As well as continuing to improve our student-related systems and processes we are therefore currently focussing on:

- through the Curriculum Enhancement Project ensuring we can articulate and evidence the benefits of a University of Leeds education which maximises the strengths of the University and, in particular, more explicitly integrates research with learning opportunities;\textsuperscript{18}
- through the Student Services Review providing effective support for all students and academic staff whilst eliminating non-essential variability and overlap;\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} Typology of collaborative provision
\textsuperscript{18} Curriculum Enhancement Project (research-led teaching)
\textsuperscript{19} Student Services Review
• through the Employability Strategy for taught students\textsuperscript{20} increasing student employability by building on Leeds\textit{for}Life and by further developing specific employability support arrangements for PGR students;\textsuperscript{21}
• considering the future of degree classification as a mechanism for the summative expression of student achievement;\textsuperscript{22}
• ensuring that we are prepared to meet external changes such as the introduction of the Key Information Set;\textsuperscript{23}
• ensuring that we build on our commitment to the WP and fair access agendas as we monitor the impact of the new fees regime;\textsuperscript{24}
• achieving benefits realisation following the conclusion of the PGR Experience project;\textsuperscript{25}
• embedding the new strategy for PGR training.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{20} Employability strategy
\textsuperscript{21} PGR employability support
\textsuperscript{22} Degree classification
\textsuperscript{23} KIS Group
\textsuperscript{24} Access Agreement
\textsuperscript{25} PGR Experience Project monitoring
\textsuperscript{26} PGR Skills Strategy (paras 41-46 apply)
SECTION 2 How the institution has addressed the recommendations of the last Audit

9. The Taught Student Education Board (formerly Learning and Teaching Board) received a summary of the recommendations arising from the last Audit together with proposals for action in response in November 2008. A report on progress was received in June 2009 and further updates have been included in the subsequent annual Learning and Teaching (now Student Education) Summary Statements for 2009 and 2010. The Graduate Board has similarly been kept abreast of developments in matters relating to research student support and supervision. A detailed report of the actions taken was submitted to QAA in March 2011 as the mid-cycle review. Actions building on those already reported in that review paper can be summarised as follows:

Advisable

- The team advises the University to ensure that learning outcomes contained in programme specifications are, as the University expects, specific to each programme.

10. Programmes of study will be audited again as part of the migration to the new programme catalogues. Joint Honours programmes will be the subject of re-specification once they become integrated into schools’ portfolios following the change in the management arrangements for joint honours programmes introduced in 2011.

- The team advises the University to check Codes in order to ensure compliance with its expectations, where, through School Codes of Practice and in order to reflect disciplinary differences, it permits variation in practice in assessment.

11. The effectiveness of the new framework document for taught programmes which schools will adopt from the 2011-12 session will be reviewed at the end of the current session.

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27 Response to the 2008 Audit report
28 Report on progress in meeting recommendations of 2008 Audit
29 2009 Annual Learning and Teaching Summary
30 2010 Annual Learning and Teaching Summary
31 Graduate Board response to 2008 Audit
32 Mid-cycle review
33 UPMC project
34 Cross-disciplinary Review
35 Code of Practice on Assessment workshops
Desirable

- *It would be desirable for the University to improve its ability to use key themes extracted from reports and reviews, and use them in order to enhance practice across the institution.*

12. A Student Education Summary Statement is now considered at a meeting of the Taught Student Education Board each session. In 2010-11 the summary was considered at the last meeting of the session\(^{36}\) in order to feed into enhancement and improvement plans for the following session. The statement is shared with schools via the Faculty Student Education Committees. The Board also considers all reports\(^{37}\) of its periodic review process known as Student Academic Experience Reviews (SAER) and School Action Plans prepared in response to student feedback\(^{38}\) each year. Examples of good practice arising from the use of teaching enhancement funds are publicised via the annual Student Education Conference\(^{39}\) and through the *Casebook*\(^{40}\) website.

13. Graduate Board reflects on the themes arising from the postgraduate research element of the Student Academic Experience Reviews,\(^{41}\) extracting general issues that require attention across the Faculties.\(^{42}\)

- *It would be desirable for the University to consider its methods for ensuring that it has a clear, comprehensive overview of the current status of practice with regard to changes in the Academic Infrastructure.*

14. Following identification of where in the University primary administrative responsibility for ensuring consideration of the Academic Infrastructure lay, responsibility for considering any further changes was clarified. The Student Education Summary Statement to TSEB explicitly pulls together any changes in the Academic Infrastructure and the University’s agreed response.\(^{43}\)

15. Graduate Board ensures that Section 1 of the QAA Code of Practice is reflected in the University Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures.

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36 2011 Student Education Summary
37 TSEB consideration of SAER reports
38 School action planning process
39 Annual Student Education Conference
40 Casebook
41 Graduate Board consideration of SAER reports
42 Graduate Board reflection on SAER outcomes
43 Student Education summaries
• **It would be desirable for the University where, to reflect disciplinary differences, it permits variation in practice in personal supervision, to check that variation in order to ensure that it is still within the University’s expectations, and in order to facilitate the spread of good practice.**

16. A University-wide model for the operation of personal tutoring systems in schools has been agreed and lies at the heart of the Leeds for Life project.\(^{44}\) The use of the Leeds for Life tool for personal tutoring continues to be monitored\(^{45}\) and its use strongly encouraged. The efficacy of the arrangements adopted in each school continues to be interrogated and explicitly confirmed as part of the Student Academic Experience Review.\(^{46}\)

17. Our Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures prescribes the way that personal supervision of research students should be conducted and the newly embedded Faculty protocols indicate the approved model or models that are in use in each Faculty.\(^{47}\) A web-based university-wide Personal Development Recording system\(^{48}\) has been developed to support consistent documentation of all formal postgraduate research supervision meetings, student training, the transfer from provisional to confirmed registration category and to provide formal reports on student progress. This went live in 2011-12.

• **It would be desirable for the University to enhance, through greater provision of study space and facilitation of shared training across faculties, opportunities for research students to meet other postgraduate research students in their own and other disciplines.**

18. In 2009 the University embarked upon a major postgraduate research strategic project which focussed upon improving the student experience. One result is that in 2011-12 a unified model of training and development came into being, with 4 training hubs (for delivery of the “Next Generation Researcher” programme) which will encourage greater interaction amongst students.\(^{49}\) The project was also responsible for the First Annual Pan University Conference for Postgraduate Researchers (December 2010) attracting over 200 participants.\(^{50}\) The second Annual Conference will take place in December

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\(^{44}\) Leeds personal tutoring model  
\(^{45}\) Leeds for Life monitoring  
\(^{46}\) SAER process  
\(^{47}\) CoP Research Degree Candidatures  
\(^{48}\) Postgraduate Development Record System  
\(^{49}\) PGR training hubs  
\(^{50}\) PGR Conference
2011. Cross-Faculty activity has increased.\textsuperscript{51} Newly established Research Council funded Interdisciplinary Centres for Doctoral Training have also supported inter- and intra-Faculty interaction and networking. Initiatives to increase study space and new facilities have taken place at School level.\textsuperscript{52} Further efforts are continuing to be made and the University accepts that increased emphasis is needed upon the provision of study space. The 2011 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) results indicated that just under 70\% of those responding agreed or strongly agreed that they had suitable working space. However, attention is now being given to analysing the responses of the remaining 30\% to identify where there are particular issues, so that these can be addressed as soon as possible\textsuperscript{53}.

19. Leeds University Union takes its responsibilities for all categories of students seriously and actively engages in discussions at all levels within the institution. Building on its increasingly effective taught student representation and engagement scheme it has recently reviewed its arrangements for research students to encourage greater participation and interaction with the research student community and is in the process of developing improved communications and other links with the PGR community.

\textsuperscript{51} Cross-Faculty PGR activity
\textsuperscript{52} Enhancements to PGR facilities
\textsuperscript{53} Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
SECTION 3 How the institution sets and maintains the threshold standards of its academic awards

20. The University manages the standards of its academic provision and monitors the effective and appropriate discharge of its degree awarding powers through the implementation of agreed policies and procedures. Internal reference points provide the common framework within which all schools operate. In developing these and the supporting policies careful note has been taken of external reference points such as the QAA Code of Practice and benchmark statements, and international developments such as the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the European HE Area. The University has a number of programmes of study which are accredited by PSRBs; these additional subject-level requirements are therefore also taken into account.

21. The University has detailed and well understood arrangements for the consideration and management of all collaborative activities and is confident that these provide assurance as to the security of the University’s awards offered through collaboration. With the exception of the accredited arrangements, which are now being taught out, all collaborative provision is subject to the same requirements as the University’s on-campus delivery and therefore is specified, approved and reviewed according to the same procedures (along with the additional processes specific to collaborative arrangements). All collaborative provision follows the University’s common Ordinances, Regulations and Rules for Award.

Evidence used by the Institution

Alignment with FHEQ.

- For undergraduate and taught Masters programmes the University has a single module and programme approval process overseen by a central team which requires schools to ensure that programmes of study are appropriately located within the FHEQ. Graduate Board’s Programmes of Study and Audit Group ensures that all research programmes are appropriately aligned with the relevant reference points.
• The taught programme approval documentation embodies the formal module or programme specification for students which is published in the relevant web-based catalogue thus ensuring the congruence of public-facing information with that which has been formally approved.  

• All new programmes are sent for external subject-specialist review to ensure they comply with external requirements and meet the levels of scholarship and practice appropriate for the level of study in the relevant discipline. The report and response arising from this review forms an essential part of the consideration for approval of any programme.

• The report form used by external examiners of taught programmes specifically asks for assurance that student performance and achievement is at an appropriate for the award.

• The continued appropriateness of taught and research programmes of study is considered as part of the periodic Student Academic Experience Review procedure, at which time all existing taught programme specifications are formally considered for re-approval by the external subject-specialist member of the panel.

• Many of the University’s staff are, or have been, members of external working groups considering national developments, external examiners and reviewers for other institutions, or members of subject-level accrediting bodies.

• The approval for the development of new research degree programmes is overseen by the Graduate Board’s Programmes of Study and Audit Group. Where taught modules form part of a new integrated programme the approval of the relevant Student Education Committees is sought.

**Use of external examiners**

• The University’s procedures relating to external examiners for taught programmes are reviewed annually in the light of experience and against the expectations of the relevant section of the QAA Code of Practice and other guidance; for example the recent UUK/Guild HE Review of external examining arrangements in universities and colleges in the UK.

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59 Programme and module catalogues  
60 Programme approval trail  
61 External Examiners’ report form  
62 Re-approval of programme specifications  
63 Programmes of Study and Audit Group  
64 Approval of an integrated programme  
65 External Examiner procedures
- Graduate Board, through its Examinations Group, establishes and monitors the procedures for the appointment of external examiners for research degrees.\textsuperscript{66}
- The appointment of all external examiners (taught and research) is undertaken and monitored centrally to ensure compliance with institutional policy and external expectations.\textsuperscript{67}
- Issues raised by external examiners are quickly and effectively handled at the appropriate level.\textsuperscript{68} A written response is made to all taught external examiners addressing any issues raised in their report.\textsuperscript{69}
- All reports from external examiners for taught programmes are received and scrutinised by staff in the Academic Quality and Standards Team (AQST) and the relevant Pro Dean is alerted to any specific issues of concern. There is provision to escalate concerns to the PVC Student Education should this be warranted.\textsuperscript{70}
- All reports from the team of examiners for research programmes are received and checked by Research Student Administration before consideration by the Examinations Group of Graduate Board. Reports are referred to the Postgraduate Research Tutor or the internal examiners if further clarification is required.\textsuperscript{71}
- An annual summary of taught external examiners’ reports from the Faculty is considered by each FTSEC; TSEB subsequently considers an institutional summary to identify common themes and to share best practice.\textsuperscript{72}
- From the start of the 2011-12 session external examiners’ reports and responses for taught programmes will be available to students on the ‘Respondingtoyourfeedback’ website\textsuperscript{73} which may be accessed from any computer on the campus network.

*Design, approval, monitoring and review of assessment strategies*

- A single set of Curricular Ordinances and Regulations supplemented by Rules for Award apply to all undergraduate awards and taught postgraduate provision, thus ensuring consistent requirements across the institution. These are available to staff and students on the University intranet.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{66} PGR external examiner procedures
\textsuperscript{67} External examiner appointment procedures
\textsuperscript{68} Consideration of taught external examiners reports and responses
\textsuperscript{69} Taught external examiners’ reports
\textsuperscript{70} Escalation of issues in taught examiners’ reports
\textsuperscript{71} Research external examiner’s report
\textsuperscript{72} Overviews of taught external examiners’ reports
\textsuperscript{73} Respondingtoyourfeedback website (NB. this is not accessible off-campus)
\textsuperscript{74} Ordinances, Regulations and Rules for Award
• Training in the design of assessment strategies forms an integral part of the training programmes for all staff new to teaching.\

• Appropriateness of the assessment strategy for a module and programme is considered as part of the approval process.\

• A Code of Practice on Assessment template is provided which from 2011-12 all schools will use.\

• Information sessions are held annually to alert schools to any changes made to the Code of Practice on Assessment as well as information being circulated directly to schools.\

• School Codes of Practice on Assessment are considered annually by the FTSECs and monitored institutionally as part of the SAER procedure.\

• Boards of Examiners operate consistently across the University and standard classification software is provided which facilitates consideration of each student’s profile of grades across all modules as well as calculating the class of degree earned.\

• Boards of Examiners are not allowed to alter module grades agreed by an external examiner although they may take additional information into account as part of the consideration of mitigating circumstances or when applying discretion against pre-determined criteria within a narrow margin at degree class boundaries.\

• The profile of awards across all undergraduate programmes is considered annually to identify any trends at institutional, faculty school or subject level.\

• There is compulsory training and updating for all staff undertaking the examination of research degrees.\

• Every examiner’s report for a research degree candidate is considered by the Graduate Board’s Examinations Group, thereby ensuring consistency of practice and that any comments about current University policy and practice are addressed. Submission rates are also carefully monitored.

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75 University of Leeds Teaching Awards
76 Consideration of assessment practice
77 Code of Practice on Assessment
78 Changes to the CoPA
79 Classification Tool
80 Degree classification statistics
81 Training for PGR supervisors
Design, approval, monitoring and review of programmes enabling standards to be set and maintained and allowing students to demonstrate the learning outcomes of the award.

- Appropriateness of the assessment strategy for demonstrating achievement of the learning outcomes of modules and programmes is considered as part of the approval process.\(^{82}\)
- All new programme proposals are considered by an external subject specialist reviewer; appropriateness of the assessment regime is part of this consideration.\(^{83}\)
- Summative assessment instruments are agreed with the external examiner before being used to ensure they are appropriate for the level and learning outcomes of the module (external examiners have access to the learning outcomes for the module and for the programme to facilitate this consideration).
- Appropriateness of assessment forms part of the consideration at SAER.\(^{84}\)
- The effectiveness of assessment is monitored and reviewed by the module team as part of the annual module review.\(^{85}\)
- The Graduate Board’s Programmes of Study and Audit Group takes responsibility for the approval, monitoring and review of learning outcomes for research degree programmes.

Subject benchmark statements and qualification statements are used effectively in programme design, approval, delivery and review to inform standards of awards

- The University has a single approval process for taught programmes overseen by a central team.\(^{86}\)
- All new programmes are sent for external subject-specialist review to ensure they comply with subject expectations, relevant subject benchmarks and PSRB requirements. The report and response to this review forms an essential part of the consideration for approval of any programme.\(^{87}\)
- The continued appropriateness of programmes is also considered during the periodic Student Academic Experience Review when all existing programmes are formally considered for re-approval by the external subject specialist member of the panel.\(^{88}\)

\(^{82}\) Assessment strategy approval
\(^{83}\) External review of assessment regime
\(^{84}\) Assessment issues in SAER reports
\(^{85}\) Module review
\(^{86}\) Programme approval process
\(^{87}\) Programme approval examples
\(^{88}\) SAER: external member remit
• Guidance and policy is reviewed in the light of changes to the Academic Infrastructure and generic benchmark statements\(^89\) and schools are informed of and invited to contribute to consultation on changes to subject benchmark statements.

• Many of the University’s staff have been members of external groups considering such developments and act as external examiners and reviewers for other institutions.

• A large number of programmes are subject to professional accreditation and as part of the accreditation process programmes are considered against appropriate reference points. Any reports from accreditation visits or other forms of external scrutiny are reviewed by the FTSEC\(^90\) to determine if there are any broader issues which might need attention. If necessary these would be referred to TSEB; however, this has so far not been required.

**Areas where further development is taking place**

22. All of the policies and procedures for the operation of assessment, e.g. the Rules for Award, the Ordinances and Regulations, the Code of Practice for Assessment and operational administrative procedures\(^91\) documents are kept under constant review. Changes may be made in the light of experience or external developments as necessary; for example, it became possible to extend the deadline for the submission of module grades as a result of the changes to the arrangements for the management of joint honours provision.\(^92\) Where a particular issue is noted TSEB or Graduate Board may establish a working group to consider this in more detail. Recent examples of such groups are:

• TSEB Group on Plagiarism\(^93\)
• TSEB Group Progressing an Inclusive Taught Student Education \(^94\)
• TSEB Group to consider the development of the HEAR\(^95\)
• Graduate Board Group to review plagiarism issues and procedures for PGR following on from and taking into account work of the recent TSEB Group.\(^96\)

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\(^89\) Masters level reference point
\(^90\) Consideration of PSRB reports
\(^91\) Annual update of Ordinances and Regulations
\(^92\) Cross-disciplinary Review
\(^93\) TSEB Group on Plagiarism
\(^94\) TSEB Group on Progressing an Inclusive Taught Student Education
\(^95\) TSEB Group on the HEAR
\(^96\) Graduate Board Group on Plagiarism
23. Feedback is also the focus of university funded project work\textsuperscript{97} and work being undertaken as part of the Curriculum Enhancement Project.\textsuperscript{98} Projects are considering best practice in assessment and, in particular, how to make better and more effective use of formative assessment for the benefit of students and their learning experience. As assessment and feedback remains a key issue identified by students as needing further attention the outcomes of these projects are being pooled for more general dissemination and discussion to identify appropriate ways forward and make local improvements.\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{97} ADF projects on assessment and feedback
\textsuperscript{98} Curriculum Enhancement Project
\textsuperscript{99} Assessment and feedback best practice
SECTION 4  How the institution manages the quality of students' learning opportunities

24. The provision of high quality learning opportunities is fundamental to the University’s mission. We strive to provide as varied a portfolio of opportunities as possible, the quality of which is managed through regular and effective dialogue at all levels between all those involved in the process of student learning and development. This embodies the clear emphasis, enshrined in the Partnership, on collective engagement and the sharing of responsibility between staff and students for everything we do.\textsuperscript{100} The University is confident that its current framework of policies and practices\textsuperscript{101} used to manage learning opportunities is able to deliver an appropriate level of security in ensuring this responsiveness and increasing parity of treatment and opportunities for students. This is monitored through the results of national surveys, in particular NSS, and internal programme surveys.\textsuperscript{102}

25. There has recently been a change in the way students’ learning opportunities are perceived and managed within the University as the curricular and co-curricular student experience is now considered more holistically. This was encouraged by the development of LeedsforLife and the increasing awareness that students do not, and indeed should not, see their time at university as being spent in many separate and unrelated compartmentalised activities. This change is further reflected in the taught areas through a change to the title and remit of the PVC Learning &Teaching to the PVC Student Education and the Learning and Teaching Board to the Taught Student Education Board.\textsuperscript{103} The attendance at TSEB has also been enhanced to ensure representation from all of the services involved in supporting the student experience alongside the academic staff. This change in how the student experience is viewed was strongly supported by Leeds University Union.

Professional standards for teaching and support of learning

- All staff new to teaching are required to undertake an HEA accredited programme which is delivered flexibly to ensure maximum take up.\textsuperscript{104}
- All new research supervisors have to complete a training programme.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{100} The Partnership
\textsuperscript{101} QA framework
\textsuperscript{102} Responding to student feedback
\textsuperscript{103} PVC roles; TSEB Terms of Reference
\textsuperscript{104} ULTA participation
\textsuperscript{105} PGR supervisor training
• All new staff are allocated an experienced member of staff to act as their mentor or personal adviser.\textsuperscript{106}

• An extensive programme of staff development is provided\textsuperscript{107} for all academic and professional support staff.

• Senior academic and professional support staff have access to the \textit{Tomorrow’s Leaders} and \textit{Senior Leaders} leadership development programmes and there is a \textit{Leading and Managing in an Academic Environment} programme for other academic and professional staff.\textsuperscript{108}

• Training is provided for all postgraduate students who are involved in teaching and a qualification and open courses specifically designed for this are available.\textsuperscript{109}

• Schools are required to be able to demonstrate the impact of research on teaching.\textsuperscript{110}

• The importance of teaching is recognised through, for example, the University Student Education Fellowship Scheme (formerly the University Teaching Fellowship Scheme).\textsuperscript{111}

• The Annual University Student Education Conference is attended by over 500 staff.

• Regular issues of the Student Education Bulletin are published.\textsuperscript{112}

• Increased recognition in all appointment and promotion criteria of the importance of engaging in high quality learning and teaching activity.\textsuperscript{113}

• Engagement of staff with professional associations, in consultancy and with industry.

• Common structures across all schools in terms of academic roles and responsibilities; e.g. Pro Deans Student Education, Directors of Graduate Schools, Postgraduate Tutors, Directors of Student Education, Examination Tutors, Admissions Staff allowing appropriately targeted briefings and discussion networks\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{106} Staff training and development policy
\textsuperscript{107} SDDU portfolio
\textsuperscript{108} Tomorrow’s Leaders programme
\textsuperscript{109} SDDU provision for PGR students who teach
\textsuperscript{110} Impact of research on teaching
\textsuperscript{111} University Student Education Fellowship Scheme
\textsuperscript{112} Student Education Conference
\textsuperscript{113} Promotion criteria
\textsuperscript{114} Academic and support roles
Learning Resources are appropriate to allow students to achieve the learning outcomes of their programme

- Academic support for students through the Leeds Model for Personal Tutoring supported by LeedsforLife.  

- As part of programme and module approval the Head of School and Faculty Dean are required to confirm that appropriate staffing and resources are available to deliver the programme.

- The Library's Faculty Teams have named points of contact for each school who liaise closely with School Taught Student Education Committees; Staff and Student Library Representatives and others in the schools to ensure that the Library's services and resources support student education within that School.

- Faculty Team Librarians and skills@library provide teaching, enquiry support and online resources for students to develop their academic skills.

- There is a close working relationship between the VLE Team in the Library and the schools to determine that adequate resources are available for students, reflecting increasing use of electronic materials and the development of the VLE.

- New specially-designed buildings for the Schools of Performance and Cultural Industries, of Law, and of Earth & Environment.

- New dedicated Student Services Centre.

- The staff development programme is established to align with both strategic developments and requirements raised through the Staff Review and Development Scheme.

- Specific support for international staff through a web site developed by the University.

- Results of the NSS, PRES and internal surveys relating to learning resources are used to inform service development plans.

- The Library's LibQual survey is used to inform development of services to users.

- The suitability of learning space is regularly reviewed and recommendations for developments made in light of pedagogical developments.

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115 LeedsforLife website
116 In principle programme approval form
117 VLE Annual Report, Faculty VLE reports
118 Student Services Centre
119 Staff Review and Development Scheme
120 International staff support
121 Example of NSS influence on service plans
122 Review of learning space provision
• Investment to encourage greater and more imaginative use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) as one of the tools to support the development of a more exciting learning environment for students.\textsuperscript{123}

• Important external partnerships providing additional learning resources and opportunities for students; including ULITA/Yorkshire textile archive; Marks & Spencer archive; DARE.\textsuperscript{124}

• International students are supported by both pre-sessional and in-session cultural orientation and English language courses delivered by the Language Centre.\textsuperscript{125}

• Procedures for the consideration of programmes to be offered in collaboration include an assessment of the extent of partner learning resources.\textsuperscript{126}

• Learning resources are regularly considered at SAER and Annual Health Checks.\textsuperscript{127}

• A wide range of opportunities for PGRs is provided by the Next Generation Researcher Programme.\textsuperscript{128}

• The University adheres to the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures in that applicants are only accepted where appropriate expertise and adequate resources are available for the proper conduct and supervision of the research.

\textit{Effective contribution of students to quality assurance}

• New Partnership agreed and the implementation plan is being worked through.\textsuperscript{129}

• Open and transparent dialogue with students is the norm.

• Student involvement in the development of school action plans.

• An improved student representation system\textsuperscript{130} has been rolled out across all the faculties in a way which preserves the best of their existing practice whilst also sharing the good practice learned from a pilot project. The scheme is managed by the dedicated Democracy Team in Leeds University Union who work closely with representatives of Learning and Teaching Support to ensure the effective training and integration of the students.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{123} VLE vision. Faculty project reports

\textsuperscript{124} External partnerships providing additional learning resources

\textsuperscript{125} Language Centre

\textsuperscript{126} Consideration of resources in approval of collaborative activity

\textsuperscript{127} Consideration of resources in SAER/AHC reports

\textsuperscript{128} Next Generation Researcher Programme

\textsuperscript{129} Partnership implementation

\textsuperscript{130} Student representation

\textsuperscript{131} LUU representation project
• Student representatives meet regularly with Pro Deans for Student Education to discuss informally the issues coming to the FTSEC and so that they can raise issues arising from the Student:Staff Forums.\textsuperscript{132}

• Sabbatical Officers have regular formal and informal meetings with senior managers. The Vice Chancellor also holds open meetings for students each semester.

• Recognition of the crucial importance of facilitating student evaluation at module and programme level and of responding appropriately and transparently to such evaluation through dialogue with the students.\textsuperscript{133} All data are shared with the student representatives.

• A centrally determined framework of policies and procedures available to all staff and students.\textsuperscript{134}

• Student:Staff Forum minutes are regarded as crucial evidence considered at SAERs and Annual Health Checks.\textsuperscript{135}

• From the current session students are full members of the SAER teams and the faculty teams undertaking Annual Health Checks.

• Students are full members of project working groups. The model used to develop the latest version of the Partnership where groups of school reps and staff worked together on an initiative is one which is being used effectively in most of the strategic projects.

• Movement towards student involvement in appointing committees at all levels.

• The Graduate Board provides for student representation on its Groups and Working Parties except those concerned with the review of examiners’ recommendations on research degree submissions, and other individual student cases.

• The establishment of the new post of Dean for Postgraduate Research Studies provides a route for effective communication on postgraduate research student matters for research students and LUU.

• Student representatives meet with Library staff twice each year to discuss library, VLE, Portal and computing provision. Sabbatical officers meet every six weeks with library, Portal, VLE and computing services managers to share information and ideas on service development

\textsuperscript{132} Pre-FTSEC meetings
\textsuperscript{133} Responding to your feedback website
\textsuperscript{134} Learning and Teaching policies and procedures
\textsuperscript{135} Student:Staff forum
Effective use of management information to safeguard quality and standards and to promote enhancement of student learning opportunities

- Extensive use made at all levels of the outcomes of NSS, PRES and internal surveys.\textsuperscript{136}
- Management information used as part of review processes at all levels; e.g. module review, programme review, FTSECs, TSEB, Graduate Board, SAER, Institutional Planning Exercise (IPE),\textsuperscript{137} the Annual Review of Innovation and Research (ARIR).
- Bulletin prepared by the Office of Academic Appeals and Regulation.
- Development of institutional performance indicators monitored by TSEB.\textsuperscript{138}
- Information on student progression and achievement provided centrally.\textsuperscript{139}
- Information on appeals and complaints is considered annually by Graduate Board, TSEB and the Senate.\textsuperscript{140}
- Systems to allow access to admissions data.\textsuperscript{141}
- The Equality Service monitors the provision for, and performance of, students to ensure equity of opportunity.\textsuperscript{142}
- Information regarding any programmes offered in collaboration is monitored in the same way as University programmes.\textsuperscript{143}
- Employability data is monitored and informs the development of strategy and interventions as well as the deployment of the central provision.\textsuperscript{144}

Policies and procedures used to admit students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied

- Taught admissions policy and practice is overseen by the Admissions and Widening Participation Committee (AWPC), a sub-committee of TSEB chaired by the PVC Student Education.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{136} Use of PGR student survey results
\textsuperscript{137} Use of management information
\textsuperscript{138} Institutional performance indicators: Inspire Our Students
\textsuperscript{139} Student progression and achievement
\textsuperscript{140} Appeals and complaints
\textsuperscript{141} ADMIT admissions tool
\textsuperscript{142} Equality Service
\textsuperscript{143} Collaborative provision review
\textsuperscript{144} Employability monitoring
\textsuperscript{145} Admissions and Widening Participation Committee
• Institutional and school undergraduate and most recently postgraduate taught student admissions policies are updated annually using a template agreed by the AWPC.146
• Each FTSEC has oversight of schools’ practice, currently through a local committee (FAWPC).147
• The University provides a Matrix-accredited information, advice and guidance service (IAG) for adults pre- and post-entry through the Lifelong Learning Centre.
• A sub group of AWPC reviews the equivalence of qualifications.148
• Recent consideration of the use of industrial experience and English language proficiency in the admission process.149
• Taught admissions data is reviewed regularly at both local and institutional level.150
• The AWPC has also helped us to respond positively to national initiatives such as the introduction of the UKBA Points Based System and contextual admissions.151
• The University is involved in several local and national initiatives to raise the aspirations of those most able students least likely to have otherwise considered attending a university and to encourage applications to Leeds from under-represented groups152. This is coordinated through the Educational Engagement Strategy.
• Admission to programmes offered in collaboration follows the same process as on-campus programme admissions.
• The admissions requirements for research degree students are set out in the regulations153 and University arrangements are clearly specified in the University Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures.
• The Graduate Board’s Programmes of Study and Audit Group takes responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards: for example, ensuring in particular that the University’s initiative to increase the numbers of postgraduate research students is not undertaken at the expense of quality. The Chair (and members) of the Group review any unusual cases prior to offers being made and monitor transfers and progression.

146 Admissions policies
147 Faculty Admissions and Widening Participation Committees
148 Admissions Qualifications Group
149 Setting admissions criteria
150 Admissions and recruitment data
151 AWPC business: contextual admissions; UKBA monitoring
152 Outreach activity
153 Ordinance X (Research Degrees)
There are effective complaints and appeals procedures:

- The University Complaints Procedure\textsuperscript{154} is accessible to all students.
- There is a dedicated Office of Appeals and Academic Regulation for taught provision.\textsuperscript{155}
- To ensure equity a specially constituted Committee on Applications hears all appeals and administers institutional plagiarism procedures and penalties for taught programmes.\textsuperscript{156}
- There is a well established Appeals Procedure for dealing with appeals by postgraduate research students; this was reviewed by the Graduate Board in 2010-11.\textsuperscript{157}
- Comprehensive support and advice for students is provided through the LUU Advice Centre.\textsuperscript{158}
- The number and governance of appeals and complaints is monitored annually and reported to TSEB, Graduate Board and the Senate.\textsuperscript{159}

There is an approach to career education, information, advice and guidance that is adequately quality assured

- Institutional Employability Strategy overseen by the Employability Committee of TSEB.
- The recent establishment of faculty employability working groups.\textsuperscript{160}
- LeedsforLife is an entitlement for all taught students.\textsuperscript{161}
- The Careers Centre is accredited and all staff offering guidance are appropriately qualified.\textsuperscript{162}
- A project is underway to develop an approach to collecting data over a longer period than the national DLHE survey to better understand the factors affecting graduate level employment and further study at Leeds.\textsuperscript{163}

\textsuperscript{154} Complaints procedure
\textsuperscript{155} Appeals procedure
\textsuperscript{156} Committee on Applications
\textsuperscript{157} PGR appeals procedure
\textsuperscript{158} LUU Advice Centre
\textsuperscript{159} Appeals and complaints monitoring
\textsuperscript{160} University and Faculty Employability Committees
\textsuperscript{161} LeedsforLife
\textsuperscript{162} Careers Centre website
\textsuperscript{163} DLHE follow-up project
• A project is underway to identify where students are on the Employability Strategy’s ‘Decide, Plan, Compete’ path to facilitate better targeting of interventions.\footnote{Student Approaches to Career Planning project}

• Integrated careers modules are offered in some disciplines.

*The quality of learning opportunities is managed to enable the entitlements of disabled students to be met*

• Dedicated Equality Service supporting both staff and students.\footnote{Equality Service website}

• An Equality Statement has been agreed.\footnote{PGR equal opportunities statement}

• Graduate Board receives an annual statement about PGR students with disabilities.\footnote{PGR equal opportunities}

• Improved data on equality issues and a Sub-group of TSEB considering this in order to progress an inclusive taught student education.\footnote{Progressing Inclusive Education Group}

• Policy and practice reviewed against the relevant Section of the QAA Code of Practice.\footnote{Students with disabilities}

• Steps taken to increase awareness of disability issues in relation to PGR students.\footnote{Disabled PGR student support}

*The quality of learning opportunities for international students is appropriate*

• A dedicated International Office supporting international students working with named contacts in schools and raising any issues through representation on major committees.\footnote{International Office}

• Monitoring and enhancement through standard and targeted surveys.\footnote{International Student Barometer}

• Provision of facilities for international students outside normal term time.\footnote{Provision for international students out of term time}

• Dedicated induction and use of intercultural ambassadors.\footnote{Induction programme; intercultural ambassadors scheme}

• International students have the opportunity of obtaining additional support from the Language Centre, which in addition to English language support classes provides “tailored” support packages for individual research students.
Support and guidance is provided to enable postgraduate research students to complete their programmes and to enable staff involved in research programmes to fulfil their responsibilities

- Postgraduate researchers attend separate induction.\textsuperscript{175}
- There is specific workshop provision in project managing a research degree.\textsuperscript{176}
- A mandatory training and development needs analysis (TDNA) is carried out between each research student and their supervisor and this is reviewed as part of the formal transfer to full PhD.\textsuperscript{177}
- The Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures, the learning outcomes for research degrees and the Research Student Handbook have been updated for 2011-12 to clarify the role of research students and supervisors in engaging with the ethical implications of their research and going through ethical review as appropriate. At the transfer stage and at exam entry research students are required to indicate any ethical approvals that have been granted to them.\textsuperscript{178}
- Progress and monitoring is facilitated through a requirement for the formal recording of ten meetings per year between full time researchers and supervisor(s) facilitated by new PDR system.
- For researchers approaching the final stages of their research degree there is targeted support through workshops\textsuperscript{179} and information available on thesis presentation and the viva.\textsuperscript{180}
- The Guide for Research Degree Supervisors is revised annually.\textsuperscript{181}
- No member of staff may begin to supervise a research student or act as an internal examiner without first having undertaken preparatory training for the role.\textsuperscript{182}
- Special arrangements are in place for supervision offered through York St John University and through Leeds Trinity University College.\textsuperscript{183}
- An Annual Postgraduate Research Tutors Forum provides opportunities for training and dissemination of good practice.
- Working Parties are established by Graduate Board to explore relevant issues.\textsuperscript{184}

\textsuperscript{175} PGR induction support
\textsuperscript{176} Workshop on project managing a research degree
\textsuperscript{177} PGR training and development needs analysis
\textsuperscript{178} Ethical implications of research
\textsuperscript{179} SDDU workshops
\textsuperscript{180} PGR examination information
\textsuperscript{181} Guide for Research Degree Supervisors
\textsuperscript{182} Criteria for PGR supervisors and internal examiners
\textsuperscript{183} Arrangements for PGR students at Leeds Trinity University College and York St John University
\textsuperscript{184} PGR Submission and Qualification rates
The quality of learning opportunities delivered as part of collaborative arrangements is managed effectively to enable students to achieve their awards

- Limited collaborative activity prescribed by a typology of collaborative provision.\textsuperscript{185}
- Detailed consideration of arrangements as part of collaborative provision approval and review.\textsuperscript{186}
- Processes aligned with the requirements of Section 2 of the QAA Code of Practice.\textsuperscript{187}
- Strategic approach to the initial consideration and review of collaborative arrangements.\textsuperscript{188}
- TSEB Standing Group on Collaborative Provision gives detailed consideration to all existing and proposed taught arrangements.\textsuperscript{189}
- Recent review of the effectiveness of the LTUC exit strategy.\textsuperscript{190}

The delivery of learning opportunities delivered through flexible and distributed arrangements, including e-learning

- Policy on flexible & distributed learning aligned to the relevant Sections of the QAA Code of Practice.\textsuperscript{191}
- Consideration given to a number of additional matters during approval and review of flexible and distributed learning arrangements, including support available, pedagogy and learning opportunities.\textsuperscript{192}

The quality of learning opportunities delivered through work-based and placement learning

- Policy and guidelines are provided.\textsuperscript{193}
- New risk assessment and health and safety procedures introduced.\textsuperscript{194}
- Study Abroad Group review of support for students on placements.

\textsuperscript{185} Typology of collaborative provision
\textsuperscript{186} Approval and review of collaborative provision
\textsuperscript{187} Collaborative Provision protocols
\textsuperscript{188} Strategic approach to approval and review of Collaborative Provision
\textsuperscript{189} TSEB Standing Group on Collaborative Provision
\textsuperscript{190} Accreditation Review of LTUC
\textsuperscript{191} Revised policy on Flexible and Distributed Learning
\textsuperscript{192} Approval of FDL programme
\textsuperscript{193} Policy on placement learning
\textsuperscript{194} Risk management of student placements
• New Sub-group of the Employability Committee established to identify ways in which placement opportunities can be increased.195

• Specialist support for students applying for and taking part in internships provided through Careers Centre.

• Careers Centre oversight of students undertaking placement opportunities within the University.196

• Monitoring and evaluation as part of programme review.

_A student charter or equivalent document setting out the mutual expectations of the institution and its students_

• The Partnership developed jointly by staff and students builds on the earlier197 Partnership Agreement which had been in place for five years.

• A detailed implementation plan for the new document.198

• Agreement that the document should be jointly reviewed annually.

**Areas where further development is taking place**

26. It is recognised that whilst the University is able to express confidence that it has in place policies and procedures which adequately meet the expectations for management of student learning opportunities, this does not of itself lead to equity of experience for students or guarantee a quality experience. The outcomes of some of the surveys we have conducted and discussions we have held with students during reviews suggests that still more could be done to ensure that policies are adhered to and operated effectively so that all students obtain the experience currently enjoyed by the majority. As one of several steps to improve equity the Annual Health Check and SAER procedures have been revised to focus specifically on the student experience rather than on the operation of quality assurance processes. This will be further strengthened by the inclusion of students on the review teams. As well as continuing to improve existing practice there are also plans to:

• refresh the peer review of teaching.199

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195 Placement/internship support
196 Careers Centre support for work placement
197 Partnership Agreement
198 Partnership implementation plan
199 TSEB Peer Review of Teaching Working Group
• continue through the Library Strategic Advisory Board discussion on library provision for students; in particular, to take forward through the University Capital Group a proposal for a new student library as a priority;\textsuperscript{200}
• develop the use of data visualisation tools to improve access to and use of management information;\textsuperscript{201}
• review the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Students Engaged in Teaching (an area raised by LUU) through a joint TSEB and Graduate Board group;\textsuperscript{202}
• Further develop the new ‘Next Generation Research’ programme;
• Develop enhanced careers and employability support for postgraduate researchers, together with more detailed collection of employment data following research degree award.

\textsuperscript{200} Student library proposals
\textsuperscript{201} Data visualisation tools
\textsuperscript{202} PGR students engaged in teaching policy review
SECTION 5  How the institution manages the quality of public information about academic standards and the quality of HE provision

27. The University has always recognised the importance of providing accurate information about the standards and quality of its provision. It manages its responsibilities through its communications and marketing teams. More recently Deans and Heads of School have been supported by the appointment of professional marketing managers in each faculty.

HEI information

28. The University maintains a comprehensive externally-facing website, which facilitates open access to the University strategy and quality assurance procedures, together with a staff intranet and a Student Portal\footnote{Student Portal} which brings together a wide range of student-facing information. Relevant information is openly available on the external site to support potential applicants to the University, current students, alumni, research sponsors, business, the local community and visitors.

29. The Communications Team\footnote{Communications Team} oversees the preparation of institutional publicity materials whilst individual schools and services maintain their own pages which contain a wide range of academic and academic-related information including details of taught provision offered, research-related information, administrative guidance and links to other resources within the University and elsewhere.\footnote{Provision of information} Ensuring accuracy of this information is the responsibility of the relevant Head of School or Service working with the Marketing Team.\footnote{Marketing Team}

30. A Student Portal team\footnote{Portal Team} is responsible for the development and maintenance of their system advised by a Portal Steering Group.\footnote{Portal Steering Group} For the end of last session the Portal Team working collaboratively with the LeedsforLife and Alumni teams launched a Graduate Portal\footnote{Graduate Portal} providing ongoing access for graduates to key University information.

31. The advice and guidance websites of the University and LUU have recently been drawn together in an issues-focussed (rather than service-focussed) website called

\footnotetext[203]{Student Portal} \footnotetext[204]{Communications Team} \footnotetext[205]{Provision of information} \footnotetext[206]{Marketing Team} \footnotetext[207]{Portal Team} \footnotetext[208]{Portal Steering Group} \footnotetext[209]{Graduate Portal}
help@leeds.210 This front end is the start of a process of revision of the websites to ensure that they provide consistent, user-friendly information to students.

32. The University prospectuses211 are produced centrally following detailed annual discussion with individual schools. Separate information for PGR programmes is produced including in 2011 a document called ‘Postgraduate Research: Experiences and Expectation’ to showcase the benefits and value of PGR study at the University.212 Their format is reviewed regularly by the Student Communications Steering Group213 which also reviews developments relating to other student communications; for example the centrally-produced induction booklet and information on financial matters.214 The materials produced by schools, including School Handbooks, are routinely considered for accuracy and completeness as part of the SAER process. Many schools have taken the decision to provide handbooks via the Portal rather than in hard copy.

33. The Student Services Centre publishes information, guidance and instructions to inform students of the actions they need to take to ensure compliance with the University’s regulations to effect smooth progression through their registration and enrolment procedures and throughout their subsequent student career.215 The University publishes additional guidance for students on how to lodge appeals and complaints.216

34. An internal web site gives students access to the NSS and programme survey data, external examiners’ reports for taught programmes and school responses to these, together with school Action Plans.217 This site has recently been refreshed and its usefulness will be reviewed jointly with students at the end of the session. As part of the PGR Project improvements to the main University website for PGR students have been made and more are planned.

Programme Specifications

35. The term ‘programme specifications’ is not normally used in conversation with students. However, they are made aware that through the programme catalogue218 and dynamic links to the constituent module details for the current session they can access accurate information about the provision as delivered, rather than as it existed when the

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210 help@leeds
211 University Prospectus
212 Postgraduate Research: Experiences and Expectation
213 Student Communications Steering Group
214 Fees guidance
215 Student Services Centre
216 Appeals and Complaints advice
217 Responding to your feedback website
218 Taught programme and module catalogues
programme was last formally approved. Previous versions of the programme specification are available from the catalogue archives. Programme information is reviewed during the SAER process at which point an external specialist view is obtained of the continued academic coherence, congruence with the subject benchmark statement and currency.

**UNISTATS**

36. As this site currently takes the majority of its data directly from HESA and NSS and any contextual information is provided centrally we are confident that the information currently provided is accurate.

**UCAS**

37. General information supplied to UCAS on financial information and the admissions process is managed centrally and links provided to institutional websites. The guidance on qualifications and tariffs is reviewed annually and changes for individual programmes approved by the relevant Faculty Pro Dean on behalf of the FTSEC.  

38. Dedicated websites are available addressing the needs of those applying in special circumstances as well as a site for prospective international students.

**Preparations for the KIS**

39. A group has been working to ensure that we are best able to provide accurate information as part of the KIS and to ensure that appropriate contextual information is also available to students.

**Response to HEFCE 2006/45**

40. In response to HEFCE 2006/45 the institution reviewed the information it makes available and has continued to ensure that its own websites and material provided for external sites is current; for example, the employability statement on the UNISTATS site is updated annually.

41. The University has previously made available external examiners’ reports to student representatives who are members of STSECs and Student:Staff Forums. In line with the move to a more explicit partnership with the whole student body it has been agreed

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219 Admission tariff change  
220 Applying to Leeds advice for international students  
221 KIS Group
that from the current session all external examiners’ reports and responses made by schools will be available to all students on the intranet site ‘Respondingtoyourfeedback’.
SECTION 6 How the institution enhances the quality of students learning opportunities

42. The University views enhancement to be the deliberate and systematic process of self-reflection and change that leads to improvement. This continual enhancement process allows the University to provide the highest quality learning environment to support students in achieving their maximum potential. Such enhancement takes place at all levels within the University: for example, as large strategic projects managed institutionally; as Faculty initiatives to enhance discipline specific learning; as School actions implemented in response to student feedback; and as improvements made by individual academic staff to enhance student achievement on individual modules. The University ensures that enhancement can take place by providing the appropriate structures and environment within which to encourage and effectively manage change.

43. The following are examples of deliberate steps which have been taken recently to facilitate systematic enhancement relating to taught provision across the University:

- Identification of a number of strategic priorities which are reviewed and agreed annually by TSEB; these priorities influence the decisions about local projects and about the allocation of central development funding.\(^\text{222}\)
- Provision of funding for local projects linked to the University’s student education strategic priorities.\(^\text{223}\)
- Action planning process to identify and subsequently monitor areas for enhancement.
- The University Student Education Fellowship Scheme.
- The annual Student Education Conference as a means of stimulating discussion and ideas.\(^\text{224}\)
- Development of Annual Health Checks as a forum for discussing school responses to institutionally identified enhancement priorities and engagement with strategic projects.\(^\text{225}\)
- Development of specific strategies as deemed necessary to highlight particular aspects of work, e.g., Student Engagement Strategy and Employability Strategy.\(^\text{226}\)

44. As noted previously, as part of the implementation of the Strategy Map, a number of strategic initiatives were identified and approved under the theme ‘Inspire our Students’.

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\(^{222}\) TSEB strategic priorities  
\(^{223}\) Academic Development Fund  
\(^{224}\) Student Education Conference  
\(^{225}\) Annual Health Checks  
\(^{226}\) Employability strategy
These initiatives were agreed following consideration of a number of key performance indicators which had been determined by a high-level institutional group. These initiatives are regarded as key to enhancing the student experience. Each initiative is overseen by a project steering group which is chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Student Education) and includes senior representatives of the academic community and the services. The key performance indicators are monitored routinely and progress reported to TSEB and the University’s Council. Large strategic projects initiated to address specific needs through consideration of performance information have included LeedsforLife, the Curriculum Enhancement Project and the Student Services Review.

45. These projects are supported both locally within the faculties and centrally through the Strategy Project Team, the Learning and Teaching Support Management Team and the Student Welfare and Support Management Team who all work closely with LUU.

46. In the PGR area enhancement has been focussed on delivering the aims of the recent PGR Experience project. In particular, through:

- the implementation of the new PGR Personal Development Record system.
- a new model for PGR training.
- a review of the PGR websites.

47. The deposit of e-theses as mandatory for doctoral students commencing after September 2009 has also been an important enhancement, enabling students to disseminate their research to an international audience.

48. In addition to the deliberate and systematic steps taken to enhance the students’ experience noted above the University takes a proactive approach to the dissemination of practice in order to ensure the sharing of good practice and as a stimulus for debate both locally and institutionally. This is seen as part of the on-going general enhancement of student learning opportunities and takes place alongside the institutional initiatives. Good practice is shared through the formal committee structures but also through:

227 Inspire Our Students Steering Group
228 IOSSG Theme Report
229 Strategic initiative: Curriculum Enhancement Project
230 Example project plans for strategic projects
231 LTSMT and SWSMT
232 PGR Project report
233 PGR Personal Development Record system
234 Researcher Skills training model
235 PGR website
236 E-thesis information
• the annual Student Education Conference;\textsuperscript{237}
• a Student Education Bulletin produced three times a year;\textsuperscript{238}
• an assessment group pulling together the work of several smaller projects and providing another forum for dissemination: MARK project;\textsuperscript{239} Return not Retain;\textsuperscript{240}
• informal networks: e.g. Directors of Student Education, Taught Student Administration Group, Widening Participation Forum; Admissions Forum;
• the \textit{Talking about Teaching} seminar programme and other workshops offered by SDDU;\textsuperscript{241}
• special events on particular topics;\textsuperscript{242}
• the Casebook web resource;\textsuperscript{243}
• allocation of central funding for local projects with a requirement that the findings must be disseminated;\textsuperscript{244}
• University Student Education Fellowship projects reported on a website.\textsuperscript{245}

49. Specific examples of dissemination in the PGR area include:

• A number of fora for special groups; e.g., Directors of Graduate Schools, Faculty Graduate School Managers and Co-ordinators, Postgraduate Research Tutors;
• A series of ‘Enhancement Activities from Faculties’ reported to Graduate Board;\textsuperscript{246}
• A Research Skills Training and Development Operational Group has been established, feeding into the main Research Training Steering Committee;\textsuperscript{247}
• The annual PGR Conference.\textsuperscript{248}
• Flying Start developed by Skills@Library working with a range of different schools;
• Development of an online Library Guide to introduce new students to the full range of Library services and resources.

50. A successful initiative was developed jointly by LUU and the University under the banner ‘\textit{I love my personal tutor}’ to identify and acknowledge those staff who are most highly
regarded by their students for personal tutor support.\textsuperscript{249} The scheme proved very successful with increasing numbers of high quality nominations and with the awards being highly regarded by staff. The scheme has now been expanded by LUU to become the Student Choice Awards, recognising other forms of learner support, innovation and excellence in teaching as perceived by students. The awards are presented at a special event during LUU’s annual ‘Celebrate Week’. The information from the nominations is also providing a useful means of identifying enhancements which students perceive as particularly valuable.

\textsuperscript{249} LUU Student Choice awards
51. Work has been underway for some time to sharpen the focus placed on the transition of students from school to university. In 2009, for example, the Annual Student Education Conference highlighted the issue by inviting the head-teacher from a local high school to give a keynote address on the secondary school experience; and a project was worked through to co-ordinate centrally-organised induction materials and activities with those provided by schools. The following are examples of activities currently being undertaken to specifically support the first year experience:

*Initiatives to support transition*

- The development of customised web forms in LeedsforLife to support the school-HE transition and the first round of personal tutorials;
- The preparation of a resource, ‘Integrating students into the academic community: examples of good practice’ as part of LeedsforLife;
- The use of student Intercultural Ambassadors to help support the transition for international students;
- Full induction programme for all new students involving curricular, co-curricular and administrative information supported by relevant web sites;
- Students with disabilities arrive on campus early to allow orientation whilst the campus is less busy;
- Mentors are provided for all students admitted through access schemes;
- A PASS scheme piloted in the Faculty of Business;
- A peer-assisted learning scheme providing support for year 1 students in Maths is being rolled out across the faculty;
- Peer mentoring schemes in operation in several schools.

52. The success of such initiatives is measured through the year 1 programme survey, maintenance of high early-stage retention and through discussion with students in focus groups.

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250 LeedsforLife web forms to support personal tutoring
251 Integrating students into the academic community
252 Intercultural Ambassadors scheme and case study
253 Induction resources
254 LUBS Peer Assisted Study Sessions scheme
255 Peer Assisted Learning scheme in School of Mathematics
256 Peer mentoring schemes
Information provided for first year students

- An induction working group oversees the preparation of ‘Countdown to University Life’ and the generic presentations schools use in their local induction events. This ensures a co-ordinated approach to materials provided electronically and in hard copy for students through liaison between central induction and schools;\(^{257}\)
- Academic Development Funded projects to provide information and activities for students pre-arrival; e.g. in the School of Earth and Environment;\(^{258}\)
- Use of social networking sites, e.g. Facebook;\(^{259}\)
- Accommodation information in a variety of formats;\(^{260}\)
- The University provides a Matrix-accredited guidance service for IAG for adults, pre- and post-entry through the Lifelong Learning Centre;
- The Flying Start project of online materials by skills@library.\(^{261}\)

53. The effectiveness of the material provided is assessed through surveys and through discussion with groups of students. Students appreciate having material electronically so that they can continue to refer to it during the year. They have also reported the value of hearing the views of previous students and of having contact with the staff in their school prior to arrival. These resources are therefore being included in pre-arrival material and in initiatives such as LeedsforLife.

Assessment and feedback for year 1

- The first year of most programmes is essentially a pass/fail year, allowing both students and the University to assess their progress whilst they settle into the new forms of study, assessment and the University more generally;
- Formative assessment available at early stages in many Year 1 modules;
- Clear policy on work with students on plagiarism and the use of Turnitin in all schools;\(^{262}\)
- Development of an online plagiarism tutorial for use early in Year 1;\(^{263}\)
- A number of ADF funded projects involving the provision of feedback, including during Year 1;
- Emphasis in the first year on effectively using feedback received.

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\(^{257}\) Countdown to University Life booklet (web version)
\(^{258}\) Faculty of Environment pre-entry support project
\(^{259}\) University of Leeds Facebook pages
\(^{260}\) Accommodation web pages
\(^{261}\) Flying Start
\(^{262}\) Turnitin policy
\(^{263}\) Online plagiarism tutorial
Monitoring retention and progression in year 1

- Retention and progression are monitored through programme review and the institutional planning processes;\textsuperscript{264}
- Specific monitoring of students admitted through access schemes.\textsuperscript{265}

54. As well as monitoring through retention and progression data the first year experience is also explicitly considered through specific questions as part of the year 1 programme survey\textsuperscript{266} and an LUU survey.\textsuperscript{267} The usefulness of specific activities and information is monitored through focus groups.

\textsuperscript{264} Retention monitoring
\textsuperscript{265} Access to Leeds monitoring data
\textsuperscript{266} Year 1 survey
\textsuperscript{267} LUU survey
Concluding Remarks

55. Like many other HE institutions, the University of Leeds is undergoing a period of significant change and it recognises that the need to develop and evolve will persist if it is to continue to meet national and international challenges. The University is dynamic and ambitious; but it is also mindful of its responsibility to manage change effectively. It fully intends to maintain a secure base to allow the fulfilment of its mission whilst simultaneously providing the most inspiring learning experience possible for its students. It is confident that the structures and practices it has in place provide a strong yet flexible framework for the assurance and enhancement of the quality of its provision and the maintenance of its exacting standards, whilst at the same time providing the basis for individual disciplines to evolve without bureaucratic hindrance and without detriment to the learning experience of students.

56. The University recognises that the assurance of academic standards and the enhancement of the quality of the learning opportunities it provides is an ongoing process and fully understands and accepts its responsibilities in this respect. It is broadly confident that it continues to make progress with the development and consolidation of its operational mechanisms, policies and procedures to meet this essential goal. As time progresses, and as the evidence base derived from both internal review and external scrutiny, comment and advice accumulates, the level of confidence the University is able to express in its mechanisms, policies and procedures justifiably increases.

57. However, the University is not complacent. It recognises that improvements are possible, and indeed desirable, in some aspects of its activity as described in this document. It strives to monitor its performance with development and progress in mind. It is not afraid to seek to learn from others and to adopt and benefit from best practice recognised elsewhere. By the same token, the University is not afraid to publicise and share good practice developed at Leeds. To this end it is vigilant in respect of the information put into the public domain, ensuring that it is, as far as is within its power to determine, complete, accurate, honest and reliable. This briefing document is no exception. The University believes it to be a faithful reflection of the current position at Leeds and thus of its capacity to maintain the quality of its students' learning experience and the security and standard of its awards.
Annex A   Committee Structure for Taught Student Education

Council

Senate

Committee on Applications

Taught Student Education Committee (TSEB)

Standing Group on Study Abroad

Standing Group on Collaborative Provision

Inclusive Education Steering Group

Cross Faculty Taught Student Education Committee

SDDU Taught Student Education Committee

Faculty Taught Student Education Committees (FTSEC)

School Taught Student Education Committees (STSEC)

Faculty Admissions and Widening Participation Committees

Admissions and Widening Participation Committee

Faculty Employability Working Groups

Employability Committee
Annex B  Committee Structure for Research Support

Council

Senate

Research and Innovation Board

Graduate Board

Taught Student Education Board (TSEB)

Research Skills Training and Development Academic Steering Group

Programmes of Study and Audit Group

Ad Hoc Review Groups

Examinations Group

Group on Higher Doctorates

Group on Scholarships, Studentships and Prizes

Doctoral Training Grants Steering Committee

Faculty Graduate School Committees

Faculty / Department / School

Appeal Panels to consider individual student appeals*

* Take independent decisions and action on individual appeals but report back to the Board on relevant general issues