

CHAPTER A - INTRODUCTION

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A.1 – PURPOSE OF THE ACADEMIC QUALITY HANDBOOK

The Trinity Laban Academic Quality Handbook is an integrated guide to the Institutional regulations, policies, systems and procedures that assure and enhance the quality of the academic provision. The handbook should be read alongside the Strategic Plan 2018-2028 and the sub-strategies.

The Handbook is relevant to those with particular responsibility for delivering the academic programmes, including;

- Directors and deans of the faculties;
- heads of department;
- programme leaders and coordinators;
- module and component leaders;
- project supervisors;
- teachers;
- external examiners

The handbook is also relevant to other staff involved in student support, the Registry and Academic Services, the libraries, human resources management and widening participation. The handbook is available to students and their representatives, as a source of information about the processes that underlie the management of standards and quality, although the primary source of information for students is the programme handbooks.

The Institution has a valuable asset in the quality of the teaching staff - many of whom combine their teaching with distinguished and diverse careers as performers, choreographers, composers, researchers and writers. The contribution of the teachers to the richness of our students' educational experience is inestimable. Many of our teaching staff are part-time and the Institutional academic management has particular responsibilities for ensuring that those who are involved in programme delivery are informed about Institutional policy on learning and teaching and external reference point, such as the UK Quality Code, legal requirements etc.

This handbook, together with the following documents published at the beginning of each academic year, provides the essential information and guidance for those responsible for learning and teaching at Trinity Laban:

- Programme Handbook for each programme, including the Programme Specification (which in turn includes any programme-specific regulations) for each programme;
- The City University Validation and Institutional Partnerships Handbook, which describes the operational framework for research degree provision validated by the University.

The handbook is updated annually for the following Academic Year based on staff and student feedback and Committee decisions made throughout the year. In addition to the updates made on a needs-basis, each Chapter of the handbook is periodically reviewed in full.

1.1 Quality Enhancement and Academic Standards at Trinity Laban

1.1.1 Definitions

Quality Enhancement

Trinity Laban defines quality enhancement as:

The process of taking deliberate steps at Institutional level to achieve (steady, reliable and demonstrable) improvements in the quality of learning opportunities.

Trinity Laban's enhancement activity is informed by sector good practice, as outlined in the advice and guidance section of the UK Quality Code, and research-based pedagogic interventions.

Quality Assurance and Academic Standards

The term 'quality assurance' refers to the systems and processes that the Institution uses to safeguard the standards of academic awards and to ensure high quality learning opportunities. The term 'learning opportunities' refers to the support that the Institution offers in order to enable students to meet the standards set for academic awards. Learning opportunities include teaching, academic and personal support, learning resources, admissions structures, the operation of assessment, staff development, and the contribution that students make to their own learning and development.

The term 'academic standards' refers to the level of achievement that a student has to reach to gain an award. The academic standards of taught programmes relate to the appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes of programmes, modules and components (in relation to credit aims, content and qualification level); the appropriateness of the syllabus (in relation to learning outcomes); and the effectiveness of assessment (in relation to the measurement of the attainment of learning outcomes). The academic standards of research degree programmes relate to the appropriateness of research degree criteria, student achievement against the criteria, and the effectiveness of assessment (in relation to the measurement of research criteria).

There are 'threshold' standards - the level of achievement that a student has to reach in order to gain an award, rather than any particular class of award. These threshold standards are set out in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) and subject benchmark statements. UK threshold standards are aligned to the *'Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area'* (ESG).

The FHEQ includes descriptors for each qualification, setting out the assessed outcomes and wider attributes expected for each named qualification.

Subject benchmark statements are published by the QAA for a range of disciplines. They describe the characteristics and standards of qualifications at honours and Master's level for

a particular subject, including the specific subject knowledge and skills and the generic or graduate skills that will be developed, and the forms of learning, teaching and assessment that will be provided. Each statement sets out the learning outcomes that make up the 'threshold standard' at which a qualification in a subject area may be awarded and the 'typical standard', which indicates the level of knowledge and skill expected of the majority of graduates.

The Institution keeps under ongoing review its alignment to the good practice articulated in the Advice and Guidance section of the UK Quality Code with regard to academic quality.

Higher education providers have obligations to prospective and current undergraduate students under consumer law. There are clear expectations for the provision of information to students and the Institution has aligned its practices with the advice issued to higher education providers by the Competition and Markets Authority.

1.1.2 Quality Assurance and Quality Management

The Institutional quality assurance systems, policies and procedures are set out in this handbook. Trinity Laban complies with the requirements of the validating partner City University London in relation to the Research Degree Programme. An experienced provider of Higher Education, the Institution has received external verification of its own quality assurance and quality management practices through external review.

A.2 - VALIDATION ARRANGEMENTS

Trinity Laban is governed as described in the Memorandum and Articles of Association approved by HM Privy Council and the Charities Commission and filed with Companies House. The Institution is subject to the Financial Memorandum issued by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) in relation to public funding. Trinity Laban is a Recognised Body, having been granted taught degree awarding powers by HM Privy Council on 2 February 2016.

Trinity Laban has the powers to award its own taught degrees and diplomas. City, University of London is the validating authority for research degrees.