Introduction

Module and programme handbooks are important ways in which detailed information is communicated to students regarding the curriculum and School-level procedures and practice. Together, these sources of information allow the University and its Colleges and Schools to comply with the Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code as interpreted within the University Quality Framework. Publishing these documents also enables the University to demonstrate how it intends to discharge its legal responsibilities, for example in relation to equality and diversity matters.

University Policy on Module and Programme Handbooks

A programme handbook and set of module handbooks must be available for all students enrolled on taught undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. A digital copy of each year’s handbook must be sent to the Library and Learning Centre (vle@dundee.ac.uk) for inclusion in the central handbook repository. For research degrees, the generic University Research Degrees Quality Code (available from https://www.dundee.ac.uk/qf/research-degrees/) applies. This should be supplemented by a School research postgraduate handbook providing local information.

Schools are granted discretion over the presentation and order of handbook material and the specific material that is selected to appear within the programme handbook, the module handbooks, or both. Schools may also elect to combine programme and module handbooks as they see fit. As part of the induction process each academic year all students should be informed how to access the relevant handbooks.

Handbooks may be provided in printed form to students, and/or via links to files (for example, in pdf format) on School/programme website areas or the virtual learning environment. Arrangements must also be in place to provide handbooks in relevant alternative formats to assist students with disabilities. Certain elements of handbooks are mandatory, others are recommended. These are detailed in the accompanying guidelines.

Guidelines for Content of Module and Programme Handbooks

The School Secretary and Dean have responsibility to ensure that the following material, regarded as mandatory handbook content, appears in relevant School publications:

- aims of module/programme
- programme/module name and SITS code
- semester dates and class timetable
- list of teaching team with contact details and/or office hours as applicable
- School office, programme leader and support staff contact details and/or office hours as applicable
- statement in relation to the School's policy on the inclusive nature of the curriculum and its teaching, including contact information in relation to support for disabilities and equality and diversity
- statement on disclosure of disability
• details and format of assessments (including, for example, weighting between in-course and end-of module assessments, number and types of questions on each paper, duration of paper, word count for coursework exercises, weightings applied to component assessments, peer assessment details)

• scheduling and submission dates for assessments and coursework and information on any penalties for late submission

• how and where to submit coursework, including any presentation requirements

• attendance and participation criteria and assessment, including use of registers, counts of online visits, and engagement in activities that may be taken into account and any penalties that may be applied

• information relating to assessment processes and criteria for group and peer-assessed work

• definition of plagiarism and academic dishonesty as it applies within the programme discipline and types of assessment used

• descriptive marking criteria allied to the marking scale or reporting scale or both, as appropriate

• details of the mark aggregation process, where multiple assessments are involved, including weighting of elements among and within assessments or exam papers

• details of criteria for achieving merit and distinction (for those taught postgraduate degrees where this is relevant)

• procedures for return of coursework (including minimum times for return) and type of grades and feedback that will be given to students on their submissions

• progression/termination information

• procedures where extenuating circumstances apply (e.g. obtaining and submitting medical certificates, forms for self-certification or extenuating circumstances)

• resits, including the fee charged by the University for registration

• provisional nature of results, especially for Semester 1 modules or assessments

• discipline, complaints and appeals procedures

• taking a year out / discounting a year / temporary withdrawal from programme

• transferring between programmes /degrees

• learning outcomes at appropriate levels, as deemed appropriate (lecture, practical, tutorial, topic, module, programme)

• library facilities, including induction courses

• link to reading and resource materials

• information on the use of the Virtual Learning Environment by the School and any web-based learning materials (where appropriate)

• sources of guidance and support (i.e. academic guidance, personal tutor, advisor of study schemes, University support services - academic and pastoral)

• information on student feedback procedures, representation and student-staff liaison committees

• health and safety information

• Careers Service contact details.

The following material is recommended handbook content:
• introduction/welcome by programme leader or Dean of School
• discipline formats for citing sources and discipline referencing style(s)
• opportunities for students to receive formative assessment and feedback
• sample forms used for submission and feedback
• how to access past exam papers
• links to relevant University degree regulations (degree regulations, assessment policy, code of practice on plagiarism and academic dishonesty, code of practice for IT)
• module choices and degree pathways (where relevant) e.g. text, table or diagram
• details of special exam procedures, e.g. for online assessment
• guidance on student conduct in group / peer assessed work
• details of graduate skills and where these are introduced, practiced and assessed
• placements and internship opportunities
• postgraduate opportunities (where relevant)
• Student exchange schemes e.g. ERASMUS
• PSRB accreditation information
• student prizes
• School based / student led academic societies
• staff photographs
• a link to the Joint Agreement on Student Representation.

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Mr Iain Kennedy
Quality Enhancement Officer