

**Consultants at the Regional Teaching Partners
Guidance, Information and Procedures**

First compiled: August 2018

Last updated: April 2023

Introduction

schedule of business; receiving and discussing a number of reports and action plans including the RTP Annual Quality Report which amongst other things reflects on consultant reports.

Each RTP also has a Partnership Management Group (PMG) which meets four times a year.

Consultancy role

Selection criteria and appointment process

Consultants will hold an academic post of an appropriate level of seniority and normally be an employee of Lancaster University. In cases where an appropriate consultant cannot be identified from Lancaster University, a consultant may be appointed from another institution. Consultants must have a relevant subject specialism in at least a cognate academic area to the programme they are appointed to. Consultants must be able to demonstrate:

- a knowledge and understanding of the UK sector for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
- an awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
- familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
- competence and experience relating to the monitoring and enhancement of the student learning experience.

Whilst the role is separate to their substantive post, consultants must be able to undertake the indicative hours and meet the remit and required duties of the role, including provision of the mid-year and end of year reports to AQSC. Consultants are appointed on the understanding that their substantive post will not suffer as a result of accepting the additional workload.

There will be one consultant per programme or per group of programme pathways as identified by AQSC. A Foundation Degree and its related top up programme is counted as one programme. A consultant will be appointed for new programmes in the developmental period leading to initial validation. Where a programme has been laid down, a consultant will be retained during the teach out phase.

RTP programmes are categorised as either standard or established and the role and time commitment of consultants differs depending on a programme's categorisation. The role for new programmes in the developmental period leading to initial validation will also have a different time commitment. Prior to the start of each academic year, AQSC will decide whether each programme at the RTPs requires a standard consultant or whether it falls into the category of an established programme for that year. siWhy

coming year. Continuing consultants should be aware that a programme may move between standard and established and that this is reflected in the expected workload and payment.

For new programmes or where a new consultant is needed AQSC will approach colleagues in a relevant academic field. Once a person has agreed to undertake the role the AQSC team will initiate the appointment process. Where a consultant is appointed for the first time, a more experienced consultant will be approached to act as a mentor to offer support and guidance during the first year of appointment.

At the start of each academic year, AQSC will provide contact details for programme teams and relevant quality staff at the College for which the consultant is appointed. AQSC also provide the college with details of all consultant appointments and contact details.

If consultants struggle to make contact with the programme team then they should let AQSC know as soon as possible so that this can be followed up.

Core remit and required duties

In relation to annual review and monitoring, consultants are expected to:

- Monitor the quality and standards of learning and teaching and the student experience at the RTPs and comparability with those of Lancaster awards delivered at Bailrigg;
- Discuss with and advise programme teams on matters related to quality and standards;
- Provide a mid-year report to AQSC in December;
- Provide an end of year report to AQSC in July.

Whilst there are two formal reporting points within each academic year, consultants are asked to raise any issues and concerns with AQSC at any point in the year. Should there be a serious or potentially serious issue which risks quality and standards then consultants are expected to raise this with AQSC immediately.

In relation to programme delivery, consultants are expected to:

- Discuss with and advise programme teams on matters related to programme delivery including staffing, resources, learning and teaching, assessment;
- Discuss aspects of programme delivery with students to seek feedback.

In relation to staffing, consultants are expected to:

- When changes to programme teams occur after validation/revalidation, approve college staff to teach on Lancaster programmes;
- Monitor programme staffing (both volume and appropriate expertise) through discussions with programme teams and students.

In relation to academic standards and assessment, consultants are expected to:

- Review a sample of student work to ensure that programme learning outcomes are being achieved and to provide comment on student achievement and the equivalence of standards and achievement with Lancaster programmes delivered at Bailrigg;
- Attend examination boards as a University representative – d

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In reviewing a sample of work and attending examination boards, consultants are looking at equivalence with Lancaster and are not acting as the external examiner. Unlike the external examiner, consultants are not required to approve marking and moderation and final assessment results though they may discuss these with the external and programme team as part of ongoing monitoring of the programmes. For the avoidance of doubt, in the areas of marking, moderation and final assessment results the view of the external examiner is final and always takes precedence over that of the

are required for the incoming consultant. If possible, it is useful for the outgoing and incoming consultants to meet to discuss the programme and latest report.

Consultants are appointed on the understanding that programmes will continue to run and that in the case of new programmes, they will recruit students in the first year of operation. Whilst this is rare, if a programme is not continuing or does not recruit and/or there are no remaining students on the programme, the AQSC team will inform the consultant as soon as possible that they are being stood down.

Payment and indicative workload

Consultant for a standard programme: £1500

Approximate number of days per year: 3

Consultant for an established programme: £1000

Approximate number of days per year: 3

Reports

Content of reports

Consultant reports are an important source of information and evidence to support the ongoing monitoring by the University of the quality and standards and student experience at the RTPs.

Consultants are expected to provide a report for each programme for which they are a consultant for. Where a consultant's remit covers more than one programme then a separate report is required for each.

The purpose of the **mid-year reports** produced by consultants are to assist the AQSC to monitor the quality of the programme. The reports are produced by consultants for each programme for which they are a consultant for. The reports are produced by consultants for each programme for which they are a consultant for.

For general queries and anything related to contracts and payments, please contact programmeconsultants@lancaster.ac.uk

Induction

When a new consultant is appointed they are provided with the following information:

- Consultant Guidance and Information
- Last consultant report
- Last external examiner report
- Last annual programme review
- Last set of validation/revalidation documents for programme and module specification information.

A meeting can be arranged with AQSC representatives to discuss the role and logistical procedures.

In addition, a mentor is allocated to each new consultant for their first year in the role.

Mentors

The role of mentor is to provide consultants in their first year of appointment with an independent, experienced point of contact for advice and guidance.

The mentor should:

- Establish contact with the mentee;
- Wherever possible, arrange to meet the mentee face-to-face, but if not possible the mentoring role can be accomplished via email or telephone;
- Provide advice and guidance on consultant processes and procedures;
- Advise on the role, context and content of written reports;
- Clarify details, provide support and build confidence.

All regulatory and procedural issues would continue to be communicated as currently by AQSC.

Mentors should normally be a current consultant of the University and should normally have been in role for at least one full academic year. The role of mentor attracts an additional fee of £100, which is paid automatically at the end of the academic year. The role of mentor is in addition to other consultant duties.

Termly bulletins

AQSC will issue termly consultant bulletins via email. These bulletins include information and updates, as well as prompts on the various activities consultants should be undertaking that term as part of the requirements of the role.

Meetings and sharing practice events

In order to create a community of practice for consultants AQSC will hold consultant meetings up to twice a year. A theme or themes will be selected for discussion with a view to sharing practice,

proposed changes with consultants and seek the consultant's approval before submitting the amendment request.

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