A07 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Review Policy

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1   Introduction

This policy sets out SAE's approach to continuous review and enhancement of Learning and Teaching practices across campuses. This policy gives primacy to sector best practice in learning, teaching and assessment, and is founded on the principles of scholarship as integral to the development of effective learning and teaching, and promotes self-directed lifelong learning in line with SAE's graduate attributes.

1.1   Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- A05 Academic Quality Assurance Policy
- A08 Assessment Policy
- A08.3 Academic Misconduct
- A14 Complaints Policy.

2   Scope

This policy applies to the learning and teaching approach employed by SAE Institute across all validated programmes.

3   Principles for Learning and Teaching Enhancement

SAE Institute maintains that the student learning experience depends on high quality teaching and effective and supported student learning, and curricula that are informed by industry and discipline knowledge and practice, scholarship, and professional experience.

Learning, teaching, pedagogical support, and curricula must therefore be well-informed and subject to continuous reflection, evaluation, and improvement. To achieve this, SAE Institute requires that:

- All curricula are regularly, systematically and expertly reviewed and reported to the Academic Board.
- Reviews will include all stakeholders: students, faculty, industry.

- Student feedback and satisfaction data are regularly collected and reported, contributing to continuous improvement in teaching, learning and the curriculum, and SAE responses provided back to students.
- The enhancement and development of teaching practice is supported by:
    - regular campus-based peer and supervisor observations of teaching
    - scholarship through publications, conference presentations and industry bodies
    - professional practice
    - certificated, formal and informal professional development programmes such as PGCertHE (Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching and Learning) and Higher Education Academy fellowships.
- SAE Faculty regularly develop and enhance their teaching praxis.
- Student support systems, including academic skills development and formative guidance on progress associated with assessment tasks are regularly and systematically reviewed.
- Appointments to faculty will be provided with a copy of this policy and an induction programme on SAE teaching and assessment practices including all relevant technologies.
- All faculty feedback on learning and teaching enhancement through Boards of Studies, Assessment Boards and Panels, Programme Committees and directly to their regional DASS team.
- Feedback from stakeholders, including students, employers, and professional practitioners, as well as national and international benchmarks and the provisions of the QAA Quality Code, be taken into account in programme and module reviews.

3.1 Continuous Improvement Cycle

The academic quality of courses and programs at SAE Institute is monitored, assured and subject to review and improvement through a continuous improvement cycle based on the principles of PIMRI which was adopted in 2011, and which applies to both management and academic yearly cycles of activity. The PIMRI process is illustrated in the diagram below:
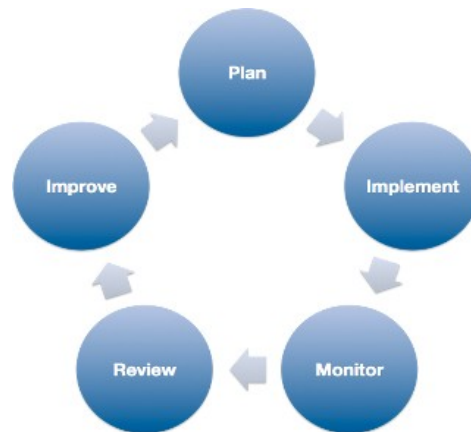
The major aims of this Academic Quality Assurance and Improvement Cycle are:

- To support a culture of quality assurance and continuous improvement.
- To build quality into all SAE educational courses and activities and ensure incorporation of the QAA Quality Code.
- To gain staff commitment to continuous quality improvement.
- To establish and make use of reliable performance indicators and benchmarks of quality at all campuses.
- To gain information from stakeholders including industry partners and use that information for continuous improvement.
- To identify and promote good practice.

Responsibility for the implementation and achievement of operational and business objectives resides with General Managers, while ongoing academic quality assurance is the specific responsibility of the regional Deans and their staff.

This approach addresses academic quality assurance objectives through specific plans, policies, and procedures, as outlined in the following section, which are then applied through key functions for individuals with designated responsibilities for implementation of policies and monitoring of evidence.

4 Review and Reporting Cycle

SAE Institute and its University partners have established regular review and reporting cycles in relation to all aspects of academic operations. Programme Committees and Academic Coordinators contribute to reviews of programmes and their constituent modules as described in this section. These are reviewed and endorsed by the Academic Board and its sub-committees as well as the UPSQC.

4.1 Periodic Academic Reviews

Academic reviews are held as part of a standard cycle of review and quality assurance, defined by SAE as six years in length, but adapting to the regulations and review processes of University partners where there may be any differences in timing. Major reviews are generally held every six years, with minor reviews at each three-year interval between those major reviews. A review may be specially convened:

- as a result of major restructuring to the programme structure and/or content
- as a result of serious problems related to the programmes (such as an adverse external review)
- in response to a requirement laid down by a validation event.

Academic reviews, whether major or minor, are intended to consider:

- Changes to external reference points, such as subject benchmark statements.
- Changes in student demand, employer expectations or employment opportunities.
- The continuing validity and relevance of aims and outcomes in relation to research in the area, professional practice, etc.
- The effect of incremental change to the programme(s) since the last review.
- The extent to which the curriculum continues to support, and assessment continues to demonstrate, the achievement of learning outcomes.
- The extent to which the use of learning technologies and blended learning strategies are appropriately embedded in the curriculum to support student achievement.
- The extent to which resources and facilities are appropriate to enable students to achieve learning outcomes.
- The effectiveness of mechanisms for quality assurance and assurance of standards, with relation to the programme(s).
- Arrangements for recognition of prior learning, in line with procedures agreed with the University partner(s).

- Administrative communications between SAE and the University partner(s).
- University partner support for the programme, including staff development and training.
- Link tutor or collaborative partner liaison.
- Statistics related to application rates, offers and acceptances, cohort analysis, non-continuation and deferral, pass and failure rates, progression and final awards, and any graduate destination statistics.
- Comparative performance of students across regions and campuses.
- Student views on the accuracy of public information, the academic and social experience, understanding of the University partnership arrangement, and on their mechanisms for feedback and SAE's response to such feedback.
- External Examiner moderation of the programme(s).
- The language of programme delivery and assessment (if applicable).
- Handling of, and outcomes from, the process for any complaints raised related to the programme(s)
- The question of value-added – what it is that students gain from a collaborative programme validated by a partner University.

A review panel is appointed by, and reports to, the University Partnership Standards and Quality Committee (UPSQC). An Officer is appointed by the UPSQC to coordinate and manage the review process, including documentation, organization of the event(s), the panel, officering and reporting. The procedure for review is generally aligned with the procedures for validation and review of programmes as set out by University partners for the relevant programme(s), but with a change of focus for internal use.

4.2   Annual Monitoring and Evaluation

All SAE campuses involved in delivery of validated provision are subject to formal annual monitoring and evaluation processes, both through the regulations and quality assurance framework of University partners (for all validated programmes and modules), and through SAE's internal academic governance (for all provision).

These processes seek to maintain a self-critical academic community, in which individual members of staff are committed to the ongoing appraisal of their teaching, learning and assessment methods and to the dissemination of good practice.

4.2.1 University Partner annual monitoring

Each SAE campus and region is required to submit an Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report (AMER) for all University of Hertfordshire programmes, addressing the operation of the programme during the previous academic year. Deadlines for reports are agreed between SAE and the University partner, usually falling within three months of the end of the academic year under review. Additionally, Programme Committees may prepare a Subject Monitoring and Evaluation Report (SMER) to provide a critical review of issues pertinent to the delivery of an academic discipline area.

Guidance on the completion and templates for all annual monitoring reports is available from the University partners and will be distributed each year by the regional Directorate of Academic and Student Services (DASS). All annual monitoring reports must use the approved templates from the University partner and follow the processes for completion and submission as set out each year by the University partner.

The preparation of annual monitoring reports is the responsibility of the Quality Manager (or equivalent), with the required input of campus Academic Coordinators and Programme Committees, following a procedure approved by the DASS. Reports will also be provided to regional Academic Boards for information and review. An action plan from each annual monitoring report will be maintained for review and development during the following academic year.

4.3   External Examiners

The roles and functions of External Examiners are discussed in detail in A08.5 External Examiner Policy, and in the policies and regulations of University partners by whom the External Examiners are appointed.

Examiners will usually provide both brief written reports, and verbal reports, to Content Specialist Panels and Finalist Assessment Boards, three times annually. Examiners then submit annual reports, using templates provided by the University partner, reviewing the programmes for which they have been appointed over the course of the academic year.

These annual reports are also provided to SAE, who note the reports at the next relevant assessment board and provide a written response to the examiner.

4.4   Other Mechanisms for Review

As well as periodic reviews, annual monitoring and reporting processes implemented by AD Education and as an element of collaborative University partnership, and the external examining system, SAE Institute conducts continuous review and improvement of learning, teaching and assessment practices through other mechanisms as detailed in A04 Academic Governance, including but not limited to:

- Academic Boards
- Learning and Teaching Committees
- Programme Committees
- Boards of Studies
- Assessment Boards and Panels.

5   Peer Review of Teaching

SAE adopts the principle that peer review of teaching is a worthwhile and necessary practice that enables individuals to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and provides a means through which individuals can improve the effectiveness of their teaching.

All staff with teaching responsibility from 0.2 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) upwards will be reviewed annually and undertake reviews in accordance with local processes. Visiting Lecturers will be automatically included in the process if they teach beyond the threshold of 0.2 FTE or 110 teaching hours per academic year. Visiting Lecturers who do not meet this threshold will be invited to take part at their discretion.

5.1   Principles

The value of peer teaching observations within faculty is recognised throughout the sector and is common practice at SAE's University partners. Following local procedures, each campus or region will ensure that relevant faculty have a thorough understanding of the

process and have appropriate development before carrying out observations. All applicable staff are expected to become reviewers within a suitable period.

Each member of faculty will undergo an observation and review at least once per year. The responsibility for nominating observers and ensuring that peer reviews take place rests with each campus Academic Coordinator. Faculty should normally have different peer observers in successive years.

5.2   Monitoring and Evaluation

The Peer Review process and its appropriateness and effectiveness will be monitored and evaluated by the regional Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), reporting to the Academic Board.

6   Policy History

Policy Created:	July 2021
Date of Last Revision:	August 2022
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