

Academic Quality Policy

The De Montfort University Academic Quality Policy is to promote enhancement, promulgate good practice, assure the quality of learning opportunities and the standards of DMU programmes and awards, and provide evidence of quality to stakeholders. This Policy relates to all DMU students, undergraduate, postgraduate and research, wherever they are located.

The university's approach to quality management is about finding ways of enhancing the learning opportunities made available to students as well as about assuring quality and standards. It is important that this approach is not seen solely as a 'top down' process, but also a 'bottom up' approach where ownership starts within programme and module levels. Changing practice in, and views of, learning, teaching and assessment is promoted through discussion, reflection and exposure to examples of good practice and is underpinned by the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

The strategic and systematic promotion of enhancement is achieved through embedding it within quality procedures. Embedding quality enhancement actions within the work that is already undertaken at all levels across the university avoids unnecessary creation of systems or duplication of activity. Processes for validation, monitoring and review all culminate in identifying shared themes, areas for development and enhancement, and activities to be commended: these outputs normally take the form of enhancement and development plans.

The Academic Quality Policy is based on the following principles:

Standards

University awards are set at the appropriate level and are developed with reference to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards. Activities which support the maintenance of academic standards include external representation on validation and review panels, external examiner arrangements and programme monitoring, including analysis of data on student achievement.

Ownership

Responsibility for quality is shared by all staff and students. The authority to make decisions should be exercised at the appropriate level and individuals are enabled to exercise executive responsibility for certain processes or protocols where this is a part of their substantive role (eg faculty Head of Quality). Students have a responsibility to contribute their views through their programme and school representatives, through participation in quality management processes such as periodic review and validation, and through module and course level surveys.

Trust

DMU quality processes are predicated on the university employing professional, competent and trusted staff; therefore the primary purpose of the quality system is to provide assurance and to continuously enhance, rather than provide systems to prevent failure.

Accountability

The university is accountable to its stakeholders for the quality and standards of its academic provision and awards. The Academic Board has overall accountability for the quality of academic provision.

Continuous enhancement

Staff are expected to engage in reflective practice and critical self-evaluation. Sharing of good practice, and responsiveness to the ideas of others, are central features of enhancement. The continuous enhancement of quality also depends upon the individual efforts of university staff. The development of staff is actively promoted and supported through a range of professional development opportunities including the PGCert in Higher Education and a commitment to seeking means of achieving higher levels of recognition of teaching expertise.

Student engagement and representation

Participation by students is a key element of quality management processes and is used to inform the development, improvement and enhancement of the academic provision. Student engagement in academic quality takes a number of forms including involvement in validation and periodic review events, module evaluation and committee representation, and takes place both directly and through the student representative system.

Student feedback is provided through a number of mechanisms including external and internal surveys such as the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and the Course Level Feedback (CLF) survey. The university is committed to responding to student feedback and sets benchmarks against which to measure this feedback.

Responsiveness and resolution

The university is committed to responding in a timely manner to the views of all stakeholders, including students, staff, external examiners, employers and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), and to the prompt resolution of issues.

Appropriate regulation

The university's quality procedures are under-pinned by a risk-based approach and are transparent, fair and proportionate. The degree of regulation is commensurate with the task and sensitive to the dangers of overly bureaucratic processes. Procedures are regularly reviewed by the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) to ensure that they continue to be effective.

University academic quality management processes are devised to align with these principles.