



# **ACADEMIC QUALITY POLICY & PRACTICE 2023 V1.5**

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## **Section 2: Quality Enhancement and Assurance Strategy**

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## 2. QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND ASSURANCE STRATEGY

### 2.1 Context

GCU assurance and enhancement strategies support [Strategy 2030](#) priorities, [Strategy for Learning](#) (SfL) and the [Common Good Mission and Vision](#). We foster effective partnership working in an environment that is sensitive to the diverse population on campus. Partnership in this sense reflects the UK QAA Quality Code concept of joint working, based on a mature relationship and mutual respect. We promote an inclusive approach to learning by embedding the [principles of equality and diversity](#) throughout the institution, valuing individuals regardless of background or groups to which they belong. Every member of staff contributes to the creation of an excellent student experience for all students and all members of academic and professional support staff ensure that the highest academic standards are adhered to.

The [QAA Quality Code for Higher Education](#), the definitive reference point for all UK higher education providers, makes clear what higher education providers are required to do and articulates and makes transparent the standards students, staff and the general public can expect of the University. GCU adheres to the overarching values of the Code and is committed to demonstrate that in line with [GCU Values and Behaviours](#) :

- every student is treated fairly and with dignity, courtesy and respect
- every student has the opportunity to contribute to the shaping of their learning experience
- every student is properly and actively informed at appropriate times of matters relevant to their programmes of study
- all policies and processes relating to study and programmes are clear and transparent
- strategic oversight of academic standards and academic quality is at the highest levels of governance of the University
- all policies and processes are regularly and effectively monitored, reviewed, and enhanced
- sufficient and appropriate external involvement is in place for the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities
- all staff are supported, enabling them to support student learning.

### 2.2 Quality Enhancement

Quality Enhancement is defined by the QAA as; *'taking deliberate steps to bring about continuous improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experience of students'*. GCU commits to providing opportunities for academic and professional staff and students to engage in meaningful professional dialogue through active participation in University (Senate, Education Committee, Learning Enhancement Sub-Committee) and School (School Board, Programme Board) Committees and Working Groups, and in the activities around the [Quality Enhancement Framework](#) (QEF); Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR),

Enhancement Led Internal Subject Review (ELISR), Student engagement and the Enhancement Themes.

[Student engagement](#) achievement and success involves academic, professional, and support staff across the University. The University's [Strategy 2030](#) and [Strategy for Learning](#) seek to develop students, as a body and individually, to be *the best that they can be*. These strategies take account of, and respond to, the collective and individual student life stages of learning by enabling and supporting students to take responsibility for their own learning through a commitment to an engaged relationship with the University, achieved through institutional dialogue and [partnership working](#).

Taking into account key messages from these key internal and external drivers, the following enhancement statements link to and promote reflection and evaluation at University, School, Department and Programme level and provide an internal and external articulation of quality enhancement and assurance processes, evidencing process in practice.

At GCU we:

- articulate and implement our strategic approach to learning and teaching, and promote a shared understanding of this approach to staff, students and external stakeholders, including the general public
- apply the strategic aims of key policies to the everyday practice of learning and teaching through targeted action plans
- maintain the physical, virtual and social learning environments, ensuring that these are safe, accessible and reliable for every student, promoting dignity in learning and respect in their use
- shape our learning and teaching and assessment activities and associated resources to provide every student with an equal and effective opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Allied to this, take deliberate steps to assist students to engage with the opportunities that the University provides to shape their learning experience
- enable students to self-monitor and further their academic progress through opportunities to reflect on feedback and take advantage of our comprehensive approach to [personal tutoring](#)
- ensure our learning and teaching practices are informed by reflection, deliberate and engineered evaluation of the professional practice of teaching, and discipline-led programmes of educational scholarships.
- collect and analyse appropriate information to ensure the continued effectiveness of our strategic and discipline-specific approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities and teaching practice
- work in partnership with students in quality enhancement and assurance processes, resulting in the improvement of their educational experience

- create an integrated environment in which students, academic, professional, and support staff can engage in professional discussions to bring about demonstrable and sustainable enhancement of the educational experience
- put arrangements in place to ensure that we promote the collective student voice at all levels of the University
- demonstrate the value we place on teaching that aims to be inspirational
- support staff to gain professional recognition and enhance their own and the University's reputation through CPD

2.2.1 The following features are highlighted as a key part of the Enhancement Strategy:

- GCU conducts subject review on a five-year cycle by academic department or other appropriate grouping
- Scope of subject reviews encompasses all taught provision, research-student supervision and CPD activity, consultancy and knowledge transfer, and the connection between research and industry and curriculum development
- Achieving student engagement with enhancement and quality processes.
- Subject review process is aligned, wherever possible, with the programme approval/review process and with professional/ statutory/regulatory body reviews.
- Colleagues from the [Quality Assurance and Enhancement](#) and other central departments will work with Programme Development Teams to provide bespoke input into the quality assurance and academic development of new programmes including advice and information on curriculum design and digital delivery.
- School based Senior Academic Staff act as Panel Chairs for Programme Approvals and Reviews and other members of academic staff and students act as Panel Members.

## 2.3 Quality Assurance

**At GCU the process of assuring quality is the day to day responsibility of all academic and professional staff. Together we seek to:**

- safeguard the academic standards of the University
- assure the quality of the learning opportunities that GCU offers to students
- promote continuous and systematic improvement in GCU education provision

To ensure the University complies with and adheres to consumer law ([CRA/CMA](#)) the content of the programme, the modules offered and the approach to learning and teaching

must adhere to and comply, in practice, with all detail included in the Programme Specification. Failure to do so contravenes University policy and exposes the University to the risk of being non-compliant with consumer law ([CRA/CMA](#)).

The University recognises the valuable contribution that key programme and department staff make to the learning, teaching and quality process, including Department Heads, Programme leads, Module Leads and professional support staff. **The Department Head is operationally responsible for the overall quality and academic integrity of all academic programmes and associated modules within the Department.**

Working with the Programme Team, the Programme Leader is responsible for the quality and integrity of the Programme, including Programme Approval/Re-approval. The Programme Board is the hub of programme activity and monitoring, and under the leadership of the Programme Leader is responsible for generating the [Annual Programme Analysis and Monitoring Report](#).

## 2.4 The Common Good

As part of the implementation of GCU's [Strategy 2030](#) and the [Strategy for Learning](#) the University has developed a model which will support, recognise and embed the Common Good within the curriculum and the wider student experience as part of its core mission. The learning experience at GCU will prepare students to develop four [Common Good attributes](#):

- Active and global citizenship,
- Entrepreneurial mind-set,
- Systems thinking,
- Responsible leadership,
- Resilience, compassion and empathy
- Confidence

GCU students will develop the [Common Good attributes](#) through their formal taught curriculum. The [Common Good Curriculum](#) will also provide opportunities for students to enhance and develop these attributes further through engaging in co- and extra-curricular activities aligned to the Common Good – for example, social innovation, community engagement and volunteering. These attributes are reflected within all Programme Approval and Review Documentation. Additionally the [GCU Values and Behaviours](#) (Integrity; Creativity, Responsibility and Confidence) act as guiding principles for all aspects of Programme and University QEA activity and associated behaviours.