



Centre for Alternative Technology

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Plan 2024-24 – July 2024 Update

This QAP/QEP builds upon the lessons, challenges and developments of the previous 30 months, and recent successful QAA, UEL and LJMU partnership reviews. Many actions are ongoing as enhancement is a continual process.

Amendments to July 2023 update in RED

<u>1 Findings</u>	<u>2 Actions to be Taken</u>	<u>3 Date for Completion</u>	<u>4 Action By</u>	<u>5 Success Indicators</u>	<u>6 Progress Measures</u>
Features of Good Practice					
The innovative design and development of adaptable programmes that provide a wide range of practical and professional skills and academic rigour for students that are aligned with the CAT's mission and values	Keep courses up to date by: CPD, Conferences Experience weekends Begin process of considering new Academic Programs	Ongoing	All Academic Staff Short Courses Team	Partner universities continue to validate courses Collaboration with Short courses team to deliver CPD	Modules and programmes rationalised to avoid over duplication and provide additional focus to curriculum. LJMU programmes successfully re-validated in 2024. New programmes validated 2026/7 Increased CPD uptake on modules

	Develop new M.Arch programme in response to proposed changes in accreditation	Sept 2026	HoS / M.Arch Team	Development of new programme	ARB /UEL approve new programme
Well-organised and flexible learning experience that enhances the provision of learning opportunities for students	Continue to recognise and respond to the fact that no single learning approach can meet the needs of all students	Ongoing	PLs / academic staff	Student feedback demonstrates diverse student needs are being met	Ongoing – monitor student feedback
	Provide variety of learning approaches - consider more flexibility in teaching session durations and intersperse any long didactic content delivery with more interaction. Guest lecturers will be encouraged to also consider activities to run engagement activities or provide breaks during delivery.	ongoing	Module Leaders	Adjustments made to online delivery timetables	Good practice to continue throughout 2024 / 5 particularly in introductory modules to support student induction
	Online Feedback database and maintenance	Ensure continual update and review - ongoing	PLs	Searchable feedback database	Use feedback database to support course enhancement.
Review Curriculum content	Use metrics such as assessment outcomes to review modules, support assessment module quality outcomes	Ongoing	PLs / Academic Staff	Consistency across all modules and programmes	improved student engagement and progression with new modules Demonstrable consistency across modules – support module action plans where issues identified.

	Ensure greater internationalisation of curricula	ongoing		Module teams to consider where examples from different countries can be incorporated and where a more global perspective might be appropriate.	Use of overseas lecturers and/or international examples to all modules
The recognition of individual student capacities and the availability of specialist resources that support their academic, personal and professional development	Continue the equivalent of the National Student Survey for GSE students	July / August 2024	Student Support Manager (SSM)	Survey data analysed and repeated surveys show improved student satisfaction. Student satisfaction shows improvement across programmes	End of year Survey issued in July 2024 Sufficient feedback received to allow detailed appraisal of feedback by programme
	Site Masterplan redevelopments	Ongoing	CAT SMT and Eco-centre Manager	New flexible training facilities planned as part of site redevelopment plan.	Support fundraising activities for planned redevelopment.. Mid Wales Growth Deal application process still ongoing. Review training facilities in redevelopment considering Growth Deal outcomes.
	Onsite library / quiet space for working	Spring 2024	HoS / Eco-centre Manager	Site redevelopment to include quiet space working / library facilities	Garden Room Annex refurbished – Book and journal collection partially catalogued Consider security of store and acquire hard copies of core texts for library

The wide range of assessment activities including live projects that use bespoke resources to engage and challenge students	Continue to widen the range of opportunities for students to acquire practical skills and experience and to expand capacities for analytical, critical and creative thinking as an independent learner. Students will continue to be encouraged to undertake projects and pursue areas of interest outside of their specialist programme areas	Ongoing	PLs	Positive Student feedback Feedback from external examiners	Ongoing Enhance opportunities for live projects, and student experiences
	Expand on the range of learning opportunities for research led by applied research design module	Ongoing	PLs and module leaders	Positive student feedback to ARD module and improved progression to dissertation	Complete - All modules now include a section on research and reflection on dissertation opportunities for students
	Monitor use of AI in assessment.	Ongoing	All academic staff	Staff to consider use of AI in support of study but without breaching academic integrity.	Students learn to use AI as an employability skill appropriately AI policy agreed at Academic Council but kept under review.
	PT route to dissertation	Complete	HoS and PLs	Continue to review PT student dissertation outcomes following new PT route	student engagement with dissertation increasing – higher number of graduates with full MSc
	Consistency in feedback including between modules	Ongoing	PLs / academic staff	Support from external examiners on assessment and feedback methods	Robust internal and external moderation processes built into assessment tasks.

					Use of rubrics to help deliver consistency
Improved coursework feedback	Ensure high achieving assessment also receives feedback to show areas for improvement	ongoing	Academic Staff	Improved student feedback	Improvements in student assessment outcomes for all students
Module Development Plans	Complete Module Development throughout academic year as modules are completed to inform CME/QAA process	Complete but ongoing	Academic Staff	Improved modules as a response to module outcomes and student feedback	Module Development Plans in place for start of 2024/5 academic year for action
Retention and Progression					
Enhanced Induction policy / early student interactions	Improve drop out rate in first few months of programme, which is key period for programmes, notably in initial module delivery	2024/25 Academic Year	HoS PL SSM All Academic Staff	Improved Retention and Progression rates in first 3 months of programme	Initial progression through programme increases
	Ensure student awareness of teaching and learning approaches at CAT and mechanisms for teaching delivery	Ongoing	SSOs/PLs / academic staff	Enhanced induction activities pre and on enrolment	More engagement with students at induction. Introduction to VLE. Initial modules increase engagement
Investigate barriers to progression	Review progression and report to Academic Council	2023/24 Academic Year	HoS PL SSM All Academic Staff	Improved Retention and Progression	Progression through programme rates increase and PT completion time reduces
Develop formal student engagement strategy	Creation of formal engagement strategy that enhances current enhancement strategy	2024/5 Academic Year	HoS	Improved progression – fewer withdrawals	Clearer policy on student engagement Lead to improvements on student engagement and progression

Consider EDI barriers in recruitment to programmes	Review applications and enrolments of diverse groups	Ongoing	HoS SSM EDI group	Improved enrolment levels from more diverse groups	Annual improvement in student diversity
Distance Learning					
Improve the learning experience for distance learning students	Continue using developments in Teams to enhance DL provision	2024 / 25 Academic Year	Academic staff / SSOs and IT department	Improved online engagement amongst students and staff including more use of insights to monitor engagement	Increased engagement with online activities
	Clearly scaffolded tasks for break-out groups with check in and sharing – DL practicals				
	Meet and Greet activities for DL students within modules				
	Weekly drop-in sessions for any questions or discussion				
	Using Interactive Miro boards to improve engagements Using a range of templates and structures to navigate a task.				
Employability					
HESA Outcomes survey	Prepare to incorporate HESA survey from Summer 2024. Contact students 15 months after graduation	Summer / Autumn 2024	HoS / SSM	Improved information on student destinations that can support GSE activities and course development	HESA requirement October 2024
Graduate Fair	Deliver annual graduate employability fair	Spring 2024	SSM and GMSO	Improved employability of students and engagement with employers	Improved employability of students
Student Outcomes / Leavers Survey	Review and repeat yearly graduate survey and use results	Ongoing	SSM/ HoS	Improved employability of students and changes	Evaluate responses to Survey Sept 2024. Consider student career

	to improve student learning experience and outcomes			in programmes to reflect alumni experiences	outcomes within curriculum development
Skills Audit	Ensure that general skills reflected in programme outcomes, eg numeracy and presentation are reflected across programmes	Ongoing	HoS, PLs, All Academic Staff	Improved employability skills	Completed skills assessment audit completed during LJMU revalidation process
Student Experience					
The strong community engagement that promotes an innovative and positive environment for all stakeholders in the strategic enhancement process	Students meet personal tutors at least once each month (M.Arch), and at least twice a year (MSc). Programme Leaders monitor tutorial activities.	Annual report	PLs / HoS	Student feedback. Records of meetings with tutors Academics to be more proactive with non-engaging students	Offer is made – MSc monthly/bi-monthly. Engagement variable. Monitor centrally and improve engagement. Offer is made – MSc monthly/bi-monthly. Engagement currently variable – improve take up
	Review new booking system to ensure better access Student Support Officers.	Academic Year 2024/25	HoS/SSM	Student feedback. Notes of interactions	New booking system offers improved timely access to SSO's and academics inc. online giving equal consideration for DL students
	Continued use of external lecturers and employers and guest speakers	Ongoing	PLs and module leaders	Student feedback. Lists of external lectures and employers used	Ongoing – review feedback of external speakers. Remote delivery increases opportunities to engage external lecturers, especially international

	Students to influence directly the Centre's plans for module and programme development through direct representation in major committees	Ongoing	HoS/PL's	Active student representation in all major GSE committees.	Student feedback included within module developments
	Continue to create opportunities for student input to site development plans and activities	Ongoing	HoS/Head of Eco Centre/Head of Development	Involve students in CAT development plans as key stakeholders Development actively reflects student input – demonstrate student creativity where possible	Site Development Plans ongoing subject to Capital Fundraising
	Continue to seek and obtain student feedback at several times throughout the academic year	Ongoing	HoS/PLs/SSM	Feedback sought and actively responded to	Receive end of module feedback, course committee and representation through student reps Increased use of feedback dashboard to demonstrate responses Increased representation at Academic Council
	Continue to seek and obtain improved levels of MArch student feedback at several times throughout the academic year	Academic Year 2024 / 25	MArch Team / HoS	Improved levels of MArch student engagement with feedback process.	Levels of feedback improve throughout 24/25 Academic Year to be on par with MSc feedback levels

Staff Development					
Training to support the development of high quality staff	Maintain allocation of Continuing Professional Development budget.	Summer 2024	HoS/HR manager	Number of conferences and CPD courses attended	Continued and more diverse range of CPD applications
	Additional opportunities for staff training identified	Ongoing	HR manager / HoS	Staff meet, and achieve success, on additional training requirements	Additional training on aspects such as Mental Health and First Aid offered. Continued engagement with staff
	Peer observation and review	Ongoing	HoS / PL and academic staff	Review peer observation at academic council	Improved professional skills of academics
	HEA accreditation for staff	Ongoing	HoS and Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching UEL	UEL admit CAT staff to HEA programme inc AFHEA for SSOs	CAT academics enrol upon UEL courses and achieve HEA accreditation Access to HEA process also available to SSOs
Other Actions					
Quality of Information	Annual audit process to ensure the continuing appropriateness of published public materials	ongoing	HoS/ GSMO/ SSM	Accuracy of all public information Meet UEL and LJMU information guidelines	Liaise with LJMU and UEL marketing departments to review documentation
	Ensure student support information to cohort is of high quality.	Ongoing	HoS/SSM/PLs	Accuracy of all student facing information	Communications with students improved, measured through student feedback
	Improved module and programme guides	Academic Year 2024 / 2025	HoS / SSM / PLs	Edit current guides to improve focus clarity and usability	More engagement with guides by students and reduction of misinformation

				Meet UEL and LJMU information guidelines	
	Improved information about module timetables and differences between timetable and module options	Ongoing	SSOs/PLs / academic staff	Provide simpler explanation of the online timetable options and the implications for study patterns on teaching, learning and assessment	Greater student satisfaction and greater module performance from students selecting the module study pattern which best suits their personal circumstances Production of module guides (video)
Widen the diversity of students on all programmes	Monitor the student diversity	Ongoing	HoS / Graduate Marketing Support Officer (GMSO)	Broader diversity of students, progressing on courses	Additional applications and success from students from diverse backgrounds
	Extra resources provided to support recruitment from broader population of students	Ongoing	HoS / GMSO	Broader diversity of students, progressing on courses	Diversity of student intake on programmes largely consistent despite larger intake.
	Review documentation for unconscious bias	Ongoing	HoS / PLs	New and revised policy documents checked for use of pronouns	Documentation improvements
	EDI forum	CAT EDI forum / subgroup Autumn 2023	CAT EDI lead/Academic Staff / Students	Review of GSE activities	CAT forum created – ensure GSE / student needs expressed EDI group report to Academic Council 2024-5

	Review progression rates amongst diverse subgroups	Ongoing	HoS / PLs	Broader diversity of students, progressing on courses New and revised policy documents checked for use of pronouns	Diversity information included in annual monitoring and enhancement reports
Increase and widen the support for students with learning difficulties	Additional Learning Needs assessed more quickly at induction	Ongoing	ALN tutor / HoS	Quicker assessment of ALN student needs	More engagement and progression for students with ALN.
	Review newly implemented ALN processes to support students (including additional support with assessment)	Summer 2024	HoS/SSM/ALN Tutor	Improved assessment outcomes and retention rates for students with learning difficulties	Improved ALN strategy to support students learning and assessment
Develop stronger links with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)	Develop further PSRB links with programmes	Sept 2025	HoS / PLs	PSRB accredit programmes	Links developed for new courses. Some progress made on accreditation.
M.Res programme	First delivery of M.Res Sept 2023 – monitor progress	2023-25 Academic Years (2026 if intake PT)	HoS / Academic Staff	2025/26 Timely progression of M.Res students. Publication of extended dissertations / papers	Ensure students are supported throughout M.Res delivery and extended research project
LJMU programmes	First delivery of LJMU programmes following 2024 review–	2024-25 Academic Years	HoS / PLs	Student Experience maintained with new programme. 2025/26 Timely progression	monitor progress

Create a strong alumni	Creation of formal alumni network	ongoing	HoS / PLs / GMSO	Creation of alumni / membership network	Numbers of ex-students engaging with the GSE and CAT increases at Graduate Symposium and with CAT membership. Continue development off network opportunities available for student body with ex-students
Enhancement Strategy	Continue effecting the CAT Student Learning and Enhancement Strategy Implementation Plan.	Ongoing	HoS	Academic Council agrees implementation	Ongoing process