

Approval procedure for Centres and Institutes

Introduction

These procedures cover the establishment of Centres and Institutes. Please note that Research Groups do not fall under this procedure.

Centres and Institutes

A Centre or an Institute may be for teaching, research or both. The term 'Centre' is not restricted and may refer to virtual and actual academic units. The term Institute is restricted and may only be used for an actual unit that employs staff specifically to work within that unit. Some interdisciplinary Centres/Institutes may span more than one School in which case the lead School will need to be identified. Some Centres/Institutes may be freestanding and not part of a School in which case a cognate School should be identified, through which quality assurance processes will operate.

Quality framework

The College needs to know what is being done in its name and therefore should be notified of the establishment of a Centre or an Institute. It also needs to satisfy itself that its Centres and Institutes, as formally recognised areas of academic activity, operate within the College's quality framework which covers the following:

- Programme and module approval and modification
- Annual monitoring
- Programme review
- Assessment
- Consideration of and response to External Examiners' reports
- Student feedback
- Monitoring of alignment with the *Core code of practice for postgraduate research students*

Those centres/institutes which have more than a virtual reality, and will operate as a quasi department employing staff to work specifically within it, will require the formal approval of Academic Board prior to establishment.

Formal approval

The approval documentation to be submitted to Academic Board should include:

1. The academic rationale - the aims and objectives of the proposed centre or institute and how they fit in with the academic strategy of the College and the School for those Centres/Institutes within a School.
2. Details of any collaborative arrangements - to include any relationships with outside bodies including sponsors
3. Details of the academic activity to be undertaken, whether teaching or research, and how this will be monitored in terms of the College's academic quality assurance
4. The management structure and the reporting links with the School(s) or the cognate School through which quality assurance processes will work.
5. A summary of the business plan and confirmation that the appropriate School/College authority has approved the finance for the Centre/Institute together with an assessment of the impact on corporate resources.
6. Approval documentation must be accompanied by a statement of support from the Head(s) of School or territorial Vice-Principal for free-standing Centres/Institutes.

Approved by Academic Board October 2010