

Professional Accrediting Bodies

This section of the Hartpury Quality Enhancement Framework covers engagement with bodies that endorse and accredit curriculum.

Key reference points

Higher Education Quality Code, Relevant Professional Accrediting Body guidance and appropriate institutional strategic documents.

Audience

Staff members including Heads of Department, Programme Managers, Module Leaders, members of committees involved in the monitoring and review and approval of academic provision.

Professional Accrediting Bodies sections

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1. Scope and principles

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) is an umbrella term for a diverse group of bodies. Hartpury has adopted the HESA¹ definition of a PSRB as 'a very diverse group of professional and employer bodies, regulators and those with statutory authority over a profession or group of professionals'. Professional bodies often act in the interest of an individual profession to promote and support professionals by being a membership organisation. They are usually independent of government and may control entry to a specific profession. A regulatory body acts in the public interest, regulating professional activity or individual professionals. Many statutory bodies or regulators have powers mandated by

¹ https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c12061/psrb_faq

Parliament and protect the public interest by guaranteeing the standards underpinning the professional title.

The institution strives to provide professionally accredited and practice-oriented programmes, which contribute to an outstanding learning experience and generate excellent graduate employment opportunities and outcomes for all students. Accreditation through PSRBs plays an important role in helping to achieve this aim. Hartpury has adopted the HESA definition of accreditation as 'any process of approval leading to assurance that a programme meets the standards required by a particular profession'.

This guidance sets out only the formal processes for engagement with PSRBs and other accrediting bodies. Together these organisations will be referred to as Professional Accrediting Bodies (PABs) in this guidance. The guidance is in no way intended to limit or prescribe the informal communication channels between Departments and their PABs which are vital to the maintenance of good relationships.

2. Key roles and responsibilities

Key individuals

- a) The **Academic Registrar** has strategic oversight for PAB activity. They will submit a report of current PAB accreditation/engagement and dates of any subsequent review or re-approval to Academic Board on an annual basis.
- b) A nominated member of Departmental staff (appointed by the relevant Head of Department) - the **Professional Accreditation Link Co-ordinator** - will coordinate, prepare and manage PAB activity on behalf of the Department or across Departments. The link co-ordinator will liaise with the Academic Registrar, the Dean of Teaching and Learning and the relevant Head of Department (or nominee) regarding the PAB activity and ensure reports are submitted (or assist with submission of reports) as required. The PAB link co-ordinators are the designated official correspondent with all PABs in respect of the formal accreditation of awards and the formal notification of decisions and responses arising in the context of accreditation.
- c) The **Dean of Teaching and Learning** will provide guidance on how the relationship with the PAB can be used to maximise the benefit to the student experience.
- d) The **Curriculum Records Manager or Professional Accrediting Body Administrator** will provide guidance on curriculum approval matters relating to the PAB activity.

Committees

- a) The **Academic Board** is responsible for ensuring the awarding institution's quality and standards mechanisms in relation to PABs are followed and reporting on this as appropriate. Any variant regulations would have to be approved by Academic Board.
- b) The **Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee** has an overview of PAB activity and will receive notification of the outcome of each engagement. It is responsible for monitoring any action plans resulting from PAB activity and will highlight good practice or issues requiring enhancement to further committees and subsequently to the awarding institutions as appropriate.
- c) The **Collaborative Academic Partnership Management Committee** is a sub-group of the Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee, that meets more regularly. It is

responsible for monitoring intentions to engage with a professional accrediting body (PAB), and supporting the academic department during PAB engagement.

c) The **Curriculum Validation Committee** has responsibility for approving new curricula and changes to existing curricula and will therefore consider any implications related to PAB engagement.

3. Engagements with PSRBs

Each PAB has its own requirements with which the institution must comply in order to achieve and maintain its relationship. Most require some formal involvement with the awarding institution's approval, review and regulatory processes in order to satisfy themselves about the standard of an award and the content, coverage and application of the curriculum in their subject areas.

The following section sets out the most common types of engagement with PABs but is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. Individual PABs will have specific requirements in terms of information required and the format of events. Where PABs require specific documentation (e.g. evidence of competency mapping), the institution will endeavour to use these documents in place of those prescribed in this guidance if appropriate. In such cases, prior approval must be gained from Collaborative Academic Partnership Management Committee or via Chair's action as needed.

The procedure for seeking PAB accreditation, either for a new or existing programme (NB the change itself may be the intention to seek PAB accreditation) is laid out in the 'PAB Accreditation and Internal Approval Process Sheet'.

Curriculum development requiring PAB accreditation

Where approval of a new programme or amendments to an existing programme, which also requires PAB accreditation, are being undertaken, PAB requirements should be considered as part of the curriculum development process. The curriculum development should follow the established procedure set out in the HQEF and is undertaken alongside the compilation of any additional information or documentation required by the PAB. This may be achieved by:

- a. Inviting a representative from the PAB to join the curriculum approval as a panel member; or,
- b. Considering documentation provided by the PAB prior to curriculum approval.

The outcome of engagement with the PAB, if outside, or additional to, the usual Curriculum Development activities, should be recorded using the 'Notification of outcome of PAB engagement' template and sent to Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee for consideration.

Annual monitoring for maintenance of accreditation

PABs may require annual reports to be submitted to them in order for the relationship to be maintained. The format of the report and any supporting documentation will be mutually agreed. In such cases, prior approval must be gained from Collaborative Academic Partnerships Management Committee or via Chair's action as required.

Notification of changes to curriculum

Where changes are proposed to relevant programmes it is necessary to consult the PSRB on their requirements for maintenance of ongoing relationship before any amendments are approved by the awarding institution. A formal record of these consultations should be retained by the nominated PAB link Co-ordinator. Each PAB will have a specific process which must be followed and which may range from notification of the changes made to a full approval process.

The outcome of engagement with the PAB, if outside, or additional to, the usual Curriculum Development Activities, should be recorded by the PAB Link Co-ordinator using the 'Notification of outcome of PAB engagement' template and sent to Collaborative Academic Partnerships Management Committee for consideration, prior to notifying Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee.

4. PAB outcomes and the Quality Assurance Cycle

The Key Roles and Responsibilities section above sets out the committees responsible for oversight of PAB activity and the monitoring of outcomes, however, these outcomes also play an important role in the wider Quality Cycle. They should be considered as part of Curriculum Development, Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement and Periodic Strategic Review. Likewise, issues and examples of enhancement arising from these activities will inform curriculum development with PABs.

5. PABs and variant regulations

On occasion, the requirements of a PAB may conflict with the academic regulations resulting in a request for a variation to regulations. In this case, the appropriate procedure for requesting a variation to regulations will be followed. The request should include a clear statement from the PAB directly or evidence from the PAB's accreditation criteria that this variation is required for accreditation. Any communications already held with the PAB regarding this must also be provided.

Any approved variations must be recorded in the relevant Programme and Module Specifications.

6. PABs and external examining

Some PABs have specific requirements around the appointment and role of External Examiners and these must be taken into account when appointing External Examiners and when agreeing the details of their reporting commitments. An External Examiner usually completes an Annual Report to the institution and PAB requirements can be taken into account at this point, or by agreeing a different reporting process.

7. Exception-based reporting to external bodies

Certain external bodies who provide funding, require Higher Education Providers to report to them any significant weaknesses identified by independent reviews by PABs, the Quality

Assurance Agency or internal processes in a timely manner and for an action or improvement plan to be put in place to address the weakness.

All reports involving independent reviews by PABs, QAA or internal processes are submitted to Collaborative Academic Partnerships Management Committee and any other committees as appropriate. The report will be accompanied by an action plan or improvement plan if issues or weaknesses have been raised during the course of the reviews.

8. Annex

Log of operational changes made to HQEF Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies Section

Version	Section	Change
16-17 v1	All	This was the original Approved document
17-18 v1	2 – Key Roles and Responsibilities - Committees	Associate Faculty Board renamed - Academic Board Resulting in: change of personnel in: PSRB web text and PSRB process sheet
18-19 v3	All	Updating job titles, e.g. Associate Dean Teaching, Learning and Research becoming Dean of Teaching and Learning, and ensuring titles are correct. Updating Curriculum Approval Committee to Curriculum Validation Committee
19-20 v1	All	The references to the Quality Code have been updated to reflect the revised UK Quality Code.
2	3 – Engagements	Clearly state that the 'Notification of outcome of PSRB engagement' only has to be used if the engagement and/or curriculum amendments fall outside the usual Curriculum Development Activities and reporting lines.
21-22 v1	All	This section and the collective word will be Professional Accrediting Bodies (PABs). This term is defined in section 1
	All	The reporting line for PAB activity will be through Collaborative Academic Partnerships Management Committee, a sub committee of Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee The administrative link has been amended from the Curriculum Records Manager to a PAB administrator.

9. Section documents

Notification of outcome of PAB engagement

PAB accreditation and internal approval process sheet