
ACADEMIC REGULATIONS POLICY

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What We Mean by ‘Academic Regulations’

‘Academic regulations’ cover the expectations ABA has of you, our students, in terms of good conduct and ensuring you all have a fair and equitable experience. It also covers the measures we take to safeguard those academic standards.

‘Academic standards’ are then defined as the levels of achievement you have to reach in order to achieve an award. They are determined against nationally agreed reference points for the academic standards of higher education qualifications, as set out in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and Subject Benchmark Statements. Standards include:

- ‘the appropriateness of learning outcomes (aims, content and level)
- ‘the curriculum you study
- ‘the effectiveness of assessment (in relation to attainment of learning outcomes).

‘Quality of the learning experience’ refers to the ways in which we provide you with the best possible opportunity to meet the stated outcomes of your course. This includes pedagogy (ways of delivering education) and welfare and support functions.

‘Programme review’ is the regular process by which all programmes are reviewed and evaluated. This includes ‘annual monitoring’ which is a reflective, holistic and cross-institution review process that examines historic and current data whilst also looking forward to the coming year.

Principles

Our Quality Assurance and Enhancement procedures operate within a framework of policies and course management procedures, which are linked to below. Many of these are influenced by the regulations of our awarding bodies and institutions.

Guidance documents, including the Quality Assurance Handbook, Student Handbook and Course Handbooks make clear responsibility for academic quality and standards. The requirements set out in these documents are regularly reviewed in consultation with staff and students.

Scope

This policy covers rules and regulations for normal academic conduct, including arrangements for appeals, student complaints, associated expectations and programme and annual monitoring. This policy should be read in conjunction with both our Governance and our Teaching, Learning and Assessment policies.

Aims

The overall aim of the policy is to ensure that we take the appropriate measures to define and publish clear expectations for your academic conduct and to explain the consequences of infringing these measures. The policy also sets out the ways in which you can appeal or complain in those cases when you feel you have a legitimate concern. We also highlight our arrangements for providing records of academic achievement.

The policy also sets out our approach to programme approval, monitoring and annual review.

Objectives

The objectives of our Academic Regulations Policy and its related procedures are:

Academic Management

We have a responsibility to:

1. Ensure that each programme has an up-to-date programme specification that's revised on a regular basis and published appropriately.
2. Specify and publish detailed regulations that clearly describe our expectations around academic conduct.
3. Take steps to ensure you are informed about academic regulations and you understand the penalties for infringing them.
4. Clarify our procedures for handling complaints and the academic appeal process.
5. Ensure that complaints and appeals procedures are conducted in a fair, reasonable and timely manner and that appropriate action is taken following a complaint or appeal.
6. Ensure that appropriate guidance and support is available to students who make a complaint or appeal and also for any staff that may be involved.
7. Monitor the operation and effectiveness of the complaints and appeals procedures, reflect on the outcomes and consider broad implications.

Academic Standards

Our Standards are put in place to:

1. Enhance the quality of the learning experience by ensuring that each course/module is subject to rigorous validation, monitoring and review.
2. Ensure that each course/module is delivered at the appropriate level.
3. Ensure that each course/module has a programme specification and unit/module information with clearly stated learning outcomes and assessment.
4. Ensure that each course/module operates in accordance with stated academic regulations, term periods and assessment requirements.

5. Take ultimate responsibility for safeguarding the standards of awards.
6. Make appropriate use of input and judgements from those external to ABA within our Quality Assurance and Enhancement processes.
7. Take account of relevant external quality assurance and enhancement expectations, benchmarks, reference points and requirements, particularly those articulated in the UK Quality Codes.
8. Ensure that ABA operates appropriate and effective processes for module and programme review.
9. Produce an annual review report, drawing upon programme review and other sources of quantitative and qualitative data.
10. Take steps to evaluate and report upon the overall quality of the student learning across ABA and to present findings as part of the annual reporting exercise.
11. Reflect on the activities we undertake to improve both the quality of the student learning experience and the processes for Quality Assurance and Enhancement through a process combining systematic reflection and active planning.

The following Academic Regulation procedures describe the above responsibilities in more details:

1. Academic Appeals Procedure
2. Complaint and Grievance Procedure
3. Approval of New Programmes Procedure
4. Academic Misconduct Procedure
5. Registration and Certification Procedure
6. Programme and Annual Monitoring Procedure

Additional procedures may be issued if an identified need for further guidance or clarity emerges.

Academic Appeals Procedure

1. Definition

For the purposes of this policy an academic appeal, as defined by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), as “a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment and awards.”

Broadly speaking, this means that any student has the right to appeal against any assessment decision at any stage of the assessment process.

2. Overview of the Academic Appeals Procedure

There are four stages in this process:

Stage 1

Appeals can be made against the decision of a tutor within 10 working days of the date of the assessment decision by requesting further clarification from the tutor. The appellant may request clarification to be made either verbally or in writing.

Every effort will be made to resolve the situation at this stage.

Stage 2

The Internal Verifier must be informed in writing of an intention to appeal.

The Internal Verifier will make arrangements for the work to be re-assessed and the appellant will receive written feedback of the assessment decision within 20 working days from the date of receipt of the intention to appeal.

Every effort will be made to resolve the situation at this stage.

If the decision is still in dispute after Stage 2...

Stage 3

The appellant should complete the Complaint / Appeals form which can be obtained from the Administration Department. A copy should be retained by the appellant and the original should be submitted to the Principal.

The Principal will set up a meeting between the tutor (at Stage 1) the Internal Verifier (at Stage 2) and an Independent Hearing Officer (external board member with academic background) within 10 working days from the date of receipt of the completed Complaint / Appeals form.

The appellant will be informed of the outcome of this meeting by letter within 20 working days of receipt of the completed Complaints / Appeals form.

Every effort will be made to resolve the situation at this stage, and the Stage 3 assessment decision will be final.

If the appellant is still not satisfied...

Stage 4

If an appeal is not resolved to their satisfaction by ABA's processes, the appellant has the option of contacting the awarding body, which will have its own appeals procedure.

3. Who Can Use the Academic Appeals Procedure?

The appeals procedure is available to all students at ABA with the exception of students who have had their registration suspended by ABA, other than at their own request under the Voluntary Interruption of Studies procedure.

4. The Right to Appeal

Students have the right to appeal against the following final decisions around assessment, progression and awards:

1. The conditions imposed on taking the reassessment for further progression to the next stage of a taught course.
2. A decision to terminate a student's current programme of study.
3. A classification decision in respect of grades awarded.
4. A decision not to award the qualification for which a student is registered. This relates to decisions made at the end of a student's taught course.
5. A decision of ABA in respect of fitness to practice professionally in industry or teaching profession where information was not declared prior to starting the course.
6. The outcome of an Extenuating Circumstances claim.

5. Principles of this Policy

- The decisions made will be reasonable and, where required, provide appropriate redress.
- Appeals submitted outside the timescales prescribed in the procedure will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances and where there is good reason, supported by evidence, for the late submission.
- Appeals will be treated seriously and students will not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination as a result of making an appeal in good faith.
- The procedures are fair and transparent.
- The process is evidence-based.
- Students are encouraged to seek advice from the student welfare officer or the student's representative seeking advice on how to present their case effectively.
- Appeals form part of ABA process of quality review and improvement and are considered as providing valuable feedback rather than criticism. We will widely publicise information about procedures to students and staff.
- Students will be notified early in the process if the remedy sought within the appeal is beyond what ABA can reasonably provide or what is in its power to provide.
- It is important for students to note that the Office of the Independent Adjudicator cannot consider matters which are or have been the subject of court proceedings. Similarly, ABA reserves the right to decline, suspend or to discontinue an appeal made under the Academic Appeal Procedure, in the event that legal proceedings are commenced and the claim concerns the same subject matter as the appeal.

Complaint and Grievance Procedure

ABA strives for excellence in everything we do. However, we accept that, on occasions, individuals will feel the service they have received has not met their needs. On such occasions, we must provide a means for you to raise those concerns in a way that will be dealt with swiftly and equitably. This procedure outlines the steps we have taken to enable this process to take place.

The intentions behind the Complaint and Grievance Procedure are to:

1. Improve the service ABA provides to its students, staff, suppliers and potentially the wider community.
2. Clarify for staff and students the procedures for handling complaints.
3. Ensure that the procedures are sensitive to issues of confidentiality.
4. Encourage individuals to seek a means of resolving problems without further or more formal procedures.
5. Provide, where appropriate, a means of recording both the nature of complaints and the effectiveness of their resolutions.
6. Encourage a regular process for monitoring and reviewing records within the quality assurance framework.

What is the Difference Between a Complaint and a Grievance?

We take a complaint to be a communication of dissatisfaction around anything which the complainant needs to share with the intention of find a resolution. A complaint can be classed as minor or major. We would anticipate that a minor complaint could be raised orally in the first instance; however, it could equally be written if this is a more necessary form of communication for the complainant.

We consider a grievance to be another form of dissatisfaction which differs from a complaint in one of two ways. Firstly, it could be the escalation of a complaint that hasn't been resolved satisfactorily. Secondly, it could be of a

more serious nature, which we would classify as major. Typically, we would expect a grievance to be communicated in writing and in a more formal manner.

Who May Complain?

Complaints and grievances can be made by anyone who comes into direct contact with the services ABA provides or feels that they have been adversely affected by those services.

What Can Be Complained About?

Complaints and grievances can cover:

- Unfair coursework marking and grading
- Other students' behaviour or actions
- Course tutors or other members of teaching staff
- Non-academic staff, including management
- Alleged unfair treatment at place of work
- Academy policies and practices
- Facilities

For complaints against unfair coursework marking and grading it is appropriate to refer to the Academic Appeals Procedure.

Issues Excluded from the Complaint and Grievance Procedure

There are three issues excluded from the Complaint and Grievance Procedure:

1. Services outside of ABA's control, e.g., funding criteria.
2. Issues involving criminal offences.
3. Matters dealt with under other procedures such as the Disciplinary Procedures.

If the complaint is found to be malicious, action may be taken against the complainant.

Possible Outcomes of Complaints and Grievances

The possible outcomes are:

- An apology and/or appropriate redress.
- A correction of any error.
- An improvement in services.

The Processes of a Complaint or Grievance

The process of complaints and grievances are the same and involve a three-stage process:

Stage 1: Informal

Anyone who has an issue with any persons or procedures relating to ABA should seek to discuss their concerns with the appropriate person, trying to resolve the issue or concern informally. At this stage the complaint could be resolved by discussion, or clarification, or other possible means applicable to the complainant. At this stage, the complaint needs to be resolved very quickly (within a maximum of 5 working days)

A grievance is not generally considered to fall into this category.

The ABA expects that all complaints are made in writing (for record purposes) via the Complaints form.

Stage 2: Formal

If the complaint cannot be resolved at Stage 1, then a formal escalation is required. This should be in writing, along with any supporting evidence, using the Complaint and Grievance form. A grievance would constitute this kind of action.

A likely outcome at this stage would be a meeting to be arranged involving the individuals concerned. This meeting would be chaired by an independent member of ABA staff of senior standing.

ABA will then endeavour to provide a response within 5 working days of either the form being received or the scheduled meeting, if one is required. However, this might be extended to a maximum of 10 days if the issues are sufficiently complex.

If the complaint or grievance is made by a student, then it is likely that the Student Welfare Officer will be notified within 5 days and a formal meeting will be arranged that will be chaired by them. Following the meeting, ABA will write to the complainant with the outcome and the proposed action to be taken.

Stage 3: Final Stage

If the complainant remains unsatisfied about the response to their complaint/grievance at Stage 2, then they may appeal the decision to a final adjudicating committee, which will include an independent person of senior standing. All parties are expected to abide by the independent adjudication process.

The complainant may be accompanied by someone at this stage and evidence from Stage 2 will be reconsidered.

The complainant will be notified of the outcome in writing within 15 working days. The decision at this stage will be final. At the end of the complaint process, all records of complaints will be securely retained to ensure confidentiality and a clear audit trail.

Monitoring and Review

ABA will maintain confidential records of all complaints & grievances that are dealt with. Data on numbers of complaints and issues involved will be held, but not the names of the individuals or specific courses (where applicable) involved.

Training and Support

ABA will ensure that all persons involved in the implementation of this procedure will have access to appropriate training and support.

Since it is recognised that staff who are the subject of a complaint can find it a very stressful experience, support will be provided as and when appropriate.

If members of staff are affiliated to a recognised Trade Union, they may find it helpful to discuss the matter with their representative. They are entitled to union representation during the investigation of any complaint.

Approval of New Programmes Procedure

ABA's Strategic Plan sets out the mission and general direction of the institution, including the development of the academic portfolio. This should then act as a guide for staff to consider the approval of new programmes leading to an award.

ABA's programme approval process is designed to ensure that full consideration is given to all factors which determine whether a proposed new programme should be offered. Proposed new programmes are considered for approval in the light of both academic and planning criteria, including a consideration of the resource implications of any proposal. The decision as to whether a proposal be approved for further development is the responsibility of the Board of Governance.

All proposals must therefore fit with ABA's Strategic Plan and as a result made within the context of our existing provision and overarching mission. For instance, a new programme may enhance our existing portfolio, be proposed to replace an existing offering, or lead to the amendment of an existing programme. The resource implications of discontinuing any aspects of other programmes, then needs to be taken into account. It is particularly important that new programmes follow from identified market demand and can be offered with confidence in their sustainability.

Aims

The aims of the new programmes approval process are to ensure that:

1. The programme is appropriate in terms of its level and content, and in the light of current practice and development in the discipline.
2. It is compatible with other programmes and the Academy's mission and values.
3. There is a continuous demand for the programme.
4. The necessary learning resources can be made available.
5. The provision meets the needs of the sector for which it is designed.

Initial proposals

When ABA decides it wishes to run a new programme of study, this should initially be discussed with the Principal. A New Programme Approval form should then be completed and submitted to the Senior Management Team for consideration. Once the SMT are satisfied that the proposal is feasible, in terms of both its fit with the Strategic Plan and its financial viability, approval will be given for the proposal to be further developed.

Initial Approval

Once the SMT are satisfied with the academic case for a proposal and considers that the resources required for its delivery are sufficient to ensure the quality of the provision, it will approve the programme for delivery. The next step will be to seek external approval from the relevant awarding body and to ensure that the necessary resources are in place for the delivery of the course once this is done.

Promotion of the New Programme

Once the proposal for a new programme has been approved by the relevant awarding body, the new programme may be promoted.

A new entry for the website and prospectus will be designed in consultation with all the respective partners. This process should begin well before launch date to ensure that publicity material is as effective as possible. The usual ABA approval process for published information should be followed.

Overall Process

The steps required for this process to be completed is as follows:

- New Programme Approval form from management
- Approval application sent to the awarding body
- Programme specification
- Module specifications
- Background document
- Student handbook
- Preliminary event minutes
- Resource meetings minutes

Programme Review

This process should ensure that all programmes have the appropriate experience; expertise and resource available to them to ensure that academic standards are in line with expectations of the UK Quality Code.

Programme review will generally take place on an annual basis and will be part of ABA's overarching review process.

Academic Misconduct Procedure

We aim to maintain the highest quality standards of course delivery and academic integrity. One of our responsibilities is to clearly communicate to our students what we expect from them to maintain those standards. When students fail to act with academic integrity, this is known as academic misconduct. The purpose of this procedure is to establish clear guidance for our tutors, students and other staff members on what constitutes academic misconduct, how it can be avoided and what will happen if not.

Key Features of this Procedure

- This scope of this procedure is allegations of academic misconduct for students enrolled on courses of study at ABA.
- Academic misconduct includes all types of unfair academic practice, including plagiarism, collusion and other forms of malpractice by students during the assessment process. This includes the submission of assignments which have been purchased or downloaded from 'exam writing' websites.
- This procedure will be subject to an annual review.

Academic Misconduct Definitions

- **Plagiarism:** where a student takes significant pieces of text in whatever form and passes it off as their own. This can be avoided by referencing the source of the text as a citation and a list of references.
- **Collusion:** where two or more students submit pieces of work containing significant pieces of highly similar or identical passages of work.

The Procedure

All assignment-based assessments and similar student work will be carefully reviewed by teaching staff for evidence of plagiarism.

Under no circumstances should a tutor make a comment relating to allegations of academic misconduct on the feedback sheet attached to the assignment. Where academic misconduct is believed to have occurred, the tutor must complete a separate report and send this to the Principal, clearly identifying the nature of any allegation.

When an allegation of academic misconduct is received by the Principal, a formal letter will be sent to the student containing the following:

- Details of the alleged offence.
- A copy of the procedure on academic misconduct.
- An invitation to attend a meeting of an investigatory panel, with the right to be accompanied by a witness or friend.
- An invitation to provide a written response to the allegation, should the student not wish to attend the panel meeting.

If the investigatory panel finds the student not to be guilty of the allegation(s) of academic misconduct, then the original verified/moderated grade for the assignment will stand. The allegation of misconduct will be removed from the student's record

Penalties for confirmed cases of academic misconduct will be applied as follows:

1. Official warning letter

This will apply where the panel finds that the student was guilty of poor academic practice (for example, poor or inadequate referencing) but had not deliberately set out to deceive the assessor. The mark awarded will stand. If the original grade was a fail, the student will be entitled to re-assessment.

2. Fail and first official warning

This will apply to students who have committed a first offence but where the offence is considered to be minor or an allegation of plagiarism was not fully supported by evidence. Students will be permitted to re-submit the assignment but, where appropriate/possible, the mark will be capped at Pass.

3. Fail and final official warning

This will apply to first offences and second or subsequent offences where serious plagiarism is confirmed. In such cases, the panel will determine whether or not the student should be given the opportunity for re-assessment. Where re-assessment is permitted, the mark will be capped at Pass.

4. Exclusion from the unit/module or programme

This will apply:

- To a second or third proven case of plagiarism in the same module/unit.
- Where a student has submitted an assignment which he/she has not prepared.

- Where a student is found guilty of academic misconduct during a time-constrained examination.

The investigatory panel will meet as required to review cases of alleged academic misconduct. Recommendations made by the panel will be ratified by the next meeting of the Academic Board.

Students will have the right to appeal to an external Academic Adjudicator against the findings of the panel. The external Academic Adjudicator will be appointed by, but wholly independent of the Academy. The decision made by the Academic Adjudicator will be binding on the student and the Academy. There will be no further right of appeal unless permitted by the appropriate Awarding Body.

Key Principles

We are committed to ensuring that accurate and legitimate procedures take place in its day-to-day academic routine. We shall now outline why maintaining good academic conduct is so important.

1. A qualification is awarded when a person has achieved a certain body of knowledge and acquired certain high-level skills. If the student had not actually gained that knowledge or could not use those skills, because in fact s/he had misled the assessors about the extent of her/his accomplishment, then the qualification could not be treated by employers or others as a reliable indicator. As a consequence, the award would be devalued for all those who had earned it honestly.
2. Cheating in examinations or in other assignments assessed for the award of a certificate, or diploma is a kind of fraud. A student who copies other people's work is passing something off as their own when it belongs in reality to someone else.

For these reasons, we have a duty to all our students and our awarding organisations to ensure that all certificates and diplomas awarded are earned by students by their own efforts, not by cheating. Consequently, penalties will be rigorously enforced to any student who commits an act of academic misconduct.

ABA will ensure that

- Staff members are briefed on induction regarding the definition of malpractice and maladministration.
- All staff members are notified regarding the consequences that they may have to bear as a result of malpractice / maladministration.
- All academic and non-academic procedures are followed by all staff members at all times.
- Suitably qualified personnel have been dedicated for the job role.
- All staff members abide by the General Data Protection Regulations.
- Examination security is maintained at all times.
- Organisational channels are followed for communication.
- Only legitimate certificate / award claims are made for deserving learners; claims must be approved by the Principal.

Implementation and Monitoring Responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this procedure.

Registration and Certification Procedure

ABA is committed to ensure that all students who successfully complete their courses are properly rewarded with certificates that recognise their individual level of attainment. The purpose of this procedure is to reflect this guiding principle whereby duly appointed officers shall carry out the aims and procedures within stipulated timescales.

Aims

- To register individual learners to the correct programme within agreed timescales.
- To claim valid certificates within agreed timescales.
- To construct a secure, accurate and accessible audit trail to ensure that individual learner registration and certification claims can be tracked to the certificate which is issued for each learner.

In order to do this, ABA will:

- Register each learner in accordance with awarding body requirements.
- Provide a mechanism for programme teams to check the accuracy of registrations.
- Make each learner aware of their registration status.
- Inform the awarding body of withdrawals, transfers or changes to learner details.
- Ensure that certificate claims are timely and based solely on internally and externally verified assessment records.
- Audit certificate claims made to the awarding body.
- Audit the certificates received from the awarding body to ensure accuracy and completeness.
- Maintain all records safely and securely for three years post-certification.

Security of Examination / Assessment Material

The security of examination/assessment material is of the utmost importance and ABA has procedures in place to communicate with awarding bodies and external examiners/verifiers, as well as to store examination papers and scripts during the assessment process.

Where possible, final examination papers issued by awarding bodies should be kept in locked cabinets or a safe, preferably in an alarmed office, when not being worked on.

The keys for the cabinets should not be kept in the desk adjacent to the cabinets.

Examination papers and materials should be delivered personally to the examinations invigilating officers on the day of the examination.

Answer scripts should be collected from students soon after completion of the examination and where possible sent to the appropriate office for marking purposes.

Communication with Outside Bodies

It is the policy of ABA to allow responsible individuals, such as Programme Leaders and Lecturers, to communicate directly with relevant authorities, provided that the matters under consideration are under their jurisdiction. Any such communication should be sent to these bodies using standard systems such as the internet for emails and in the

case of claiming for certificates, correct awarding body system or portal should be used. All outside communication should be copied to the relevant Programme Leader as well as the Principal.

ABA recognises however that there may be difficulties arising from too much reliance on email, and as such, will allow other forms of communication on a limited or on a 'needs arising' basis.

Safeguarding Fraudulent Claims for Certificates

Purpose

The purpose of the certification, awards and graduation policy is to ensure that the integrity of the qualification process is not compromised.

Policy Statements

- Students who have successfully satisfied the outcomes of the programmes at exit level will be awarded with a relevant qualification for their level of study, which may range from Level 2 to 7.
- Certificates are awarded on satisfaction of the completion of the course by the student.

Safeguarding Claims for Certificates

Since ABA is a small institution governed by awarding bodies, any fraudulent claims for certificates will be identified as follows:

- Certificates are issued against a certificate number for each registered student by the awarding body.
- The Principal has the authority to request any certificate based on the results of the external examination and in case of own Academy-approved courses.
- The identity of the student, including their unique identification number also appears on the certificate/diploma.
- Where a student has used RPL to complete the course, then the RPL procedure should be followed in order to capture all the relevant information.
- When claiming certificates, cross-referencing of original data against the student database ensures authenticity. Any errors noted should be corrected prior to claiming the certificate.
- In order to apply for a re-issue of a certificate, the student has to apply in person, and bring their ID document.
- Each certificate issued is photocopied and stored in the student's file.
- All certificates are embossed and endorsed with a commissioner of oath signature to ensure authenticity. The academic Head and the Head of Institution are required to sign all the certificates/diplomas.

Safeguarding the Duplication of Certificates

Any fraudulent claims for certificates and duplicate certificates will be identified as follows:

- Certificates are issued against a certificate number, by the awarding body or the Principal.
- The identity number of the student also appears on the certificate.
- Cross-referencing against the student database ensures authenticity.
- In order to apply for a re-issue of a certificate, the student has to apply in person, and bring along their ID document.

Preventing the Issue of Fraudulent Certificates

The Principal is the Commissioners of Oaths and is required to authenticate both the certificate/diploma and the copies issued to students.

Authentication provides a check against the signature of the Academic Head which appears on the certificate/ diploma.

Awarding body certificates do not need to be authenticated if claimed but however, a copy of the certificate shall be kept in the student record for any future certification queries.

Storage of Certificates

As the certificates are generated on the computer of the administrator, no blank certificates or diplomas are stored in hard copy format. The seal (embossed Academy logo) is kept in the institution safe which is accessible by the head of institution only.

Storage of learner records

Student records are reliable and secure. They are recorded electronically and in hard copy and kept indefinitely. All records are recorded in a secure student record database according to the rules and procedures outlined in the assessment policy. To gain access to student records electronically, a password is required. Hardcopies of all records are stored securely in a lockable filing cabinet for which authorised admission is required (by the Principal).

The Academy is well aware that a delay in registration may affect the assessment and verification/external examining opportunities that they require and, therefore, certification may be delayed or withheld completely by awarding body.

The Registration and Certification Procedure will be reviewed annually.

Annual Monitoring Procedure

We are engaged in a continuous process of embedding Quality Assurance systems in all of our activities. The annual monitoring system is undertaken by all members of the academic team who each contribute to its structure by reviewing the modules and courses they manage. The annual quality monitoring and enhancement of the Academy is essential to maintaining academic standards.

The Annual Monitoring Process is planned to align with UK Quality Code and is an integral component of the Academy Quality Framework.

Aims

The aim of Annual Monitoring is to encourage reflection on the operation and management of each course over historic duration of its existence. We are also governed by the awarding body who will also conduct external reviews of the programmes they award to. The term 'Unit of Learning' has been introduced to reflect the single subject (module) to help illustrate that each module will be individually monitored.

Annual Monitoring also seeks to identify good practice and to encourage reflection on local experience of strategic matters. It will be carried out by Programme Leaders who will submit written reports to the Principal, who has ultimate responsibility for academic standards, overseen by the Board of Governance.

The Annual Monitoring Process

Annual Monitoring is undertaken following the completion of teaching and assessment. Care will be taken to compare progress over the last academic year with receding ones, thereby ensuring that continuous improvement and enhancement takes place.

Provision has also been made to enable end of term reporting where a course is offered over a single term. The scheduled date of the AMR will be the end of September each year.

The submission of AMRs is followed by a full reporting process throughout ABA in order to ensure that appropriate action is properly considered and taken at each stage of the process which should yield demonstrable quality and enhancement of good practice. The reporting procedure is designed to ensure that issues arising from monitoring are properly considered and responses provided at each stage, and to demonstrate that quality and standards are assured and that enhancement and good practice are promoted.

Scope

Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) draw on a range of sources of evidence that may include learner progress and completion data; the minutes of meetings, external verifier reports; and the outcomes of learner feedback questionnaires and meetings.

This process is intended to align with the Expectation of the UK Quality Code.

The key focal points upon which to focus are:

- Maintenance of ABA academic standards.
- The extent to which students achieve the intended learning outcomes.
- The student experience and quality of educational support to students.
- The review of the impact of deliberative actions undertaken to enhance and improve delivery.
- Identification of good practice in learning, teaching and assessments enhancing further student learning experience.

Features of Good Practice

These should conform to ABA's definition of good practice as outlined in the module evaluation reports. Previous examples of features of good practice include:

- The provision of optional skills sessions designed to help students develop their presentation skills.
- Inclusion of portfolio development during modules to improve attendance, engagement and student performance.
- Use of peer assessment to increase cohort understanding of the application of learning outcomes in summative assessment.

Module Performance Statistics

The module performance statistics in the supplied data provide a variety of information on individual modules and chiefly:

- Module data presented by course (i.e. where a module is being taken by students from more than one course, the module data is presented as a separate entry for each course and includes only the students registered for that course).
- Module data presented at the end of each module (i.e. modules delivered in more than one semester will have a separate entry for each semester of delivery).
- First and second attempt pass rates for each module.
- Average mark for the module where actual marks are awarded.
- The module evaluation score where it may be possible to rate based on student scores.

Key Themes in the Report are Expected to Include:

- Noticeably strong or weak performance from particular cohorts of students and what was done to mitigate the situation.
- Noticeable differences in performance on a particular module from students on different courses where the module is a common one in different programmes.
- Demonstrable strength or weakness in particular assessment methods e.g., written assignment responses.
- Marked variance in performance across terms.
- Noticeable differences or patterns in marking of student reports.
- Differences in performance from the previous year (and how these might relate to any actions from the previous year)
- Commentary on the range of module evaluation reports and student surveys.

Equality and Diversity

The Annual Monitoring Review process should provide an opportunity to reflect on how well the equality and diversity issues have been managed. The process will allow reflection on the needs, experiences, issues and priorities of different groups of students within the provision being reviewed. This in turn will provide an opportunity for addressing any issues or highlighting any areas of practice that should enhance the student experience.

On the basis of the range of data outlined above, the AMRs are prepared, identifying strengths and weaknesses, updating the action plan from the previous year, and developing an action plan for the forthcoming academic year. The main inputs of the reports may include teaching and learning observations, IQA reports, staff CPD records and the self-evaluation report.

The cycle for each year is planned to be as follows:

Timeline of Monitoring and Review Activity

Month	Autumn term start date	Course activity schemes, Annual Review meeting	Documents production time line	Enhancement and development meeting (Standardisation, IQA, lecturer/Assessor/IV meetings)
January	Winter Term	Preparatory meeting by BoG	1st Week Jan/ Previous Month	2nd Week Jan
		Termly Time tables, Module Handbooks, Assignment briefs, IQA of assignments Briefs	1st Week Jan	IQA activities
		Induction week	1st Week Jan	Standardisation meetings
		Handover of student pack	1st Week Jan	Assessor/IV meetings
				BOG Enhancement and Development Meeting Submit course action plan to Academy Staff and Academic Board, BoG
February		Student survey	2nd Week	Student Focus groups
		Tutor Evaluations	2nd Week	Student surveys
		Peer observations	2nd Week	
		Data reviewing observations made available by Principal	3rd Week	
March		Learner Assignment submission	2nd week	IQA activities
		Assignment moderation (Assessor feedback)	2nd Week to	Standardisation meetings
		Module Evaluations		Assessor/IV meetings
		IV Activity	3rd Week	
		Assessor/IV meetings	3rd Week	
		Production of statistics from surveys	4th Week	

Month	Autumn term start date	Course activity schemes, Annual Review meeting	Documents production time line	Enhancement and development meeting (Standardisation, IQA, lecturer/Assessor/IV meetings)
April	Spring Term	Spring term starts with termly activities as above	1st Week	IQA activities
				Standardisation meetings
				Assessor/IV meetings
May		Termly activities as above		
June	Summer Term	End of spring term	3rd Week	IQA activities
		Summer term starts with termly activities	4th Week	Standardisation meetings
				Assessor/IV meetings
July		Termly Monitoring activities		
August		Annual Monitoring Review reports produced	2nd Week	IQA activities
		Various meetings to review the reports	2nd Week	Standardisation meetings
		Data reviewing observations made available by Principal	2nd Week	Assessor/IV meetings
		Production of Annual Monitoring report	3rd week	
September	Autumn Term	Summer term ends	1st Week	2nd Week Sept
		Autumn term starts	2nd Week	IQA activities
		With termly activities		Standardisation meetings
		Production of statistics from surveys		Assessor/IV meetings
		Any aggregation of course level reports is undertaken		BoG
		Teaching team prepare Module Quality Report	3rd Week	

Month	Autumn term start date	Course activity schemes, Annual Review meeting	Documents production time line	Enhancement and development meeting (Standardisation, IQA, lecturer/Assessor/IV meetings)
September	Autumn Term	Academy BoG considers Aggregated Quality Reports with members of Academy Quality and Staff and Academic Board	3rd Week	
		Approval of Annual Monitoring report	4th Week	
October		Termly activities as above	2nd Week	Student Focus groups Student surveys
November		Termly activities as above	3rd Week	
December		End of Autumn term	2nd week	IQA activities
		Preparation for January session	3rd & 4th week	Standardisation meetings Assessor/IV meetings