



## Student Engagement Framework

### Introduction

The QAA Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement* covers student engagement at undergraduate and postgraduate level, irrespective of location, mode of study, teaching delivery, or discipline. The Chapter focuses on the provision of an inclusive environment for student engagement. That environment anticipates the varied needs of learners and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities.

The code sets out the following Expectation about student engagement, which higher education providers are required to meet:

*Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.*

The indicators from this chapter of the Quality Code are included in an appendix to this paper.

The plan for a *Student Engagement Framework* presented to Academic Board in autumn 2015 identified five areas of student engagement:

- Area One: Engaging students with their training / learning
- Area Two: Student engagement with enhancement in Schools
- Area Three: Cross-CDD student engagement
- Area Four: training for student representatives
- Area Five: Measuring student engagement against performance indicators

The proposal was to establish a cross-CDD baseline with regard to student engagement and enable sharing of good practice in this area between the schools. It was recognised that because of the different size and structures of the schools a 'one-size-fits-all' approach at school-level would not be appropriate. It is also recognised that student engagement in the CDD needs to be considerate of the Conservatoire context, where students have significant contact hours which may not be flexible. The intention of this Framework is to ensure there is effective student engagement within this context.

It has been set up to be aligned with the expectations of the validating institutions with regard to student engagement, to which schools are also expected to adhere.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B for links to relevant validator documents.

The draft *Framework* document which is attached is intended when complete to set out the common principles for student engagement, baselines for school-level representation, and arrangements for cross-CDD representation.

Since the initial approval of the plan for a *Framework*, a large amount of work has been undertaken in Area Three, leading to the development of the Student Advisory Committee. Area Three of the *Framework* includes a summary of the approach which has been developed in this area.

The draft Framework has been circulated to schools and discussed at CLB. Subject to feedback received from Academic Board, the proposal is for there to be an extensive period for consultation with students through schools and the Student Advisory Committee ahead of final approval of the Framework at the June meeting of the Board. Following this, good practice and areas for enhancement can be shared through the Student Engagement Framework Working Group and individually between schools.

### **Staff and the *Framework***

The QAA expects staff dealing directly with students (teaching and support staff) to actively engage in discussions about student engagement. For the CDD Student Engagement Framework to be effective, schools should ensure that staff involved in student engagement activity are familiar with student engagement practices and the role student representation plays. Staff should feel enabled to signpost, respond and deal appropriately with the contribution from students and their representatives.

### **Implementation of the *Framework***

Once approved, it is suggested that there should be an annual action plan to consolidate existing practice and then to work collectively on sharing good practice in particular elements of the Framework over time:

#### ***Year one (2016/17):***

- agree the *Framework*
- schools to work with Shared Services to address any areas where the school needs to develop practice relating to Area Two; in particular, to ensure SSLCs are aligned with Section Two of the *Framework*;
- schools, with support from Shared Services, prepare for training of student representatives in schools and cross-CDD in autumn 2017.

#### ***Year two (2017/18):***

- training student representatives at start of the year
- schools, with support from Shared Services, to give further consideration of good practice in student representation within schools beyond SSLCS: wherever it is appropriate to do so, ensure that there is appropriate student representation / consultation at all levels within the school about matters relating to students.

Subsequent years could be added to the action plan, as priorities emerge.

## **Student Engagement Framework**

### **Area One: Principles of Student Engagement**

The QAA define student engagement as both engagement in learning and engagement with enhancement of the student experience. It is expected that higher education institutions develop their own understanding of student engagement that is relevant to their particular contexts, missions and needs.

To this end, CDD has adopted a set of principles for student engagement, which reflect the relationship between student engagement and the particular character of the conservatoire training provided by the CDD schools.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Principles of student engagement:**

- 1. Students engage in and with their learning** – Schools and school staff progressively encourage and support students towards their responsibilities to develop as independent learners and to prepare them for careers as performers, makers and production professionals.
- 2. Students engage in the enhancement of teaching and learning** – With leadership and guidance provided by staff, students and student representatives are active participants in shaping the content, delivery and organisation of their teaching and learning, in order to enhance their overall training experience.
- 3. Students engage actively as members of a learning/artistic community** - Schools facilitate and enable students to collaborate, interact, work and research in partnership with other students, staff and members of the professions, including alumni, who belong to the wider community.
- 4. Students engage with the profession** – Schools encourage and support sustained student engagement with professional learning opportunities so students have the opportunity to realise their potential as artists or production specialists.
- 5. Students engage in consultation, quality processes and decision making** – Students are encouraged and are provided with opportunities to express their individual and collective opinions, concerns and ideas at all relevant levels of decision making and internal review.
- 6. Students engage through effective student representation** – Student leaders (such as representatives and governors) are an essential part of the school and CDD communities. Students are encouraged to participate in leadership roles and are supported by staff and training to act on behalf of their cohorts.

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<sup>2</sup> Indicator 1 – QAA Student Engagement

## **Area Two: Student engagement with enhancement in Schools**

To ensure alignment with the QAA's indicators on student engagement, it is suggested that schools should ensure that the following expectations are met.

It is expected that implementation of these practices would vary, to reflect the size, culture and makeup of each school. As there are many examples of good practice across CDD, there are opportunities for schools to collaborate and share good practice to find the most effective methods for developing successful student engagement.

### **Schools should ensure that:**

- there are written terms of reference for a SSLC (Student Staff Liaison Committee) or similar
- students should have the opportunity to take a lead role in SSLCs, for example through co-chairing
- there is a meeting of the SSLC at least once a term
- there is a written record of all SSLC meetings and their actions
- there is a record of the consideration of issues and ideas raised formally by student representatives
- the feedback loop is closed by feeding back both to student representatives and to all students, for example through a student intranet/moodle.
- the process for electing/selecting student representatives is transparent, inclusive and student-led
- all students know who their student representative is (or representatives are) on the SSLC, with consideration given to level of study and range of subjects in the arrangements for representation<sup>3</sup>
- all student representatives have adequate training and support to perform their responsibilities
- the roles and responsibilities of representatives are clearly outlined in their student handbook
- students are adequately signposted to appropriate formal and informal routes to raise matters of concern, give feedback and highlight good practice
- there is opportunity for all students to provide individual feedback and there are effective mechanisms to relay back to students where student feedback has been acted upon, or where change is not possible and the reasons why this has not happened
- wherever it is appropriate to do so, there is student representation and/or consultation at all levels of decision making within the school about matters relating to students<sup>45</sup>
- there is a mechanism for schools to annually review, in partnership with students, the effectiveness of student engagement and representation arrangements
- information about programmes from internal quality processes is shared with and considered by student representatives. Examples of this should include, NSS results, course

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<sup>3</sup> Indicator 3 – QAA Student Engagement

<sup>4</sup> Indicator 3 – QAA Student Engagement

<sup>5</sup> Noting that where changes are made to Terms and Conditions, consultation schools will undertake (where necessary) suitable consultation with students and (where necessary) take all reasonable steps to communicate and explain these changes with as much notice as possible.

evaluations and other student feedback, periodic review, external examiners reports, annual programme monitoring and Destinations of Leavers (DLHE) Survey results.<sup>6</sup>

- as appropriate changes to programmes, policies and procedures are discussed with student representatives / students<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Indicator 5 – QAA Student Engagement

<sup>7</sup> This will include consultation of students which is formally provided for in student terms and conditions.

### **Area Three: Cross-CDD student engagement**

The QAA code requires providers to ensure that appropriate mechanisms/activities are in place, to ensure student engagement is reflected at all levels of the institution. This area of the *Framework* focuses on formal cross-CDD student engagement.

#### **The Student Advisory Committee**

CDD has established a Student Advisory Committee as a formal sub-committee of its Academic Board to support student representation on the Conservatoire's committees and input to its decision-making processes.

The Student Advisory Committee's responsibilities include:

- To discuss, and advise, on Conservatoire strategy, policy and guidance affecting its students
- To provide a student input to other matters referred to it by Academic Board or the Conservatoire Leadership Board
- To input to the development of a Conservatoire-wide student engagement framework
- To support the Conservatoire in the development and planning of cross-Conservatoire student engagement activities, including artistic activities.

The Student Advisory Committee meets at least termly. Its minutes are disseminated to its student members and to school offices for onwards dissemination within schools, and are presented to CDD Academic Board.

Student members of the Student Advisory Committee will be given adequate training, support and documentation to perform their responsibilities.

#### **Representation on Other CDD Committees**

- An elected student governor sits on its Board of Governors and its Student Advisory Committee
- The Student Advisory Committee sends representatives to CDD Academic Board. Where possible, CDD will try to enable the attendance of student representatives at other CDD committees where this is provided for in their terms of reference.
- Student representatives attending other CDD committees will be given adequate training, support and documentation to perform their responsibilities.

## **Area Four: Training, briefing and support for student representatives**

*Higher education providers ensure that student representatives and staff have access to training and ongoing support to equip them to fulfil their roles in educational enhancement and quality assurance effectively.<sup>8</sup>*

It is expected therefore that student representatives are trained to be able to fulfil their roles. Across the HE sector, this generally takes the form of an ‘in person’ training session, supplemented by handbooks and online resources, where appropriate. To meet this expectation, it is suggested that a toolkit is developed, covering the generic training needs of student representatives in the form of a training session and corresponding resources.

### **Part One: Coverage of training and written resources**

The table below sets out a baseline of subjects for inclusion in training for student representatives.

Understanding role & support available <sup>9</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Role description and responsibilities</li><li>• How the School/CDD supports you in the role</li><li>• Committee/School/CDD structure</li><li>• Staff contacts and responsibilities</li><li>• Signposting to relevant support staff and procedures</li></ul>
Communicating with students and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to engage and consult students and ensure they know how to feedback to the School</li><li>• Communication channels for feeding back</li><li>• Understanding what reps can ask students for</li><li>• Communicating with staff</li><li>• Examples of expected feedback from students</li></ul>
Attending meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Detailed information about purpose of the meetings rep will attend</li><li>• Role of reps in those meetings, including how to represent others</li><li>• Meeting and negotiation skills</li><li>• What to report to which meeting and how to do so</li><li>• Most common topics and how to proceed with them</li></ul>
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What information should go to whom</li><li>• How to communicate the information and what channels are available</li><li>• Co-operation with other reps on their course and school</li></ul>

It is assumed that face-to-face training will be supported by the provision of appropriate written materials.

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<sup>8</sup> Indicator 4 – QAA Student Engagement

<sup>9</sup> Basic information in this box should be available to all students in student handbook.



Schools which already have well established training should regularly review what they deliver, with input from student representatives. There are clear opportunities to share good practice and ideas with other CDD schools.

Schools who do not already have training resources in place for their student representatives can either develop their own or build on a 'core' training template which would be developed by Shared Services.

### **Part Two: Delivery plan for school representative training**

Schools will develop and deliver training, as they see appropriate. Assistance in either developing or delivery training could be provided or supported by the Shared Services team.

Schools should consider asking continuing student representatives to assist in developing and delivering (some or all) of the training for new representatives.

#### Proposed timeline

- February - Agree to develop a core template for training
- July-August – School development of training (with guidance from Shared Services where requested)
- Autumn Term 2017/18 – Delivery of training (possibly involving previous student representatives)

### **Part Three: CDD Student Advisory Committee training –**

Training will be developed and delivered by Shared Services. This will, as appropriate, follow the coverage of training set out in Part One, focusing on CDD level committees, feeding back to their respective schools and collaborating with each other.

## **Area Five: Measuring student engagement**

The QAA code requires providers to regularly measure the effectiveness of student engagement.<sup>10</sup>

CDD collectively should monitor the following indicators:

- Indicator One:** ensuring that each student is represented by at least one student representative at school and (through the Student Advisory Committee) at cross-CDD level;
- Indicator Two:** the percentage of student representatives at school and representatives on the CDD Student Advisory Committee who have undertaken training;
- Indicator Three:** responses to questions 23 to 26 of the 'student voice' section of the NSS survey.

### **Indicator Three: 'Student voice' in the NSS survey**

The new Student Voice section within the NSS survey should provide a measure against which schools can review their student engagement and representation activity annually.

These new questions will be able to provide data from the student body on feedback mechanisms and how effectively schools are consulting and responding. The questions included in the Student Voice section are as follows:

- 23. I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course
- 24. Staff value students' views and opinions about the course
- 25. It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on
- 26. The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests<sup>11</sup>

### **Mechanisms for monitoring**

Student engagement at school level already falls within the scope of Annual Programme Monitoring, so schools could be asked to report on school-level student representation against the three indicators as part of their APMR.

As a sub-committee of Academic Board, the Student Advisory Committee will report on Indicators One and Two annually to Academic Board and also elicit qualitative feedback from its student members on the effectiveness of the Committee.

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<sup>10</sup> Indicator 7 – QAA Student Engagement

<sup>11</sup> Given the school structure of CDD, it is proposed that the value of monitoring responses to Question 26 as a measure of student engagement be kept under review.

## Appendix A

### QAA Student Engagement Indicators<sup>12</sup>

The following indicators are set in by the QAA Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement.

Indicator 1	Higher education providers, in partnership with their student body, define and promote the range of opportunities for any student to engage in educational enhancement and quality assurance.
Indicator 2	Higher education providers create and maintain an environment within which students and staff engage in discussions that aim to bring about demonstrable enhancement of the educational experience.
Indicator 3	Arrangements exist for the effective representation of the collective student voice at all organisational levels, and these arrangements provide opportunities for all students to be heard.
Indicator 4	Higher education providers ensure that student representatives and staff have access to training and on-going support to equip them to fulfil their roles in educational enhancement and quality assurance effectively.
Indicator 5	Students and staff engage in evidence-based discussions based on the mutual sharing of information.
Indicator 6	Staff and students to disseminate and jointly recognise the enhancements made to the student educational experience, and the efforts of students in achieving these successes.
Indicator 7	The effectiveness of student engagement is monitored and reviewed at least annually, using pre-defined key performance indicators, and policies and processes.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/uk-quality-code-for-higher-education-chapter-b5-student-engagement#.WKQ0jVWLSUK>

## **Appendix B**

### **Validating Institution Documents          relevant to Student Engagement**

University of Kent Code of Practice for Quality Assurance Annex N: Student Engagement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement:

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/documents/quality-assurance/codes/taught/pdf/AnnexN.pdf>