Quality Assurance Policy

Policy no:	3.1
Version no	24.03
Author:	Head of Quality & Compliance
Last review date:	March 2024
Next review due:	March 2025
Responsible Committee:	AcB
Approved by & date:	December 2020 Academic Board
Linked policies:	Academic Management Framework
	Learning Teaching and Assessment Policy
	Lesson Observation Policy
	Assessment and Feedback Policy
	Personal Academic Tutor Council Terms of Reference
	Equality & Diversity Policy
External references	Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)
	HEIs Partners
	British Council (BC)
	Pearson (Edexcel)
	International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO)
	Accreditation Service of International Colleges (ASIC)
	Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration
Audience:	Internal and External Stakeholders

Contents

1 Introduction

This policy sets out the goals, principles and rules the College employs to sustain and enhance the quality of education and related services experienced by students at the College. The focus is on Internal Quality Assurance (IQA), but incudes compliance with external quality assurance) carried out by external organisations including the College's partners. The policy is designed to ensure that all standards expected by students, staff and external organisations are met, and that they are exceeded wherever possible. To this end the College sets out to appraise and enhance the quality of the student experience to its optimum as part of an ongoing process of self-assessment, development and improvement.

2 Purpose

This policy aims to inform staff, students and all other stakeholders about the College's approach to IQA and ensure that all aspects of college provision are monitored, appraised and enhanced continuously throughout the academic year.

3 Scope

The College is committed to providing quality assurance in all sites, all programmes and every part of college life that impacts on students, including the following areas:

- Student Recruitment

- Admissions

- Learning and Teaching

- Assessments

- Student Support & Welfare

- Student Engagement

- Operations

- Staff Recruitment

- Physical environment

- Management & Governance

- Graduation and Employment Outcomes

Within the scope of our quality assurance policy, Oxford Business College remains steadfast in adhering to our internal quality assurance (IQA) measures outlined therein. This includes utilising various tools such as Programme level Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs), Student Module feedback and Student Satisfaction Surveys to or to enhance our educational offerings and services continually. However, it is essential to acknowledge that some of these tools may be led by our partner Higher Education Providers, by their regulatory requirements. While we maintain our commitment to monitoring, appraising, and improving all

aspects of college provision, we recognise and respect the regulatory obligations of our partner institutions in leading the QA processes for programmes which lead to an award with one of our higher education partners. This collaborative approach ensures alignment with external quality assurance standards while upholding our commitment to excellence in education.

All staff are expected to participate in quality assurance at the College through self-reflection, completing surveys, meeting participation and submitting reports as required. Staff are appraised and if they are line manager other staff will also carry out staff appraisals. Staff should monitor the quality of the work they are responsible for and report any areas for improvement immediately to their line manager.

4 Aims and objectives

4.1 Aims

The College recognises that IQA is more effective with continuous leadership and stakeholder commitment. This is achieved through the development of the Corporate Academic Governance Framework (CAGF), which is designed to ensure the College meets key priorities set down in its Strategic Plan. The CAGF underpins the Academic Management Framework, which sets out the committees, boards and policies that ensure adequate quality assurance and enhancement processes are embedded in all the College's activities. The self-assessment approach is based upon objective evaluation of outcomes from reports, feedback, observations and performance data including the experiences of students, lecturers, head of programmes and other stakeholders.

4.2 Objectives

- Arrangements for quality assurance are known and fully understood by staff and work effectively to ensure positive outcomes for students.

- An overall Academic Management Framework and approach are adopted by the college, which can provide internal oversight of academic quality and incorporate quality assurance requirements of external partners or awarding organisations. To align with sector standards and best practises .

- A self-reflective approach is promoted in the college to encourage students and staff to make constructive criticism where required without fear of repercussions.

- A bottom-up approach which places student and frontline staff experience and continuous improvement at the forefront of all considerations.

- Safeguard the student experience, by promoting a culture of evaluation and enhancement to exceed students' expectations.

- Action and development planning is conducted on a quarterly basis through the various committees that report to the Academic Board.

- A self-assessment process referred to as the annual monitoring review (AMR) cycle meets the needs of all stakeholders and is aligned with OfS Quality Conditions.

- Observations of learning and teaching including peer observations are conducted in order to ensure education in all sites and all programmes are aligned with the College's Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTA) and that faculty share good practice and continuously improve teaching performance.

- Module evaluations that take student views on board and develop action plans are carried out in order to maintain standards and to continuously improve learning and teaching

- End of year student surveys also provide the College with the views of students across a wide range of services provided by the College.

- A system is in place to ensure that any concerns or complaints about performance that may impact on student satisfaction are identified early and that an effective plan is in place to improve on areas of concern quickly and efficiently.

- Staff appraisals are conducted annually, and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is provided internally by staff and externally through the College's links with Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

- Staff are provided with opportunities to monitor and evaluate quality assurance and provide feedback on its effectiveness through self-evaluation meetings and staff surveys.

5 Governance and Quality Oversight

Oxford Business College's quality assurance approach is structured to ensure comprehensive oversight and continuous improvement of academic standards and student experiences through its key committees, review processes and assurance tools. The flow is explained below and visualised in figure 1.

5.1 Academic Board

The Academic Board at Oxford Business College plays a pivotal role in the institution's quality assurance policy. As the principal academic authority, the Board is entrusted with monitoring, evaluating, reviewing, enhancing, and maintaining the quality of academic standards and learning opportunities. This includes overseeing all aspects of learning, teaching, and assessment to ensure they meet high standards. The Board ensures an excellent student learning experience by providing high-quality support and thoroughly evaluating academic resources. It systematically monitors and evaluates data related to admissions, retention, progression, completion, and employability to ensure continuous improvement. The Academic Board is also responsible for approving academic policies and procedures, ensuring they comply with external requirements such as those set by the Office for Students (OfS) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

A key responsibility of the Board is engagement with external quality requirements, which involves conducting institutional reviews and responding to initiatives from external agencies. The Board promotes a self-critical, cohesive academic community dedicated to quality assurance, supported by robust quality and enhancement systems. It encourages staff to engage in high-quality research and actively promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring an inclusive teaching and learning environment. Additionally, the Board manages the integrity and effectiveness of academic activities, setting and maintaining academic standards, and assuring and enhancing academic quality. The Board works closely with the Student Council to ensure effective student engagement and representation, maintaining oversight of the academic management framework's outcomes and fostering the sharing of good practices.

The Academic Board receives annual reports and benchmarks related to student outcomes, access, attainment, and progression. It addresses student complaints effectively, securing the welfare and wellbeing of students. By providing strategic directions and endorsing the internal Annual Monitoring Review Report and Action Plan before submission to the Board of Governors, the Academic Board ensures that academic activities align with the College's strategic goals.

5.2 Quality and Enhancement Committee (QEC)

The Quality and Enhancement Committee (QEC) at Oxford Business College is the principal body responsible for driving initiatives to enhance the quality of educational provision and improve the student experience. Acting as the deliberative arm of the Academic Board, the QEC convenes quarterly to oversee various functions. These functions include monitoring and reviewing internal and external reports related to programme performance, student feedback, learning, teaching, and assessment. The QEC also recommends and monitors staff Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and utilises assurance tools like Programme Annual Monitoring Reports, Internal Student Survey data, and Lesson Observation data to evaluate and enhance college provision at both the programme and institutional levels. Additionally, the committee oversees induction processes and module evaluation surveys to gather feedback and make improvements accordingly.

Central to the QEC's role is the Institutional Annual Monitoring Review (AMR), which identifies areas of good practice and ensures they are shared across all campuses and programmes for consistent quality improvement. The committee diligently follows up on action plans outlined in the AMR to ensure successful completion and effective communication of feedback to all stakeholders. It evaluates the impact of implemented improvements documented in the AMR, sharing successes and lessons learned with stakeholders. Furthermore, the QEC makes recommendations for further improvements and enhancement strategies to the Academic Board based on insights gained from the Institutional AMR.

Non-academic quality issues are reported to the Senior Management Team (SMT), which oversees the effective implementation of plans for the smooth running of all college functions. The SMT manages operational activities, including strategic planning, risk monitoring, compliance with external regulatory bodies, and ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for students. It receives and acts upon reports from various committees, including the QEC, to ensure high standards across non-academic areas.

5.3 Course Committee

The Course Committee at Oxford Business College plays a fundamental role in the institution's quality assurance framework through its involvement in reviewing key assurance tools. These tools include programme-level outcomes data, module evaluation surveys, and programme teaching and learning observations. The Committee meets once per term or semester, chaired by programme or course leaders, to monitor and review the development and delivery of each academic programme.

Responsibilities of the Course Committee include a comprehensive review of various aspects of the courses offered. They analyse programme-level outcomes data to assess the achievement of educational goals and ensure alignment with the College's academic standards. By scrutinising module evaluation surveys, the Committee gathers valuable student feedback on teaching quality and learning experiences, informing necessary adjustments and improvements. Additionally, the Committee reviews teaching and learning observations to maintain and enhance academic standards and identify professional development needs for staff.

A critical function of the Course Committee is to review the Programme Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR) as the initial stage of oversight in the quality assurance process. This preliminary review is crucial for identifying potential issues or areas for improvement before the reports are submitted to the Quality and Enhancement Committee (QEC). Through this process, the Course Committee ensures that any actions required to address identified issues are clearly defined and initiated promptly. Their detailed evaluation and recommendations significantly contribute to the continuous enhancement of academic quality and the overall student experience at the College.

6 Quality Assurance Tools

6.1 Institutional AMR

The Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) document serves as an institutional-level quality assurance tool presented annually to the Board of Governors (BoG). This comprehensive report encompasses various areas crucial for institutional evaluation and enhancement. It provides a reflective account of the College's performance, major developments, achievements, and challenges over the review period. Additionally, the AMR outlines the institutional-level Enhancement Plan for the following year, which incorporates insights gathered from the Programme-level AMR processes. Structured sections include an Executive Summary, Introduction, Strategic Review, Programme Reviews, Management & Governance, Student Support and Welfare Services, and Business Planning & Resources. The AMR plays a vital role in the institutional review process, facilitating ongoing improvement and alignment with regulatory standards.

6.2 Programme Annual Monitoring

Programme Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) are detailed evaluations of each academic programme conducted annually. These reports assess programme performance, including student outcomes, retention rates, and progression statistics. They also review the effectiveness of teaching, curriculum delivery, and resource allocation. The Programme AMRs are critical for identifying areas of strength and opportunities for improvement within specific programmes. They provide the foundational data that informs the Institutional AMR and ensure that each programme aligns with the College's academic standards and strategic goals. The impact of these reports is seen in targeted improvements in programme delivery and student support, enhancing the overall quality of education.

6.3 National Student Survey

The National Student Survey (NSS) is an independent, UK-wide survey that gathers feedback from final-year undergraduate students about their academic experience. This survey covers various aspects, including teaching quality, learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, academic support, organisation and management, learning resources, and the student voice. The results of the NSS provide valuable insights into student satisfaction and areas needing improvement. The impact of the NSS is significant as it helps institutions like Oxford Business College identify strengths and weaknesses from the student perspective, guiding strategic enhancements to improve the student experience. An annual report is presented to the quality enhancement committee.

6.4 Observation of Learning and Teaching

The Observation of Learning and Teaching is a systematic process outlined in the Observation of Learning Teaching and Assessment Policy. Designed to review and evaluate teaching practices to maintain high standards of educational delivery. Conducted by senior academics, these observations focus on several critical aspects, including lesson planning, delivery, student engagement, and assessment methods. This tool provides educators with constructive feedback, highlighting areas of excellence and identifying opportunities for development. The impact of this process is the continuous professional development of teaching staff, ensuring that teaching practices remain innovative, effective, and aligned with the highest educational standards. Additionally, the outcomes of programme-level observations are incorporated into the annual programme monitoring report, which is subsequently reviewed by the Course Committee and the Quality and Enhancement Committee (QEC).

6.5 Internal Student Survey

The Internal Student Survey collects feedback from students at various stages of their academic journey within the College. This survey covers multiple dimensions such as course content, teaching quality, support services, facilities, and overall satisfaction. The data gathered helps identify immediate issues and areas for enhancement from the students' perspective. The impact of this survey is the prompt addressing of student concerns, leading to timely improvements in the educational environment and student services, thereby enhancing the overall student experience. The Quality and Enhancement Committee (QEC) reviews an annual report that analyses student satisfaction with their college experience, ensuring that insights from the survey are effectively used to drive continuous improvement.

6.6 Module Evaluation Surveys

Module Evaluation Surveys are conducted at the end of each module to gather student feedback on specific courses. These surveys assess the effectiveness of module content, teaching methods, assessment practices, and the overall learning experience. The feedback collected is used to refine and improve module delivery, ensuring that each course component meets high academic standards and student expectations. The impact of module evaluations is the continuous improvement of course content and teaching methodologies, leading to better learning outcomes and higher student satisfaction. Reports to the Course Committee analyse modular performance, identifying best practices and areas for enhancement.

6.7 External Examiner Feedback

The External Examiner (EE) process constitutes a critical component of our Quality Assurance policy, ensuring rigorous oversight and enhancement of academic standards. External examiners, chosen by our partners for their expertise and independence, review the fairness and consistency of assessment practices, assess academic standards against benchmarks from comparable institutions, and participate in examination boards to validate decisions on student progression and awards. The feedback provided by external examiners is integral to our continuous improvement efforts. Their detailed reports and recommendations are incorporated into our annual programme monitoring process, where they are reviewed by academic management. Heads of programmes are required to respond formally to EE recommendations, outlining actions taken or planned to address identified areas for improvement. This structured approach ensures that EE insights contribute directly to refining teaching methodologies, optimising assessment strategies, and aligning our educational offerings with sector-wide best practices.

6.8 B3 Outcomes Data

B3 Outcomes Data refers to the metrics used to measure the performance of higher education providers against the regulatory requirements set by the Office for Students (OfS). This includes data on student continuation rates, completion rates, and graduate outcomes (employment or further study). Analysing B3 outcomes helps the College ensure compliance with OfS standards and identify areas needing improvement to enhance student success and institutional performance. Programme-level B3 data is incorporated into the Programme Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR), providing detailed insights into the performance of individual programmes. At the institutional level, the Quality and Enhancement Committee (QEC) reviews this data, which is then featured in the Institutional AMR. The impact of monitoring B3 outcomes data is the alignment of the College's performance with national benchmarks, ensuring that students receive a quality education that supports their future career and academic aspirations.

7 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Timeline and

Reporting Structure

The quality assurance activities at Oxford Business College align with the academic year, starting in September and concluding in August of the following year. The college's quality assurance cycle encompasses annual and quarterly reporting, including the Programme-level Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) which are then aggregated to the institutional level for the Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) and processes. These include the AMR, quarterly program and operational progress reporting, student council feedback at QEC meetings, student and end-of-module surveys, and quarterly performance data monitoring by the Academic Board (AcB).
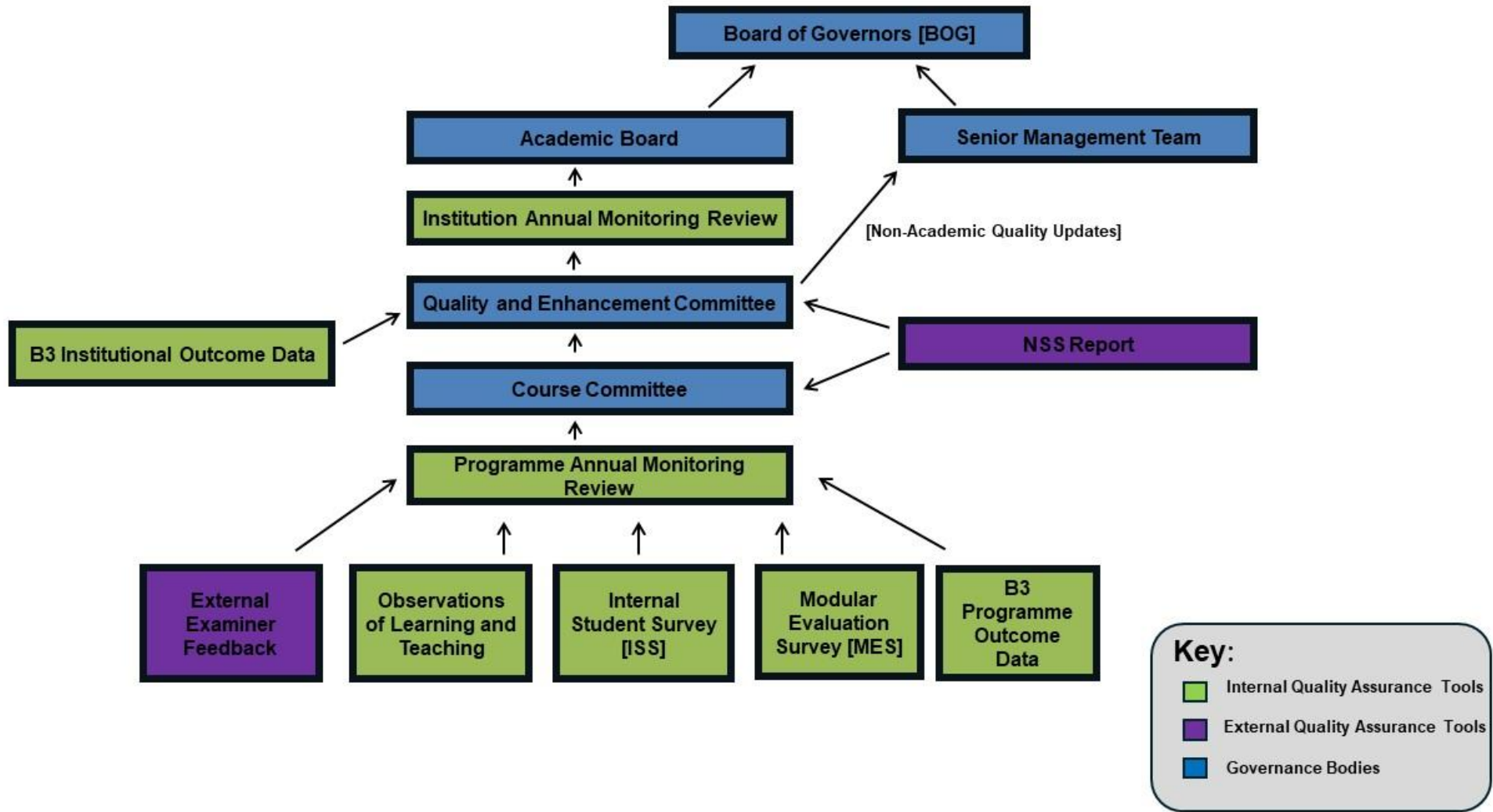
Figure 1 OBC Quality Assurance Oversight Flow Diagram