

A STRATEGY FOR QUALITY AT WRITTLE COLLEGE

Writtle College recognises the need for continuous improvements to the standards and quality of its educational provision. The responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement is embedded within the roles and duties of staff at every level in the institution.

The quality assurance processes operate at both an internal and external level. The mechanisms and procedures for quality assurance have developed within the College over many years but have been adapted to embrace the current statutory requirements and recommendations of validating bodies, relevant professional bodies and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). Undergraduate and postgraduate degree provision is validated by University of Essex in accordance with agreed quality assurance processes. The QAA has provided a Quality Code¹ for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. This suite of documented guidelines has provided a focus for review and development of many College operations and processes, and has been monitored and reviewed through the College's Academic Standards Committee.

External Review

External peer review is a key element of the College's quality assurance and is evident in the context of the External Examiner scheme, membership of validation and review panels, and QAA reviews and audits. This externality provides the necessary independent evidence of appropriate standards. Likewise, students are involved in formal academic committees as well as contributing to routine reviews, through the Student/Staff Liaison Committees and through institutional evaluative questionnaires.

As a mature institution, Writtle College contributes membership to relevant committees and task groups at the University of Essex eg Academic Partnerships Board, University Academic Board, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and the Curriculum and Quality Group.

Quality Assurance Agency

The national Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) has a responsibility to ensure that the quality of provision and standards of awards in higher education are being safeguarded and enhanced. The College must be explicitly responsive to the outcomes and reports from external reviews and audits, embracing change and improvement to its systems and policies.

The College will continue to review its internal quality assurance (QA) processes and ensure that the requirements for Audit are complied with as a matter of routine. The criteria and guidelines for the QAA review were updated from 2011-12 as published on the [QAA website](#).

The last Institutional Audit of Writtle College was in 2010 ([QAA Report of the Institutional Audit at Writtle College February 2010](#))².

Internal Strategy for Quality

The College's internal Strategy for Quality comprises three elements:

- * The development of policies that provide a framework for establishing and maintaining consistently high standards across the institution.
- * The production and dissemination of procedures and guidelines to ensure that policies are understood, implemented and monitored.
- * The establishment of a management system that routinely reflects upon the effectiveness of policies and their impact on the student experience.

¹ Formerly the QAA Code of Practice

² <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/Reports/Documents/RG705WrittleCollege.pdf>

The College's quality assurance policies and procedures are published in the Writtle College Quality Assurance Manual. The Academic Standards Committee, a sub-committee of Academic Board, has responsibility for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of policies.

The Centre for Academic Standards Teaching and Learning (CASTLe) provides the procedures and guidelines for implementation of quality-related policies derived through the College's academic committee structure. Guidance notes are provided for a range of processes including the validation and review of courses and modules. Review procedures have been agreed with the University of Essex and have been designed to comply with relevant sections of the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#).

The contents of the Quality Assurance Manual are subject to routine review and updating. Any queries regarding the content should be directed to Helen Fitch, HE Quality Systems Manager.

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