# Higher Education Programmes

# QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT HANDBOOK

**ada**

National College for Digital Skills

**CONTENTS:**

## SECTION 1 Framework for managing academic quality and standards

### 1.1 Purpose of the Quality Handbook

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook is designed to capture the quality assurance and enhancement processes that relate to Ada's HE provision in one place so that all staff have access to guidance on how the college ensures and maintains the quality of the student experience. It is a key means for the college to manage monitoring and review processes that maintain high standards and keep the college moving forward in what is a rapidly evolving and changing subject area.

The Handbook initially focuses on the quality assurance governance structures before focusing down on to specific policies and requirements for Ada's unique approach to teaching and learning and student support.  It shows how the college delivers a cycle of processes and activities throughout the academic year, all geared towards the same goal of maintaining high standards of professional practice. Some sections, in particular the College's approach to teaching and learning and student support make links to the College's 16-19 provision where necessary to ensure a holistic and coherent approach.

### 1.2 Principles

UK higher education in the FE content is based on the principle of the autonomy and responsibility of the delivery institution and degree-awarding body working collaboratively and coherently to ensure the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities for the programmes offered. The College recognizes that monitoring and review of its HE programmes is an essential aspect of its internal quality assurance mechanisms and that these enable that responsibility to be exercised and form a fundamental part of the College's academic cycle.

The quality assurance programme monitoring and programme review processes, ensure the College's academic provision makes, and will continue to make available to students, appropriate learning opportunities, which enable the intended learning outcomes of the programmes to be achieved.

They also evaluate student attainment of academic standards and allow the College to confirm that its portfolio aligns with its mission and strategic priorities.

The creation and maintenance of this handbook will support the College's efforts to reflect on the learning opportunities students have experienced, the academic standards achieved, and their continuing currency and relevance. Through cyclical monitoring and review, the College will be able to better judge to what extent our aims for the programmes of study have been achieved.

A consistent cycle of monitoring and review will also include opportunities to ensure we are listening to our students and to respond to their feedback, and feedback from other stakeholders, such as industry partners and employers.

The handbook will help ensure that monitoring and review are not treated as isolated events but become part of a continuous engagement by staff and students with a programme over time, which provides assurance, as well as identifying problems or issues.
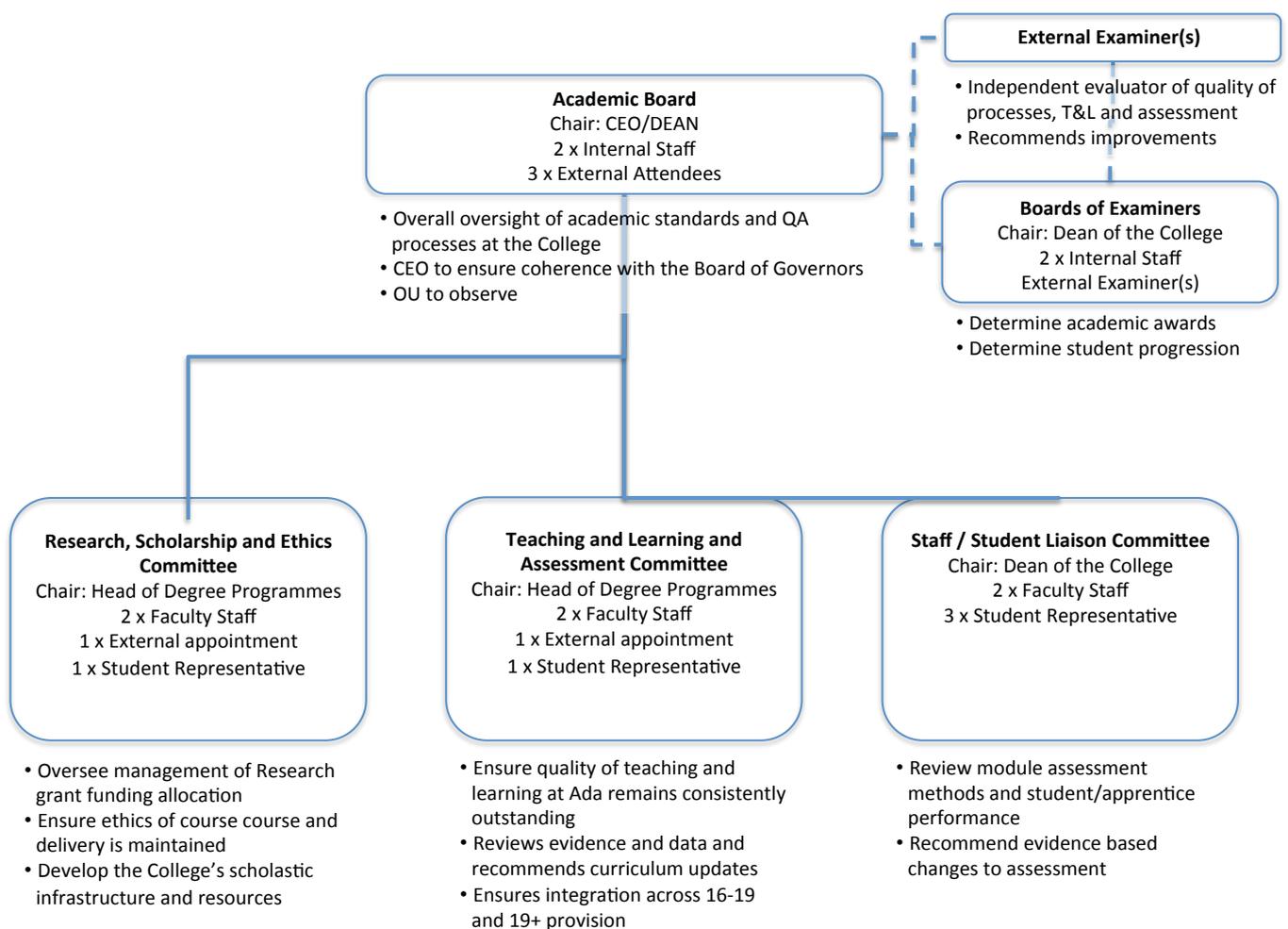
## 1.3. Committees: Their Structure and Terms of References

The following organogram describes the College's HE quality assurance structure and illustrates how both internal and external QA roles and committees relate to one another. The Academic Board is the ultimate decision making entity that makes recommendations to the OU and ensure that the annual quality assurance cycle is completed to a high standard and then feedback and on-going improvements are implemented effectively.

The Academic Board is chaired by the CEO who then provides the Board of Governors of the College (in particular the Education Sub-Committee of the Governing body) with line of sight to the activities of the Academic Board without jeopardising its autonomy and decision making authority.

The sub-committees of the Academic Board each have specialist roles and responsibilities outlined in their Terms of Reference and ensure that the Academic Board can deal with significant issues and matters arising rather than become cluttered with a breadth of priorities that would lessen its efficiency and leadership capability.

The Board of Examiners and the External Examiner have autonomy from the Academic Board but also provide direct input into and feedback on its performance and provide evidence-based feedback.

**External Examiner(s)**
- Independent evaluator of quality of processes, T&L and assessment
- Recommends improvements

**Academic Board**
Chair: CEO/DEAN
2 x Internal Staff
3 x External Attendees
- Overall oversight of academic standards and QA processes at the College
- CEO to ensure coherence with the Board of Governors
- OU to observe

**Boards of Examiners**
Chair: Dean of the College
2 x Internal Staff
External Examiner(s)
- Determine academic awards
- Determine student progression

**Research, Scholarship and Ethics Committee**
Chair: Head of Degree Programmes
2 x Faculty Staff
1 x External appointment
1 x Student Representative
- Oversee management of Research grant funding allocation
- Ensure ethics of course course and delivery is maintained
- Develop the College's scholastic infrastructure and resources

**Teaching and Learning and Assessment Committee**
Chair: Head of Degree Programmes
2 x Faculty Staff
1 x External appointment
1 x Student Representative
- Ensure quality of teaching and learning at Ada remains consistently outstanding
- Reviews evidence and data and recommends curriculum updates
- Ensures integration across 16-19 and 19+ provision

**Staff / Student Liaison Committee**
Chair: Dean of the College
2 x Faculty Staff
3 x Student Representative
- Review module assessment methods and student/apprentice performance
- Recommend evidence based changes to assessment

The Terms of Reference for each of the Boards and sub-committees are set out below to provide further detail and clarity on their specific role in the quality assurance and enhancement cycle.

## 1.3.1 The Academic Board terms of reference

**Purpose of The Academic Board**
To establish the requirements for degrees and other awards that the College delivers and to put in place procedures, policies and boards for the consideration of such awards and the preservation of the highest standards of teaching and learning.

Specific Functions of the Board:

- To approve regulations relating to the admission, assessment and operation of all programmes, modules and awards in particular in relation to the teaching and learning of all qualifications and the effective assessment of progress and student outcomes
- To approve procedures for approval and amendment of programmes and modules leading to awards by the College and ultimately the Open University.
- To approve procedures for the withdrawal of programmes and modules.
- To consider and approve or advise on, as applicable, strategies and policies designed to ensure the academic quality of programmes, including the teaching, learning and assessment strategy.
- To receive reports on procedures that relate to academic standards, academic quality and the quality of the student experience and recommend appropriate action in the light of these reports.

Relating to Academic Freedom:

- To approve policies to support and foster academic freedom in relation student and staff exploration of their chosen discipline and ensure that this is maintained

Relating to Research:

- To consider recommendations for research by staff and, where applicable, students in light of the College's stated mission and purpose

**Composition of the Academic Board**

The Academic Board will be chaired by the CEO or the DEAN of the College and supported by two internal staff and two or more external attendees from other HEI institutions or HE faculty at another FE College. In addition a student representative will be invited to join this Board to ensure the student voice is present in discussions unless of a confidential nature.

The Academic Board will ensure that the External Examiners feedback and observations, both formal and informal, are incorporated. The External Examiner will not sit on the Board but will be invited to contribute and will act as the independent evaluator of quality processes, T&L and assessment their feedback and insights will input into the decision-making and on-going enhancement of the Academic Board and the College's degree programmes. These insights will be key to making improvements to course quality and provision through the Academic Board's annual reporting to the OU.

**Quoracy:**

The minimum number of board members permissible for a quorate meeting is four. This must

include the Chair or Deputy Chair and at least one External Representative not employed by Ada.

**Ways of working**

- Minutes of each Academic Board meeting will be publicly available. To provide line of sight to the College's Governing body, the minutes will be circulated to the Board of Governors and there will be a standing agenda item for the Education Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors for either the CEO or Dean to provide an update of key items of discussion at the Academic Board.
- Scrutiny of the effectiveness of the Academic Board will be provided by the Education Subcommittee.
- Meetings will be held every other month until further notice.
- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually
- Meeting papers will be circulated electronically at least 3 days in advance of the meeting
- The Chair of the Board will be responsible for ensuring the attendance of an individual that is capable of keeping an accurate record keeping and minutes are produced for each meeting or an appointed deputy will be responsible for recording actions and creating updates for the board members.

## 1.3.2 The Board of Examiners terms of reference

**Overarching Purpose:**

There must be a Programme Board of Examiners responsible for every taught programme. The Programme Board of Examiners will report to the Academic Board to ensure high standards of rigorous assessment and examination of students are maintained and that students are credited with the appropriate level of academic award based on a thorough review of their academic knowledge.

The Boards of Examiners have delegated powers from Academic Board for the determination of academic awards to students, and for decisions about the progression of students.

**Specific Activities:**

- To set, safeguard and monitor the academic standards of the programme
- To ensure that assessment, marking and moderation processes are appropriate, rigorous and fair.
- To ensure equity of treatment for students.
- To ensure that assessment has been conducted within Ada's regulations and guidance.
- To confirm module marks and determine each student's eligibility for progression, condonement, award and classification.
- To recommend students for the award of a qualification to Ada's Academic Board
- To agree actions in the event of failure including condoned failure and re-sit provisions.
- To receive a report from each External Examiner on the appropriateness of the assessment process and on the extent to which the regulations governing the assessment of students have been rigorously and consistently applied.
- To ensure that programme teams respond to issues raised by the External Examiner(s).
- To highlight any issues for discussion at Faculty or institutional level.
- To consider any matter referred to it by the Academic Board or its sub-committees
- To ensure that appropriate moderation arrangements are in place and have

**Constitution and Membership:**

Each Programme Board of Examiners will include:

a) A Chair

b) A Deputy Chair

c) At least one Internal Examiner for each main subject area covered

d) The relevant External Examiner

e) A Faculty Representative (as a non-voting observer)

f) A named secretary (as a non-voting attendee)

g) OU representative

Where the Chair of the Board considers it appropriate, an Internal or External Examiner may be appointed to examine across more than one subject area.

Other Departments involved with the delivery and examination of a programme may be represented by an appropriate Faculty Representative.

The External Examiner will be required to provide detailed feedback and understanding of their recommendations and to assist with the preservation and enhancement of quality assurance processes where deemed necessary.

**Quoracy:**

The minimum number of examiners permissible at a full meeting of a Programme Board of Examiners is four. This must include the Chair or Deputy Chair and the appointed External Examiner for the programme.

Where final decision on recommendations for an Open University award are made and where decisions about progression are made, an OU representative should always be present.

**Candidate Anonymity:**

All marks, progression decisions and awards considered by a Programme or Faculty Board of Examiners must be considered on an anonymous basis.

**Confidentiality:**

All members have the following responsibilities:

- To preserve absolutely the secrecy of unseen written examination papers at all stages until the papers have been completed by candidates in accordance with the instructions prescribed by UCL.

- To preserve confidentiality in respect of the proceedings of the Programme or Faculty Board of Examiners.

- To preserve confidentiality in respect of final awards until results have been formally published.

- To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998

**Conflicts of Interest:**

Examiners, whether Internal, Assistant Internal or External, who have a personal or professional conflict of interest should not be appointed to a Programme Board of Examiners.

External Examiners who have any current teaching or other collaborative activity with the staff or students examined by a Programme Board of Examiners may not attend

Examiners should also declare any interest in the future research supervision of a student. Such an interest will not debar an examiner from the assessment of that student but should be declared when that student's results are being discussed at the Programme Board of Examiners meeting.

**Information for Boards of Examiners:**

Boards of Examiners should receive the following information:

- Results profiles for continuing and finalist students
- The recommendations of the Head of Degree Programmes regarding extenuating circumstances
- The Scheme of Award for the degree
- Information on absences from examinations
- Examination scripts, according to normal practices

### 1.3.3 The Staff and Student Liaison Sub-committee terms of reference

**Purpose of the Committee**
The Staff and Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) is made up of student representatives and members of academic staff and provides a link between staff and students enabling discussion on matters to do with teaching and learning that don't fit the stricter remit of the Academic Board nor the College-led Teaching, Learning and Assessment Board. The SSLC deals with student feedback and input and is the main conduit for ensuring student voice within the HE programmes. Student representation on the other boards and committees ensures that the SSLC is well-informed of developments across the HE programmes in the College and can usefully inform future strategy, policy development and programme growth and evolution.

The SSLC should be consulted of any major changes to course structures or content.

The SSLC MUST NOT consider matters relating to named members of staff or students, nor is the SSLC the place for students to air their personal grievances.

**Specific Functions:**

- To discuss follow-up action resulting from previous SSLC meetings.
- To comment upon the outcome of degree programme and course evaluation questionnaires and any consequent follow-up actions
- To receive notification of any faculty and course changes with respect to teaching, admissions and assessment.
- To comment upon any significant changes to College policy which would have a

direct consequence for HE teaching, admissions, and assessment.

- To comment upon student and staff safety within the HE programmes.
- To comment upon physical resources within the College e.g. computer/library facilities etc.
- To make students aware of the College's Equality and Diversity policy and agenda
- To receive and consider copies of the annual reports of the Chairs of Boards of Examiners and College responses to External Examiner recommendations.
- To comment on feedback to students on their assessed work
- To receive, where possible and as part of the Internal Quality Review process, the College's self-evaluative Statement and the Internal Quality Review Report.
- Each year to receive and discuss the Department's Annual Student Experience Review Action Plan

The minutes of each meeting of each such Liaison Committee shall

i. Be forwarded to The Academic Board. The minutes should also be forwarded to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (TLAS).
ii. Be produced and circulated to a standard, time-frame (it is recommended that a two week time-frame for production of the minutes from the date of the meeting is a reasonable expectation).
iii. Include a standing item "matters arising from the minutes", to ensure that feedback on action points raised at previous meetings is reported.
iv. Record the names of those in attendance, giving titles and, for student members, year of study.
v. Record in the minutes any action to be taken and by whom.
vi. Be signed by at least one student member of the SSLC.
vii. Be displayed within the Department and are available to the students on-line.   Be submitted to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (TLAS)'s meetings for consideration and where necessary, further action.
viii. Be forwarded to The Academic Board for monitoring

**Composition of the Committee**

The SSLC will be chaired by the Dean of the College. There will be two staff representatives chosen through either election or nomination at the discretion of the Dean.

There will be a further 3 student representatives chosen from the College's HE student body either through election or nomination. Students will be given the choice at the start of each academic year about which approach they would like to adopt (this is in recognition of low student volumes in early years).

**Quoracy:**

The minimum number of board members permissible for a quorate meeting is four. This must include the Chair or Deputy Chair and at least two student representatives.

**Ways of working**

- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensuring the attendance of an individual that is capable of keeping an accurate record keeping and minutes are produced for each meeting
- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensure that the minutes are shared with the Chair of the Academic Board for review and discussion and subsequent meetings and that actions identified in previous sets of minutes are actioned and followed up on.
- Meetings will be held termly until further notice.
- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually
- Meeting papers will be circulated electronically at least 3 days in advance of the meeting

Reporting Mechanism

Responsibility for reporting shall rest with the Chair. Minutes of the Staff-Student Consultative Committee (SSLC) are monitored by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment sub-committee and key points raised as required. Minutes of meetings are available to staff and students via the VLE.

The Chair of the Board will be responsible for appointing a deputy if deemed necessary.

**1.3.4 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-committee terms of reference**

**Purpose of the Committee**
The committee will ensure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Ada's HE provision is of a consistently high standard. It will make evidence based recommendations for improvement in HE teaching, learning and assessment across the College's HE programmes.

It will incorporate recommendations and suggestions from the College's Curriculum Advisory Group made up of industry representatives but also its academic partners such as the Open University and other HEI's that the College is establishing a relationship with. The committee will also ensure integration across 16-19 and 19+ provision in line with Ada's over-arching approach to industry-led teaching and learning that sits at the heart of the College's mission statement and role as a Government National College.

On a regularly basis a review will be undertaken of teaching and learning across the HE programme. This will incorporate a review of the variety of assessment methods of student progress and learning outcomes. This will achieve three outcomes:

1. An on-going enhancement of pedagogical practices and student learning at Ada through on-going incremental improvements in practice that will be added to by peer-to-peer support and development as well as continuous professional development for staff and the use of self-evaluation tools for students through our VLE.
2. Implementation of evidence-based changes to assessment practice and processes.
3. The reliability of recommendations to the Board of Examiners for the awards of qualification are an accurate reflection of each HE students' progress on their programme of study and the development of the knowledge and skills against the QAA Quality Code Qualification Descriptors and Subject Specific Statements.

**Specific Functions**

Teaching:

- Review evidence and data collected from lecturer observation, student feedback relating to teaching and learning as well as HE student performance and learning outcomes to inform decision-making regarding teaching and curriculum improvements.
- Ensure a rigorous teaching evaluation framework is in place and well maintained.

Learning:

- Ensure the student voice is heard in the evaluation of teaching and learning and proposed curriculum changes
- To approve procedures for the evolution, update and changing of degree programme curriculums and assessment methods
- To consider and approve or advise on, as applicable, strategies, policies and assessment methods to ensure the learning outcomes of programmes are realized and effectively and accurately assessed

Assessment:

- Review evidence and data collected from HE student assessments both formal and, where applicable, informal to extrapolate trends and useful conclusions to inform decision making for HE student assessment
- Ensure consistency in the approach to HE student assessment across modules, pathways and programmes of study and where necessary devise appropriate intervention strategies to ensure improvement
- To propose, consider and approve or advise on, as applicable, strategies and policies designed to improve the quality of HE student assessment at the College
- Listen to the student voice, through a variety of means, to gauge whether assessment of HE students is effective and accurate and if sufficient variety of assessment methods and techniques are being employed to measure student-learning outcomes.

In addition the Committee's responsibilities also extend to:

1. Develop and review policies and procedures relating to learning, teaching and assessment in the context of the identified needs of our students and discernible good practice in higher education.
2. Advise on policy that impacts on the student learning experience focusing on the academic support and assessment provided for all students. Such areas would include learning resources, academic guidance, feedback, assessment, progression and retention.
3. Encourage, promote and disseminate good practice in the design, delivery and assessment of programmes across the Institute
4. Identify and promote staff development initiatives aimed at enhancing the overall student learning experience.
5. Make recommendations on proposals that support programme development and other learning, teaching and assessment initiatives.
6. Interact/interface with the work of other Academic Committee Sub-Committees to ensure timely and efficient consideration of business and subsequent decision-making.

7. Consider the annual module performance reports, and implement any emergent teaching, learning and assessment recommendations across all programmes
8. Promote integration of key skills, employability and the academic curriculum;
9. Report principal recommendations and actions to the Academic Board Committee

**Composition of the Committee**

The Committee will be chaired by the Head of Degree Programmes. In addition two internal staff and an external attendee from other HEI institutions or HE faculty at another FE College will be appointed. In addition a student representative will be invited to join this Board to ensure the student voice is present in discussions unless of a confidential nature.

**Quoracy:**

The minimum number of board members permissible for a quorate meeting is four. This must include the Chair or Deputy Chair.

**Ways of working**

- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensuring the attendance of an individual that is capable of keeping an accurate record keeping and minutes are produced for each meeting
- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensure that the minutes are shared with the Chair of the Academic Board for review and discussion and subsequent meetings and that actions identified in previous sets of minutes are actioned and followed up on.
- Meetings will be held termly until further notice.
- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually
- Meeting papers will be circulated electronically at least 3 days in advance of the meeting
- The Chair of the Board will be responsible for appointing a deputy if deemed necessary

**Reporting Mechanism**

Responsibility for reporting shall rest with the Chair. Minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee are monitored by the Academic Board and key points are raised as required. Minutes of meetings are available to staff and students via the VLE.

**1.3.5 The Research, Scholarship and Ethics Sub-committee terms of reference**

**Purpose of the Committee**
The committee will ensure the integrity of the degree programmes and that research and scholarship are nurtured, maintained and grown within the College – This is particularly important in the early years of the College and given the College's stated mission.

The Research, Scholarship & Ethics Committee is accountable for supporting and promoting research activities undertaken at, or in connection with, the College.

Fundamentally, the Research Committee is responsible for overseeing the systematic integration of research and scholarship into teaching; ensuring research is linked to institutional strategy; engaging with current debates about performance-based research; ensuring distinction is made between research and scholarship; ensuring an effective contribution of research to teaching; and advancing the cause of research-related qualifications amongst the academic staff.

The Research, Scholarship & Ethics Committee is also responsible for assessing internal research funding applications, making awards to successful applicants and monitoring the impact of said awards upon the production, promotion and dissemination of research undertaken at or in connection with the Institute.

Specific Functions:

- This Committee will review the scholastic content of degree programmes to ensure that research and rigorous, independent enquiry play an appropriate role all programmes but especially those at level 6 and above in line with the QAA Quality Code HE qualification guidance.

- The Committee will propose, review and recommend strategies for the improvement of the research elements of degree programmes and the on-going role of research in Faculty development

- The Committee will review relationships with other FE Colleges delivering HE provision, HEIs, professional bodies and regulatory organisations to establish and sustain relationships that will help contribute to the scholastic elements of degree programmes

- The Committee will seek out and listen to the student voice regarding the level of research driven provision delivered in appropriate modules and programmes of study to ensure it is developed appropriately across the different stages of degree programmes

- The Committee will be the independent adjudicator of ethics based queries and questions relating to the content of degree programmes, method of delivery and production of student learning outcomes making recommendations to the Academic Board for proposed amendments and courses of action

- Managing and assigning an annual budget for research activities at the College.

- Investigating opportunities for external research funding to support the College's activities in this regard.

- Encouraging (within reasonable budgetary confines) direct College involvement in relevant scholarly events in the UK and/or internationally.

- Producing and maintaining the Institute Research Strategy.

- Promoting, publicising and disseminating research activity at the College in creative and engaging ways.

- Promoting research and continual professional development among staff at the College.

- Considering only matters of ethics in relation to research; it is not the place of the Panel to make judgments in respect of other considerations, such as where the research sits within the overall philosophical approach.

**Composition of the Committee**

The Head of Degree Programmes will Chair the Committee. In addition two internal faculty members and an external attendee from another HEI institutions or HE faculty at another FE College will

attend the committee on an 'as needed' basis. A student representative will be nominated to join this Board to ensure the student voice is present in discussions unless of a confidential nature.

**Quoracy:**

The minimum number of board members permissible for a quorate meeting is three. This must include the Chair or Deputy Chair.

**Ways of working**

- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensuring the attendance of an individual that is capable of keeping an accurate record keeping and minutes are produced for each meeting
- It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee to ensure that the minutes are shared with the Chair of the Academic Board for review and discussion and subsequent meetings and that actions identified in previous sets of minutes are actioned and followed up on.
- Meetings will be held twice per year until further notice.
- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually
- Meeting papers will be circulated electronically at least 3 days in advance of the meeting
- The Chair of the Board will be responsible for appointing a deputy if deemed necessary.

**Frequency**

Two per year

**Reporting Mechanism**

Responsibility for reporting shall rest with the Chair. Minutes of the Research, Scholarship & Ethics Committee are monitored by the Academic Board and key points are raised as required. Minutes of meetings are available to staff and students via the VLE.

## 1.4 Policies and Procedures (Admission, Misconduct and Appeals)

The College is focused on being a centre of excellence for the teaching and learning of advanced digital skills. To that end it takes seriously the admission of its student body and seeks to provide guidance and expectation for them once enrolled at the College. Ada seeks a student body that is diverse but united by a common passion for learning and exploring digital skills within a defined framework of study. The following policies help ensure we meet this objective:

### 1.4.1 The Admissions Policy Statement

**Objectives and principles**

The College recruits students from a diversity of backgrounds, admitting to its programme those applicants who, by virtue of their interests, abilities, knowledge, experience and motivation, will be best assisted to realise their full academic, creative or professional potential by benefiting from the College's educational provision.

The College wants students to gain the highest level of award of which they are capable. Therefore the admission of each student is based on a reasonable expectation that the applicant will be able to achieve the aims and outcomes of the programme and the standard required for the award for which they wish to register.

This expectation can be demonstrated through a wide variety of forms of preparation, including relevant experiential learning derived from employment or voluntary work, through vocational and professional awards, as well as through conventional certificated qualifications. Where appropriate for some identified groups offers will be contextualised to ensure all those who have the potential to benefit from higher education have the opportunity to participate.

**Equality of opportunity**

The admissions process is consistent with the College's Equality and Diversity Policy and its commitment to encouraging the enrolment of students from many different backgrounds, especially from those groups currently under-represented in further and higher education. The admissions process is fair and equitable and applies equally to all individuals. There are specific procedures for applicants declaring a disability and for applicants declaring a criminal conviction, as follows:

Applicants declaring a disability: An applicant declaring a disability on their application will be contacted to discuss their required support needs whilst at the College. The academic decision on an application is made independent of any disability support needs. The emphasis in the disability procedure is to support the applicant as required additional support needs will be discussed with an applicant and recorded to form the basis of a support plan for the student whilst at the College. Applicants with criminal convictions As part of its duty of care, the College asks all applicants with unspent criminal convictions to disclose them and to provide further information where needed. A criminal conviction is not of itself an automatic cause for rejection. The emphasis in the criminal conviction procedure is not to discriminate against or further punish an applicant, but to make a responsible assessment of risk to the College's programme, other students, staff and other members of the community, which may impact on the College.

**Pre-entry information and guidance**

The College shall provide accurate, relevant and up to date information to ensure that all applicants have a realistic understanding of the programme for which they may apply and the conditions they would be expected to meet to be offered a place. The information should include as a minimum:

- Mode of delivery of modules
- Duration of modules, and of the Academic Programme as a whole
- Start date of the Academic Programmes
- Professional placements
- Module details in outline
- Average contact time
- Assessment methods
- Entry requirements
- Career opportunities and graduate employment
- Student satisfaction survey reports
- On-campus services and support
- Information about local services

For Higher Level and Degree Apprentices this will be shared through their employer either at the time of their application for the apprenticeship or upon acceptance of the offer of an apprenticeship.

**Application**

All apprentices must be interviewed, assessed and offered a position by an employer before being admitted to the degree. Although the College may receive direct applications and filter these applications before passing them to prospective employers. Upon acceptance of an offer of an

apprenticeship, the College's employer partners will share the stipulated data required to ensure the applicant meets the College's minimum entry criteria (see later section) and that the below criteria are met.

All direct applicants for full-time or part-time courses can apply direct to the College through its Online Application System or send a hard copy application to the College. Direct applicants to the College will require a formal application, which will be processed according to the following criteria:

Criteria for admission:

- The College will communicate with all applicants using the contact details provided on the application.
- The deadline for application is generally six weeks before the start date of the programme.
- The deadline is suggested to ensure that an application can be processed in detail and properly, in time for applicants to prepare themselves for induction, enrolment and study. Late applications and subsequent delays in the application consideration process can be to the detriment of the student' and their engagement in their programme of study.
- Qualifications submitted in support of an application should be copies. No responsibility will be taken for the return of original certificates. The original certificates should be brought to enrolment for inspection.
- Applicant information is used primarily for the purposes of application processing. For students who are admitted to the College, the data becomes part of their student record. All data is held and processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

**Recruitment and selection**

- In assessing the suitability of applicants for admission and the suitability of the College for the applicant, admissions staff ensure that applicants are in a position to benefit from the College's provision, that the provision will make appropriate demands of the applicant, and that the applicant's motivation for the course of study and for the institution is high.
- Recruitment and selection decisions are made using the application, references, interviews where appropriate, records of achievement and examination results (which are interpreted in the context of the applicant's personal and educational situation).
- Admission Tutors reserves the right to interview any applicant with non-traditional qualifications or who has been out of education for a time. This is to ensure that the applicant is ready for Higher Education and to identify additional support that may be required.
- The College does not use 'Admissions Tests' for each student it recruits but some interviews may be conducted if required and an interview may include short tests

**Entry requirements**

To be eligible for admission to a programme an applicant must satisfy the General Entry Requirement as follows:  Applicants must have one of the following:

- Three full A-Level Qualifications at grade C or above
- AND/OR Level 3 (QCF) BTEC National Diploma in Information Technology, or computing related courses.
- Level 2 Professional qualification in a suitable computing related area.

- Additionally, students are normally required to have a grade C in GCSE Maths and English Language or to have demonstrated ability in Maths and English in further studies.

- In exceptional cases, the College may admit students who do not satisfy the above requirements, provided that they are able to demonstrate that by virtue of other studies and/or experience, they are capable of managing their studies and benefiting from the route. Mature students Non-traditional or mature students (aged at least 21 by 31st December of the year of admission) who do not meet these criteria will be considered on an individual basis as an 'admissions decision'. The decision on admission will be based on assessment of the candidate's ability to successfully complete the route. Applicants will be judged using the following criteria:

  - Evidence of ability for self-organisation
  - Evidence of ability to work independently
  - The motivation to learn
  - Interest in the subject area
  - Evidence of ability to work with others
  - Evidence that they will benefit from the programme of study

- The College aims to process applications and inform applicants of decisions in a timely and professional manner. In order to achieve this, the College shall:

  - Acknowledge all applications on receipt of the application form
  - Process all decisions as efficiently as possible
  - Aim to communicate the decision within five working days where the applicant has provided all required information, or to progress the application to the next stage in cases where interviews or other additional selection methods are utilised.
  - Record a reason if an applicant is rejected
  - Provide the reason for rejection on receipt of a written request from the applicant
  - Inform offer holders at the earliest opportunity if any significant changes are made to the programme applied for and advise of the options available

## Complaints about entry decisions

- The College treats all applications in a fair, equitable and professional manner and aims to respond to all enquiries promptly, courteously and to the satisfaction of the enquirer. The decisions on applications are final, and there is no right of appeal against them.
- In the event that an applicant is dissatisfied with the handling of their application, the College will consider a complaint against any decision only if there is substantive evidence of an irregularity in the processing of the application in question ((for example. failure to make a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability).
- For all applicants, complaints concerning an application should be addressed to the Chief Executive officer.

## Conclusion
By clearly matching applicants to the programme, the College will work towards a situation in which it is the institution of first choice for those applicants whose needs it is best able to serve, will enhance retention and success rates.

## 1.4.2 Misconduct

## Scope and Purpose of Policy
This policy applies to all further and higher education students of the College, whether full time or part time, including all full time 16-19 year olds enrolled with the College via direct recruitment.

This policy is expressed through a Code of Conduct. Students are expected to adhere to this Code in return for being admitted to the College and being provided with education and other services and facilities. It also sets out the procedure to be followed where the Code of Conduct is breached.

Breach of the Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action being taken against a student and repeated breaches or a single serious breach may result in a student being suspended or withdrawn from the College.

## Policy Statement
The College expects students to behave well and to abide by the Code of Conduct at all times whilst present on College premises or whilst participating in any offsite activity on behalf of or managed by Ada. The College will make an appropriate response or take action, including disciplinary action, where the behaviour or actions of a student breaches the Code of Conduct.

## Principles
The stated aim of the college is to produce rounded individuals who are ready to enter the workplace or continue onto to further academic study. This requires students to be able to self manage their emotions and general conduct. As young people who have recently left the highly structured environment of school, our students will need very clear guidance and expectations to be able to reach the stage of maturity necessary to function effectively and independently in the workplace. It is therefore crucial that all staff adopt a consistent approach to student conduct, both in terms of their expectations and in the management of conduct that is not conducive to a productive work environment.

## Recognising positive conduct
A positive environment is the cornerstone of successful outcomes for students. We would expect all students to behave in a manner that reflects well on them and on the college. It is important that we recognise positive behaviour as part of the behaviour policy. Positive behaviour should be regularly recognised through verbal praise, calls home to parents/carers, certificates for 100% punctuality and/or attendance, and in exceptional cases with letters to be kept on the student file, and to be included in student portfolios.
However there may be circumstances when behaviour falls short of expectations, and this will be addressed through the measures outlined in this policy.

## Definition of negative conduct
Negative conduct is defined as being any conduct that is likely to impact on other students or on staff or visitors in an unconstructive way. At the most basic level, this could mean levels of noise in shared working spaces that mean it is difficult for others to work productively. More serious incidents can include bullying, possession of illegal substances, and theft. Each of these types of incident need to generate an appropriate consequence, so it is useful to categorise these as low, medium, and high level.

**Equal Opportunities Statement**  In accordance with College procedures, an equality impact assessment for this policy was undertaken in December 2016

**Location and Access to the Policy**  This policy can be accessed from the Approved Policies folder within the college's Google Drive.

**Person Responsible for the Policy:**  Dean

## Code of conduct for students

## Obligations of Students

When present on College premises or whilst participating in any off-site activity on behalf of or managed by Ada, students are expected to:

- Wear their student ID badge and to show to a member of staff when asked to do so
- Behave in a way that respects the needs and aspirations of others to learn, teach and live within the community of the College when using any of the College facilities.
- Be punctual, attend all sessions required by their course timetable and undertake all associated work.
- Understand and adhere to College rules, regulations and policies, including the prompt payment of fees.
- Familiarise themselves with the College's Health and Safety regulations, comply with those regulations and act at all times with due regard for their own safety and that of others.
- Respect the property of the College, and its staff, other students and visitors.
- Support staff and other students in the maintenance of a clean and tidy environment throughout the College.
- Follow the reasonable instructions of any member of College Staff.
- Comply with the College 'No Smoking' Policy (see page 6)
- Comply with the College's IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Comply with the College's Safeguarding Policies including the Prevent Policy which aims to prevent the radicalisation of staff and students.

**Students should also refer to the section on *Student Support, Guidance and Advice* in section 9 of the HE Student Handbook.**

**Misconduct**  The following are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action being taken against students. **The list is not exhaustive**:

- Failure to wear or refusal to produce a student related identity card, without good reason, if asked to do so by a member of College staff (NB: non production of the ID card could lead to a student being escorted from the College premises).
- Any breach of any of the students' obligations set out above (including non- payment of fees which are due, any breach of Health and Safety or other regulations of the College).
- Any failure to follow the reasonable instructions of a member of staff (NB. Failure to follow reasonable instructions may result in a student's removal from College premises).
- Any smoking on College premises outside of the designated smoking areas
- Any cheating, plagiarism or copying of the work of other students.
- Any noisy or unruly behaviour or the use of foul or abusive language.
- Disrupting any class or other College activity, whether or not involving staff or other students or visitors, including persistent lateness or non–attendance. Failure to attend any part of the programme of study, including English and maths, may lead to disciplinary action.
- Deliberately or by gross negligence causing damage to any College buildings, equipment, books or furnishings or any property of others.
- Participating in or willingly permitting unauthorised interference with software or data belonging to or used by the College.
- Any theft of property or any other dishonest acts.
- Any drunkenness or behaviour consistent with the use of controlled substances on College premises or activity associated with the College or the use, possession, supply, or intent to supply, any controlled substance or alcoholic beverage.
- Any bullying, intimidation, taunting, verbal abuse or the use of any violence or threat of violence towards any person including through the use of social media both inside and outside of College.
- Any language or behaviour which is racially or sexually inappropriate/offensive or which is inappropriate/offensive to those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and any other students with protected characteristics (see appendix 1)

- Any behaviour which could bring the College into disrepute.
- Any illegal act which may have an adverse effect on the work or reputation of the  College, other students, staff or visitors.
- Refusal to comply with the requirement for drugs and alcohol testing if staff deem it necessary through student behaviour on site.

## The Disciplinary Procedure

### Introduction
The College expects that students will behave in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Students and that members of staff, as part of their day to day contact with students, will ensure that good standards of behaviour are maintained at all times.

### Informal stage
Where petty misconduct or poor behaviour, which is not of a serious nature, is observed, staff may need to take action at an informal level. Where there are low level issues, Schools will work with students to try and resolve them prior to the formal disciplinary process being invoked. Examples of issues that might be dealt with through the informal stage are lateness, attendance, missing of deadlines. Schools will maintain records of all issues dealt with at the informal stage. Every effort should be made to avoid the use of formal disciplinary action.

### Formal Process

### STAGE 1 - Repeated petty misconduct or more serious misconduct leading to a recorded verbal warning
- Where petty misconduct is repeated or the misconduct is considered to warrant more formal treatment, a member of staff may record a verbal warning to the student concerned. (Form 1) This should include the reasons for the warning and the consequences of misconduct.
- The recorded verbal warning should be given, where practicable, after talking to the student and seeking an explanation of the alleged misconduct and taking into account any explanation given.
- The warning will not be in writing to the student, but should be reported to the appropriate Course Leader and Dean so that the form can be placed on the student's personal file.
- Students will be told that a note of the recorded verbal warning will be placed on their file.

### STAGE 2 - Repeated misconduct or more serious misconduct leading to a disciplinary interview

**Notification of Disciplinary Interview (Letter 1)** Where the misconduct is of a more serious nature or where similar misconduct has been repeated after one or more official warnings, the student will be invited to attend a Stage 2 disciplinary interview with a member of the course staff. The student will be given at least five working days' notice and will be provided with the following details in writing:
- The nature of the alleged misconduct and a summary of the evidence for the complaint
- The student's entitlement to accompaniment (detailed below)
- Confirmation of the time and place of the interview
- If the student fails to attend without good reason, the disciplinary  hearing will go ahead in their absence using the facts as recorded.  The Stage 2 disciplinary interview will take place within a maximum of 15 working days of the alleged misconduct unless there are exceptional circumstances which will be agreed with the Dean.

**Format of Interview** The member of staff conducting the interview must not have had prior involvement in any previous stage of the disciplinary process relating to the complaint. The interview will be documented (Form 2).

The student will be entitled to be accompanied at the interview by a friend at the College who is not involved in the allegation, a relative or a student representative but not a legal or other professional adviser and will be entitled to state his or her case (including any mitigating circumstances) before any decision is taken. If English is not the student's first language the student may be accompanied by an interpreter if necessary. If the student is receiving support from the College's Learning Support Services, they may be accompanied by their support worker if this is appropriate.

**Outcome of the Interview** After hearing the student's case, the member of staff may decide to issue a formal written warning (Letter 2) or a recorded verbal warning (Form 1), or may decide that no disciplinary sanction would be appropriate. Where a verbal or written warning is issued it will be recorded in the students file. Practical measures to avoid any recurrence may also be implemented; these may include notifying other college staff of the details of the student, the nature of the offence and any action required by them to prevent a recurrence (Form 4). Any formal written warning will be issued within five working days of the interview. It will give brief reasons for the decision and will state that any repeated or similar misconduct by the student may result in the student's formal suspension or withdrawal of their studies with the College.

**Appeal against the outcome of a Stage 2 Disciplinary hearing** The student will have the right to appeal against the decision of the Stage 2 Disciplinary Interview. Where this is the case they must apply in writing to the Dean within 7 working days of being notified of the decision of the outcome of the interview. The letter must give the grounds for appealing against the decision. The Dean will invite the student to a further hearing with themselves and one of their Faculty Heads. This interview will be offered within 10 working days of receiving the written appeal (Letter 3). The student will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the date and time of the hearing. The appeal hearing will be held within 10 working days of receiving the written appeal unless there are exceptional circumstances as approved by the Dean.

**Format of Interview** The student will be entitled to be accompanied at the interview by a friend at the College who is not involved in the allegation, a relative or a student representative but not a legal or other professional adviser and will be entitled to state the grounds for the appeal (including any mitigating factors) before any decision is taken. If English is not the student's first language the student may be accompanied by an interpreter if necessary. If the student is receiving support from the College's Learning Support Services, they may be accompanied by their support worker if this is appropriate. The interview will be documented (Form 2)

**Outcome of an Appeal** The student will be informed in writing within 5 working days as to whether the appeal has been upheld or rejected. This decision is final (Letter 4) The student's record will be updated in accordance with the result of the appeal.

**STAGE 2.5** The Dean can choose, in particular circumstances, to introduce an additional stage prior to Stage 3, for example, in dealing with attendance issues. Students with persistent poor attendance may be invited to a disciplinary hearing with a Faculty Head in the School in an attempt to prevent escalation to Stage 3. Following the Stage 2 procedures above for inviting the student in and noting the outcome.

**STAGE 3 -** Further misconduct following a formal written warning, repeated serious misconduct or gross misconduct leading to a disciplinary hearing. The Dean must complete the Stage 3 Checklist (Form 5) for each Stage 3 disciplinary hearing.

**Behaviour resulting in a Stage 3 Disciplinary Procedure**
Any particularly serious cases of misconduct may be treated by the College as gross misconduct. Examples of behaviour likely to be treated as gross misconduct may include but are not restricted to:
– any misconduct involving violence or a serious threat of violence, deliberate damage to property, endangering the health or safety of others, unacceptable behaviour where students act

inappropriately towards another student or member of staff, any criminal activities affecting the College or other students (or which could bring the College into disrepute). It is emphasised that this is not an exhaustive list of the types of activities which the College may treat as gross misconduct. In cases where it is alleged that gross misconduct has occurred or where further misconduct occurs after a formal written warning has been given to a student, the student will be invited to attend a Stage 3 disciplinary interview (Letter 5).

**Suspension Prior to a Stage 3 Disciplinary Interview**
A student may be suspended from the College immediately, pending the disciplinary interview, where a member of staff has reason to believe that the student has committed an act of gross misconduct or where there have been repeated acts of misconduct. Any such suspension should be agreed by the Dean of the College and confirmed in writing within two working days of its occurrence. The student will be invited to a Stage 3 interview with the Dean, or if unavailable, a Faculty Head, and will be given at least 5 working days written notice. (Letter 5)  Where an individual member of staff considers that a student has committed an act of gross misconduct which would warrant immediate suspension without prior consultation with a senior colleague of the College, they can suspend a student with immediate effect. This action should only be taken in an absolute emergency, for example, where failure to do so would place other students and/or members of staff at risk. In such a case, the relevant Faculty Head, or if unavailable, the Dean, must be informed at the earliest convenient point and certainly within 24 hours of the suspension. A full written report on the reason for the suspension and the circumstances leading up to it must be submitted to the Dean at the time of notifying him/her of the suspension. The Dean will then consider the suspension and decide whether to uphold the decision made. If the decision is made to uphold the decision, the procedure outlined in the preceding paragraph will then be followed, with the Dean confirming the suspension in writing within two working days of receiving the written report. Where the Dean decides not to confirm the suspension, this decision will be communicated, in writing, to the student within two working days of receiving the written report.

Whenever a student is suspended from College, it is the responsibility of the member of staff who has taken action to suspend the student to notify the college's reception desk immediately and confirm details of the suspension on the College's attendance system (Form 3). If necessary the member of staff taking the action will also escort the student from College premises.
The reception desk should also be notified of the date of the disciplinary hearing once it is known. While a student is suspended he/she will not receive financial support from any of the financial support schemes.
The Faculty to which the student is enrolled will ensure work is provided so that the student can continue with their studies whilst suspended.

**Invitation to Stage 3 Disciplinary Interview.** The student will be given at least five working days' written notice of the initial interview (Letter 5) and will be entitled to be. The Stage 3 disciplinary interview will take place within a maximum of 15 working days of the alleged offence unless there are exceptional circumstances which will be agreed with the Dean. Where a student has been suspended, the Stage 3 disciplinary interview will take place within a maximum of 10 working days unless there are exceptional circumstances which will be agreed with the Dean.

The student will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend at the College who is not involved in the allegation, a relative or a student representative but not a legal or other professional adviser unless the College otherwise agrees, having been given notice before the day of the hearing. If English is not the student's first language they may be accompanied by an interpreter if necessary. If the student is receiving support from the College's Learning Support Services, they may be accompanied by their support worker if this is appropriate. A legal or other professional adviser will be allowed if the College intends to have an external adviser present.
The notice will state:

- the nature of the alleged misconduct and a summary of the evidence
- the student's entitlement to accompaniment (see above) and
- confirmation of the time and place of the interview
- that because of the nature of the misconduct alleged or because formal written warning has already been given, it may be recommended that he/she be withdrawn from their studies at the College as a result.
- that if the student fails to attend without good reason, the disciplinary interview will go ahead in their absence using the facts as recorded.

## Format of the Interview

The Dean will conduct the stage three disciplinary interview. In the event that the Dean is not available, a Faculty Head in the School will conduct the interview. The Dean or Faculty Head conducting the interview will be accompanied by a second senior staff member, or another Faculty Head of the College and one other senior member of the teaching staff with a pastoral role. The role of this third staff member is to ensure consistency of approach across the College. Neither members of staff accompanying the Dean or Faculty Head should have had any prior involvement in any previous stage of the process. An independent member of staff will also attend to take notes of the meeting (Form 2). The Dean or Faculty Head who chairs the meeting will take the student through the allegations which have led to the allegation of misconduct. The student will be given the opportunity to state their case (including any mitigating circumstances) and asked to state whether the alleged facts are disputed and, if so, which facts. If material facts are disputed, the student will be asked to identify and provide any sources of evidence supporting their case.

If the student does not dispute the material facts relating to any one or more complaints of further or gross misconduct, the Dean or Faculty Head conducting the interview may bring the interview to a close and make a disciplinary recommendation in relation to those complaints, taking into account any mitigating circumstances.

If the student disputes the material facts relating to the allegations, the Dean or Faculty Head conducting the interview will adjourn the interview for a future date within the next 10 working days to allow relevant evidence (including from sources identified by the student) to be made available. The Dean or Faculty Head may arrange for witnesses to be available in person for the reconvened interview or (where in the view of the Dean or Faculty Head that is not practicable) for written statements to be taken by another member of staff (Letter 6).

Where a stage three interview is adjourned pending further investigation, any student who has been suspended under this provision will remain suspended until the interview is reconvened.

Copies of any documentary evidence, together with copies of any written statements will be provided to the student at least five working days before the reconvened interview. The student will have the right to question any evidence presented in the form of a written statement.

If a witness is not available to answer questions, that will be taken into account by the Dean or Faculty Head when assessing the weight to be given to any evidence available.

Written statements which do not reveal the name of the witness will not be considered other than in the most exceptional circumstances i.e. any form of harassment.

If the student fails to attend the disciplinary interview without prior notice or good reason the hearing will go ahead with the facts available and a recommendation made accordingly.

## Outcome of the Interview

Within five working days of the end of the Stage 3 interview, the Dean or Faculty Head who chaired the interview will notify the student, in writing, of the recommendation which they have made in relation to the case. The correspondence will state the main findings on which the recommendation is made (Letter 7 or 8).

## Dean's Decision

The staff member chairing the interview must then discuss their recommendation with the Dean (either via telephone or face to face) within 5 working days.  The recommendation may be to withdraw the student from their studies in College. If the Dean agrees, Letter 9 will be issued to the student, however, if the recommendation is not upheld, Letter 10 will be issued instead.  If the recommendation is that a lesser disciplinary sanction should be taken or that no disciplinary action should be taken, and the Dean agrees, no action is required. If the Dean disagrees with the recommendation, they will issue Letter 7 to the student with details of how to appeal.  When the recommendation is for the student to be withdrawn from their studies in College, reception desk staff must be notified of the student's details and the conditions applying to the withdrawal and the student's attendance record flagged accordingly (Form 3). Sufficient detail should be recorded to allow staff to make an  informed decision on a possible return to College in the future. It is the responsibility of the Dean/ Faculty Head who chaired the Stage 3 interview to ensure the attendance record is amended accordingly.

**Appeal to the Dean against the recommendation**

**Right to Appeal** The student will have the right of appeal to the Dean, or their representative, against any recommendation for the student to be withdrawn from their studies in College. Notice of appeal must be lodged with the Clerk to the Corporation within seven working days of the day of the receipt of the letter recommending exclusion or suspension and must give the grounds and brief particulars of the appeal.

**Appeal Interview Format** If a notice of appeal is lodged within the time allowed, an appeal interview with the Dean will be arranged to take place within fifteen working days of the notice of appeal being lodged (Letter 11). The student will be given at least five working days' notice of the time and place of the appeal interview and will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend, student representative, or relative, but not by a legal or other professional adviser unless the College otherwise agrees, having been given notice before the day of the hearing. A legal or other professional adviser will be allowed if the College intends to have an external adviser present. If English is not the student's first language they may be accompanied by an interpreter if necessary. If the student is receiving support from the College's Learner Support Services, they may be accompanied by their support worker if this is appropriate. Any documents considered at the Stage 3 interview will be available for the purposes of the appeal, together with the notes of the Stage 3 interview. The appeal hearing will be held within 10 working days of receiving the written appeal unless there are exceptional circumstances as approved by the Dean.  At the appeal interview the student will be invited to explain the grounds of the appeal and to state his or her case.  If the student fails to attend without prior notice or good reason, the appeal hearing will go ahead in their absence using the facts as recorded  The Dean or Faculty Head who made the recommendation to exclude or suspend will be asked to respond to the appeal and explain the reasons for the recommendation.  The Dean, or their representative, may ask questions of the student and the member of staff and will then consider whether to allow or dismiss the appeal. Witnesses will not normally be asked to attend except in relation to any relevant new evidence which has come to light since the second stage interview.

**Outcome of the Appeal** If the appeal is allowed, the Dean or their representative, may decide that disciplinary action lesser than that recommended by the member of staff should be taken, including a shorter period of withdrawal from studies. The Dean may also decide that no further disciplinary action should be taken.

If the appeal is dismissed, the recommendation of the member of staff will stand. The Dean, or their representative, may not impose any greater sanction against the student than that recommended by the senior member of staff.

The Dean will make the final decision on the outcome of the appeal.

Within five working days of the appeal interview, the final decision by the Dean will be confirmed in writing to the student and the Dean.

If the appeal against withdrawal from studies is successful the reception desk must be informed and attendance record amended appropriately. (Form 3).

Notice of appeal to an Independent Review Panel must be lodged with the Dean's office within seven working days of the day of the receipt of the letter confirming the final decision by the Dean of Ada.

The decision of the Independent Review Panel is final.

**Complaint to Skills Funding Agency about the outcome of an appeal**
If the decision to withdraw a student from their studies at College is confirmed and the student has exhausted the appeal procedure but remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they have the right to make a complaint against the College to the Skills Funding Agency or the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education students.

At the point at which the student is notified that their appeal has been unsuccessful, they should be advised of their right to make such a complaint to the Skills Funding Agency or the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education students.

Contact details for the Skills Funding Agency and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator can be found in the College's Students Complaints Policy.

**Criminal Offences**
Where any member of staff has reason to believe that a student may have committed a criminal offence, the College may refer the matter to the police and may continue disciplinary proceedings under this procedure or suspend the student pending the outcome of police enquiries and any charges which may be brought against the student. The college will liaise with the police to confirm whether there is any reason why the disciplinary proceedings should not continue. Where the student has been suspended under this provision, when the results of those enquiries and any criminal proceedings are known, the College reserves the right to recommence proceedings under this procedure in relation to the matter.  It is emphasised that in relation to the application of this procedure, the College is not bound by the results of any criminal proceedings against students.

**Guidance for staff  - Conduct of Interview**
Disciplinary and appeals interviews under this Code will be conducted fairly by the member of staff conducting the interview who will be accompanied by another member of staff to take notes.
The member of staff conducting the interview may give instructions in relation to the conduct of the interview (without limitation) as to the length of time which any part of the interview should take. Such instructions must be fair, particularly in allowing the student to question the evidence and state his or her case.
The member of staff conducting the interview may exclude from the proceedings any person (including the student or the student's friend, representative or relative) who behaves unreasonably or who disregards the instructions of the member of staff with regard to the interview.
If the student does not attend any interview without prior notification of a good reason, the hearing will proceed in their absence.  Note Taking  Record keeping is an integral part of the procedure. It is the responsibility of both College staff and the student to make their own notes throughout the process.
Time Periods – With the exception of the time allowed for lodging an appeal, time periods stated in this Code are for guidance and may be varied by the College if it is not practicable to adhere to them. Written notice of any such variation will be given.  Periods of days in this Code are working days

(excluding Saturdays, Sundays and some College holiday periods) unless specified otherwise. Documents sent by first class post will be deemed to be received within forty-eight hours of posting.

**Students under 18/Sponsored Students**
If a further education student under 18 years of age is the subject of proceedings under this Code, wherever practicable a parent or guardian will be invited to attend any disciplinary or appeal interviews (in addition to any friend or student representative) unless in the view of the member of staff conducting the interview, such attendance would be prejudicial to a fair and effective interview.

If a student under the age of 18 is given a formal written warning, suspended from the College or withdrawn from their studies with the College, a parent or guardian will be informed in writing.

If a full time 14-16 year old student is the subject of proceedings under this Code, a parent or guardian will be invited to attend any disciplinary or appeal interviews (in addition to a friend or student representative). The parent/guardian will be informed of the outcome in writing. Where a full time 14-16 year old student is suspended or withdrawn from their studies, the local authority will be informed along with the grounds for the suspension or withdrawal from studies and the student's contact address as the local authority must make alternative provision for the student. Where there is a possibility of a 14-16 year old student being excluded, the College will inform the parent/guardian and local authority at the earliest stage.

If a student who is being sponsored with the College by an employer is given a formal written warning or withdrawn from their studies with the College, the employer will be informed wherever practicable.

**Emergency Assistance when Dealing with Threatening or Disruptive Behaviour**
Where a student is behaving in a disruptive or threatening manner and a member of staff believes that, in the interests of other staff or students, they need to be removed from College premises, contact should be made with the reception desk. In such circumstances the Dean should be promptly informed of the incident so that the matter can be investigated and appropriate action taken.

**Variations and Amendments to this Policy**
In some cases it may be desirable that variations should be made to procedural aspects of the Policy. The College may make such variations as it sees fit, subject to informing the student concerned and subject always to considerations of fairness. Without limitation, such variations may include disciplinary or appeals interviews being conducted by different persons, if the person who would otherwise be conducting the interview has previously had close personal involvement in the matter to be considered.

This Policy may be updated/amended as required. Any updates will be subject to the approval of the College Senior Management Team

**1.4.3 Appeals, complaints and data protection procedures**

**Procedures for Appeals and Complaints**

For full details please refer to the College's appeals and complaints policy found on the College's VLE.

**General**
An appeal is a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progression, assessment and awards. A complaint is different, and arises from a specific concern about the adequacy or quality of the provision of a programme of study or related academic service. The College believes that students should be able to raise matters of concern without fear of

disadvantage and in the knowledge that their privacy and confidentiality will be respected as will that of members of staff.

**How to make an appeal**
You are strongly encouraged to discuss any matters leading you to consider appealing with your Personal Tutor before submitting a formal appeal. Depending on the circumstances, your personal tutor may be able to help you resolve your concerns in consultation with the Board of Examiners without the need for you to make a formal appeal. If you decide to appeal, you may wish to seek advice on completing the Appeal Form with your personal tutor.

**Timescale for appeals**
Your appeal must be submitted in writing to the CEO's Office within one calendar month of the date of the letter notifying you of the decision against which the appeal is directed. The College aims to deal with appeals as quickly as possible. However, you should be aware that it may take some time before your appeal is resolved. You may be asked to provide further information before your appeal can be considered

**Action following appeal procedures**
The student will be sent a written statement setting out the decision that has been made and the reasons for reaching that decision, together with any actions required by the student or the College to follow up and implement that decision. The outcome will be either to:

- rescind the original decision, or
- vary the original decision, or
- reject the appeal.

The written statement will also include details of any further right of appeal available to the student if they remain dissatisfied with the final outcome of the College's procedures. This will include, where applicable, the right to appeal to The Open University

**Complaints Handling Procedure**
The College is committed to providing all its users with high quality services and we aim to do so fairly and efficiently.  However there may be times where a student, feels that his/her expectations have not been met. Where this happens, our procedures aim to make it as easy as possible for users to submit a complaint. The procedures and guides listed describe our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. You can complain about things like:

- The quality and standard of any service we provide or fail to provide
- The quality of our facilities and learning resources
- The quality and standards of academic services and personal support services available to you
- Failure of the College to follow an appropriate administrative processes
- Unfair treatment or inappropriate behaviour by a student or staff member.

**Equality and Diversity**
The College is committed to and strives for equality of opportunity for all its students and staff (existing and prospective) and will recognise and celebrate their diversity. In practice this means that we:

- are committed to providing an environment where all people are respected and treated fairly regardless of irrelevant characteristics or distinctions such as: gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, socio-economic group / background, religious

belief / faith, political belief or affiliation, marital status, family responsibilities and sexual orientation;
- will develop a culture in which diversity is celebrated;
- will not discriminate unfairly or illegally against anyone and will take positive action to
- promote equality and diversity;
- embed equality and diversity at the heart of our mission and values, including action against individuals who behave in a discriminatory manner.

For details of the full Equality and Diversity policy please refer to the College's policy repository

**Data Protection summary for Students**
The Data Protection Act 1998 sets out rules for processing personal information, and it applies to some paper records as well as those held on computer. The Act gives individuals certain rights, and also imposes obligations on those who record and use personal information to be open about how information is used and to follow eight data protection principles. Personal data must be processed following these principles so that data are:
- processed fairly and lawfully and only if certain conditions are met
- obtained for specified and lawful purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate and where necessary kept up to date
- not be kept for longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the subject's rights
- kept secure
- not transferred abroad without adequate protection

For details of the full Data Protection policy please refer to the College's policy repository

**Your rights**
You are entitled to have access to information held about you, except where releasing that information would breach another person's privacy. You also have rights to prevent data processing likely to cause unwarranted damage to distress, and to prevent processing for the purpose of direct marketing.

**Your responsibilities**
Any personal data must be collected, processed and held according to the data protection principles, whether this is on your own behalf or as part of your research or studies. The University and Colleges are responsible for the data collected for their own proper purposes, and if you have access to this information you must follow relevant policy and procedure. If you process data on your own behalf, you are responsible for compliance with the law.

**How your data is used by the University and Colleges**
Information is shared between the University and Colleges, and is used for a full range of student administration including education, research, support services, statutory returns, alumni relations, accounts, public relations, security and crime prevention. Full details on the University and Colleges' notifications with the Information Commissioner are available at:
http://www.dpr.gov.uk/search.html )

**Health and Safety**
The College recognises and accepts its responsibility to ensure the health and safety of its students whilst at the College, as well as its obligations to employees, contractors and visitors.

The College's Health and Safety Policy Statement, along with procedures, guidance and forms are available on the College's VLE.

## 1.6 Roles and responsibilities of the management team and teaching staff

It is the responsibility of the management team to make sure that teaching staff focus their professional activity on delivering those learning outcomes listed in the degree specification under programme outcomes as:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Cognitive skills
- Practical and professional skills
- Key transferable skills

Specific roles are:

CEO:

The CEO has overall responsibility for the performance of the College as set out in the College's business plan and in time its strategic plan.

The CEO is held accountable by the Governing body of the College and his or her role is to implement the agreed overall plan for the College and ensure that the KPIs defined to measure performance against this plan are met. The CEO is the accountable officer.

Dean

The Dean of the College is in charge of the day-to-day running of the College and ensuring that FE and HE students can study in a safe and effective learning environment that meets their needs. The Dean has particular responsibility for the quality of teaching, the resources of the College and the operations management of the College and is held accountable by the CEO for the College's KPIs in this regard.

Head of Degree Programmes:

The Head of Degree programmes is in charge of the HE Programmes that the College delivers and for ensuring the quality, rigour and growth of this provision.

He or she is focused on maintaining high standards of teaching and learning and the delivery of efficient systems and processes that ensure student enrolment, progress and progression.

He or she is responsible for the development of new HE programmes of study as well as the quality assurance and enhancement of existing programmes.

He or she is also responsible for the research activities of the College's staff and students

Expectations of teaching staff:

This team is responsible for delivering these general educational objectives of the programme:

- To provide a challenging quality programme, vocationally focused on the knowledge and skills required for work in the computing industry.
- To enable students to develop their academic, practical and transferable skills as preparation for their subsequent careers in the computing industry.
- To create employment in industry, government, or entrepreneurial endeavors to demonstrate professional advancement through significant technical achievements and expanded leadership responsibility.
- To provide opportunities for students to work independently and in collaboration with others, providing the opportunity to develop self-discipline, determination and responsibility.
- To develop appreciation on the part of the student of the professional, moral and ethical issues involved in IT as well as a degree of adaptability in the rapidly-changing environment.
- To provide the technical and study skills and background material so that the graduate will be able to conduct a near state-of-the-art research or development project in their final year of study.

## SECTION 2 Programme Review and Monitoring

### 2.1 Overview

The Ada College's internal review processes take account of chapter B8 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The Ada College's internal review processes comprise: (i) module review, including use of a core set of questions for student module evaluations; (ii) annual programme review; (iii) periodic learning and teaching review. The effectiveness of module and programme review is considered as part of the learning

### 2.2 Annual Programme Review

- The procedures for annual programme review provide a framework for the programme director to reflect upon the outcomes of the module review process, consider feedback from external examiner(s) and students (via the student staff liaison committees), as well as data on student achievement and the qualifications awarded.

- The programme director has responsibility for monitoring the programmes of study as specified in the Calendar. The programme director is asked to comment on the curriculum and assessment methods across the programme, the learning resources that support it, the implementation of changes proposed in earlier monitoring reports and any future developments.

- The Programme Director submits the Annual Programme Review report to the Academic Board. Annual Programme Review reports are considered at the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee. Any relevant points are reported to Student Staff Liaison Committee.

Learning and Teaching Review

Given the primary responsibility of the academic team for quality of provision and the maintenance of academic standards, the rolling programme of learning and teaching review is a major element of the College's quality strategy.

The aim of the learning and teaching review is:
- to provide assurance about the quality of educational provision and the standards of academic awards and to consider the continuing appropriateness of the

programme specifications with particular attention to curriculum content and learning outcomes;
- to consider and advise on the plans for the future development of the Faculty's teaching programme;
- To identify and disseminate good practice.

- It is intended that the review process should be positive and supportive and should involve the academic team as a whole in portraying an accurate and comprehensive picture of its learning and teaching activities. A self-evaluation document will be produced, in accordance with the review guidelines

- The learning and teaching reviews are undertaken by a panel comprised of:
- Dean
- Programme Director
- Deputy Principal
- One external adviser;
- A student representative

- The external adviser will be a senior academic in the subject area and not have had a recent link with the College (for example as an ex-member of staff or an external examiner).

- The self-evaluation document, submitted in advance of the review is of fundamental importance to the review process, in setting the context and identifying issues for discussion.

- All members of the academic team are included in the review and are expected to engage in prior discussions on the preparation of materials as a collegial activity. It is required to reflect on learning and teaching, and to consider the effectiveness and continuing validity of the taught programmes and associated curricula, and the extent to which academic standards are being maintained.

- Finally, it will required to consider computing support, library support, and any other aspects of the wider  learning and teaching infrastructure that impact upon provision.

- All of the above areas of activity are inter-related and should not be considered in isolation.  The College's approach to the review ensures that members of the academic team come together to reflect on, and justify what they are trying to achieve in all aspects of their work, and how these different areas of activity impact upon one another.

- External points of reference include the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and QAA Subject Benchmark Statements,

- The external adviser has a central role on the panel, both in terms of leading discussions during the review process, and in contributing to the report.  This external perspective is deeply valued by the College. Following the event, the external advisor is asked to submit notes, on the review's outcomes and processes.

- A draft report, based on discussions during the review and the notes from the external adviser, is prepared by the programme director.  A draft of the report is sent to the Dean for factual correction.  If necessary, a note of any differences of view which cannot be resolved is attached to the final report.  Once the report is finalised, it is submitted for formal approval to the Academic Board.

# SECTION 3 Teaching, Learning & Assessment

Teaching excellence is at the heart of our mission. We recognise that our students have varying needs, but that the principles underpinning our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy remain relevant to them whatever educational objective they are pursuing.

Ada College, has a distinctive focus on employability, culturally aware and relevant curricula, offering comprehensive student support and academic guidance, and a strong commitment to equality and diversity. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy builds on this and will further enable the College to reinforce its reputation for offering a distinctive high quality student learning experience, founded in secure College processes for continuous quality enhancement, and underpinned by nationally-leading teaching innovation and research informed teaching. It will do this by setting a series of challenges which the programme team is expected to take up in ways that are appropriate to their own academic disciplines.

## 3.1. Strategic principles

i. Varied assessment and delivery to enable student learning and achievement

ii. Enabling the development of students as independent, autonomous learners

iii. Continual focus on student employability and graduate skills

iv. Enhancing Learning through Technology (ELT)

v. Culturally aware, national and relevant curricula

vi. Commitment to inclusivity and diversity

vii. Teaching excellence informed by research

## 3.2. Aims and challenges linked to strategic principles

i. Varied assessment and delivery to enable student learning and achievement

The Ada College's Assessment Policy and Practice define expected feedback and moderation, and set out expectations of programme team and students. As part of this, students benefit from a varied learning, teaching and assessment diet that allows them to develop and be examined in their strengths, while addressing the integrity of subject disciplines, subject benchmarks, national academic standards and where appropriate, accreditation requirements of relevant professional bodies.

The aim is that:

- The programme team will review the assessment regimes annually to confirm to students that they are actively responding to their feedback, provided through mechanisms such as the end of module questionnaire, end of the programme feedback and National Student Survey.

- The curriculum will provide sufficient opportunities for students to respond creatively in ways best suited to their own skills, attributes and previous experiences.

- Learning opportunities will challenge and extend students as well as supporting and nurturing them, so that they are confident enough to take intellectual and creative risks, and to pursue activities and interests that go beyond the college curriculum.

- Assessment regimes will encourage individual critical reflection and evaluation whilst also fostering social skills such as the ability to think and act ethically.

- Feedback will link the student's response directly to the task set such that students can see exactly how to improve. Feedback should be timely enough to enable students to build upon it in subsequent work, and be consistent, fair and transparent so as to engender confidence.

- The challenges we set ourselves will be:

- Through the programmes, module leaders will develop positive relationships with their students to establish/maintain a community of learning that embraces creative endeavour and co-production of knowledge between staff and students.

- All students will have the opportunity to use appropriate feedback from earlier assessments to inform and thus improve subsequent pieces of assessment.

- LTAC will monitor the way in which assessment tasks make clear to students what is expected of them to ensure transparency, fairness and consistency, drawing upon best practice across the institution and sector.

- The programme team will extend their use of technology to support online submission of coursework and progressively introduce online feedback to students after work has been marked.

ii.     Enabling the development of students as independent, autonomous learners

At Ada College, we recognise the importance of supporting students in their transition to higher education and the value of continued and relevant support throughout the student life cycle. A staff/student partnership approach is at the heart of our commitment to progression and achievement which involves engagement with feedback and taking appropriate actions.

The aim is that:

- All students will have access to learning spaces which are fit for purpose and conducive to learning in the 21st century, and to the resources and support necessary for the development of graduate skills and academic independence.

- Programmes will support individuals to draw on their genuine curiosity, diverse knowledge, technical skills and ability to experiment, while understanding the nature of risk in a global context.

- Students will be encouraged to accept personal responsibility for their own autonomous learning and know how to benefit from feedback and access appropriate support.

- Programme team will co-create and communicate new knowledge for the benefit of students, staff and the institution. Students will be encouraged to contribute original ideas through peer group learning, as part of developing their intellectual, critical thinking and other graduate skills.

The challenges we set ourselves will be:

- The college will continue to enhance the learning environment through investment in its learning spaces and resources. This will include regular review of facilities, and consideration of alternative methods of resource discovery, access and learning support.

- Staff and student e-learning resources will be equally accessible wherever students choose to study.

- The curriculum will incrementally increase student autonomy and should be progressively challenging through each level of the programme.

- The programme team will foster their relationship with students to establish and develop a true community of learning.

    iii.       Continual focus on student employability and graduate skills

The Ada College is passionate in its conviction that its provision be aligned to the practical needs of business and the professions. The programmes actively enhance the ways in which employability is achieved by students, and nurture the development of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes in ways which are made explicit to students.

The aim is that:

- Each programme highlights the development of skills which are relevant to the world of work and any related professional body

- Our programmes develop skills which should last our students a lifetime.

The challenges we set ourselves will be:

- All programme information including handbooks will clearly articulate the skills being developed that have particular resonance with the world of work.

- Students and staff will engage with each other in skills development in order to enhance student employability and graduate skills.

- The academic team will actively engage with alumni to support and develop vocational and business links to the curriculum and the learning community.

    iv.       Enhancing Learning through Technology

At Ada College, we wish to prioritise how learning and teaching can be transformed through the considered use of technologies in the curriculum. We will use technology to nurture, stimulate and enhance our capability for inclusion, creativity and innovation.

The aim is that:

- The programmes will develop and integrate Enhancing Learning through Technology (ELT) to support, enhance and transform student learning.

The challenges we set ourselves will be:

- We will develop strategies for:

- E-assessment and e-feedback

- Open Educational Resources (OER)

- The use of ELT to support student transition into higher education

- Delivery of an institutional approach to supporting virtual communities of practice

- An institutional approach to distance learning

- Programme team will extend their use of technology to support online submission of coursework and progressively introduce online feedback to students after work has been marked

- Programmes will integrate ELT into their curriculum in ways that are appropriate to the programme and its students.

- The academic team will ensure that ELT employs assessment tasks and feedback linked to learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

v.      Culturally aware, national and relevant curricula

The Ada College is committed to becoming a truly national college by creating citizens who are aware of and able to respond to a changing and challenging environment both in education and in the world of work. To this end, curriculum opportunities will be developed and enhanced in order to encourage students to develop the social responsibility and intercultural adaptability that is critical for national awareness, understanding and career development in a fast-moving global economy.

The aim is that:

- Students will be able to reflect upon and respond to their place locally and nationally through curriculum content and delivery.

The challenge we set ourselves will be:

- Staff and students will proactively engage with the wider national agenda through activities such as, progression agreements and curriculum enhancement.

vi.     Commitment to inclusivity and diversity

We acknowledge the importance of developing learning and teaching practices that recognise the diversity of the student body. 'Diversity' is understood in its broadest sense and we recognise that inclusive higher education entails designing curricula and preparing learning, teaching and assessment activities that meet different student needs and learning styles from the outset, and are also sufficiently responsive to the particular needs of individual students.

The aim is that:

- Our entire curriculum offer will demonstrate an inclusive approach to learning that has taken account of barriers to learning, as evidenced through the validation/revalidation and periodic review processes

- All of our students will have fair and equal access to the curriculum and positive support will be provided to address diversity-related under-representation and disadvantage.

The challenges we set ourselves will be:

- The academic team   will identify where students from different diversity groups and with protected characteristics are under-represented or are underachieving, take positive action to address this and report their results annually.

- Resources and development activities will be provided to ensure staff have the knowledge, understanding and skill to meet the diverse needs of all of our students.

vii.    Teaching excellence informed by research

Excellence in higher education requires teaching and learning to be informed by current research and by leading-edge professional practice so that students experience, preferably at first hand but at least vicariously, the way in which new knowledge and professional practice is formed, tested and applied. Where possible, as members of our community of learning, students should have the opportunity to work alongside staff on research, or professional practice developments, or 'live' projects. At some point in their programme, all students will have the opportunity to develop their own research skills that will enhance their future career prospects.

To this end, the academic team should:

1. Update programme content regularly so that it reflects current research and scholarship, and relevant, leading, professional practice.

2. Ensure that at some point on the programme  students are taught and develop relevant research skills and methodologies.

3. Where appropriate involve their students in real research or consultancy projects.

4. Develop models of engagement between c content, research and professional practice in their field using appropriate pedagogies such as enquiry-led learning or problem-based learning to do so.

5. Having established a coherent pedagogy for their programme, engage with their broader subject or professional community to establish recognition and, where possible, pedagogic leadership in the field.

6. Use the Digital Library to ensure their students develop appropriate research and information evaluation skills

**SECTION 4 Student Engagement**

**4.1: Principles of student engagement**

**Introduction**

Students and staff work in partnership to co-create Ada's distinctive educational environment. Through effective student engagement, the College shall continue to enhance its provision, ensure a collegial and respectful environment based on mutual responsibilities of staff and students, and develop our students' skills and qualities.

Ada College's Education Strategy is committed to ensuring that all members of the College work "together as an academic community committed to educational excellence and a culture of reflective practice", and "a student-centred approach to education", where "students are inducted into academic communities of practice at the same time that they develop the intellectual and personal qualities that will prepare them for their future lives and employment."

The following principles shall apply to student engagement across the College.

**Guiding Principles**

1. Either directly, or through their representatives, students shall be engaged in a meaningful manner in decision-making processes related to the student experience.

2. The College shall agree the means by which students are represented on appropriate bodies within the College. The College shall recognise and respect a democratic process by which representatives are selected.

3. It shall be made clear to all students the opportunities available to engage with the College, both formally and informally, on issues relevant to their diverse student experiences.

4. Students shall be made aware of the purpose for seeking engagement and feedback, and also its consequence and impact. Staff and students shall recognise the legitimacy of honest and polite disagreement.

5. Student engagement activity shall be timely, inclusive, collegial, well-communicated, and informed by relevant evidence.

6. Student engagement and feedback activity shall contribute to enhancement of the College's educational provision, services and governance. Students and student representatives shall be encouraged to identify areas for enhancement, and work in partnership with staff to improve the life and work of the College.

7. Effective student engagement shall be a means of identifying student queries and concerns. Where concerns and queries are raised, the College shall provide a clear, timely and meaningful response.

8. Students shall be enabled and encouraged to praise and celebrate good practice across the College.

9. Engagement activities shall recognise the diversity of the student body, ensuring that typically underrepresented student groups and those with protected characteristics are equitably engaged.

10. The College shall monitor and review student engagement activity in order to ensure continuation of good practice, enhancement of engagement activity, and action in line with these principles.

**4.2 Policy statement on student representation**

**4.2.1 Introduction**

Ada College is committed to developing academic communities characterised by mutual respect between staff and students, and which draw on the expertise and experience of both groups to reflect on and enhance the quality of the educational opportunities the College offers. Central to this approach is student representation on the College committees with responsibilities for the student experience. This policy statement outlines the ways in which the College's commitment to student engagement through the student representative system will operate.

## 4.2.2 Policy statement on student representation - Staff-Student Liaison Committee

**Principles**

The College's Principles of Student Engagement state that:

*Students and staff work in partnership to co-create Ada's distinctive educational environment. Through effective student engagement, the University shall continue to enhance its provision, ensure a collegial and respectful environment based on mutual responsibilities of staff and students, and develop our students' skills and qualities.*

Building on this core principle, the purpose of the Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) is therefore to *facilitate an effective dialogue between the student body and the academic staff regarding the educational experience provided by Ada College.* The Student-Staff Liaison Committee is underpinned by the concept of co-responsibility; staff and student members have a shared obligation for ensue the effective running of the consultative committee.

Please refer to the earlier terms of reference for the SSLC

## 4.3 Policy Statement on obtaining and using student feedback

The College's Principles for Student Engagement embody the commitment of both the College's staff and students to gather, consider and act on feedback from students in order to develop and enhance the educational experience of students. This directly supports the College's strategic aim of achieving the highest quality and standards in its educational provision.

The College is committed to using a range of methods for obtaining feedback on the student learning experience, with the choice of method being made in light of the reason why feedback is being sought, and the nature of the issue(s) being considered. These methods include:

a. Formal representation on committees, including Staff-Student Liaison Committee.

b. Direct communication between staff and students.

c. Module and programme questionnaires.

d. College-wide questionnaires, for example National Student Survey.

g. Student involvement in programme monitoring and review processes.

Please see Annex 1 for a sample

**a) Student representation**

The student representative system is at the heart of college's approach to obtaining and using student feedback. Please refer to the Terms of Reference earlier in the document for specific articulation of student representation on Boards and Committees

b) **Direct communication between staff and students**

 Much valuable feedback can be gained through the formal and informal direct communication between staff and students. This takes place through normal day-to-day interaction (for example issues raised by students as part of teaching sessions, through meetings or email correspondence between staff and students.

 **c) Module and level/programme questionnaires**

Questionnaires play an important role in all student feedback systems. The College recognises the value of questionnaires as a means of obtaining feedback, but believes that the use of questionnaires needs to be

balanced with other mechanisms that yield different, often richer, information on the experience of students (for example SSLCs). It is also aware that administering, answering and analysing questionnaires demand significant amounts of staff and student time, and is conscious of the need to respect the many demands on the time of both staff and students.

## 4.4 Policy statement on the involvement of students in quality management

The College has in place a range of policies and processes to support it in effectively assuring and enhancing the quality of its educational provision. Ada College recognises the significant contribution that our students can make to these processes, by allowing their views and their experience to be considered alongside those of other groups involved in the approval, monitoring and review of educational provision.

 In order to ensure that it obtains the full value of this contribution, the College is committed to the direct involvement of its students in its quality management processes. In order to meet this commitment:

Students will be consulted by the academic team when they develop new programmes and modules.

External examiner reports for taught programmes will be shared with students through SSLC.

Students will be directly involved in the annual review of taught programmes through meetings between review teams and students.

## 4.5 Consideration of NSS results at departmental/school level

1. NSS results are circulated as soon as is practicable in September each year, with the expectation that these are discussed within committees including discussion with the SSLC.

2. The NSS results will be discussed across the Committees in order to develop an NSS action plan to

## SECTION 5 External Examining

### 5.1 Purpose of External Examiners
External examiners will be an essential part of Ada's quality assurance practice. All approved programmes that lead to a student studying for a degree at Ada will be overseen by external examiners suitably qualified to assure the quality of students' learning experiences. Their involvement will also ensure that students are assessed fairly in relation to other students studying similar computer science or software development degree courses, with an element of business management included, across the UK.

As the college faculty develop their expertise and experience, the college's Research, Scholarship and Ethics Committee will investigate proposals and opportunities for them to work as external examiners themselves, in keeping with our understanding of how important the work they do is to the higher education community as a whole.
For full guidance on how the College works with External Examiners please refer to the College's policy repository

### 5.2 Selection and Nomination of External Examiners

External Examiners for the College will be nominated and appointed by the OU. The College will work with the OU to ensure that this selection process is rigorous and a suitable candidate for the College's unique offering is identified

### 5.3 Induction of External Examiners

The external examiner will be provided with key course documentation, including Foundation and BSc programme specifications and a copy of the student handbook. This will follow notification from the OU of their appointment.

They will also receive a half-day induction as soon as possible after appointment which will cover higher education at Ada and which details:

- The history and structure of Ada
- The place of higher education at Ada,
- The college governance structure and their role in it

The College's CEO, Dean and Head of Degree Programmes will organise necessary briefings to ensure the External Examiner has a thorough understanding of the College and its workings and organise for them to meet all relevant faculty staff involved in teaching and learning for the foundation and BSc programmes.

They will have a tour of the college facilities and an opportunity to meet student representatives.

## 5.4 Role and Responsibilities of External Examiners

The External Examiner has autonomy from the Academic Board. He/she is an independent evaluator of quality of processes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment,   but also provide direct input into and feedback on its performance and provide evidence based feedback.

## 5.5 Consideration of External Examiners Report

External examiner reports are an integral part of the college's quality assurance processes. They form part of the requirement for annual review of the programme by the team responsible for delivering the course and responding to such reports will for part of the terms of reference for of each of the three sub-committees: Research, Scholarship and Ethics Committee, the Teaching and Learning and Curriculum committee, and the Assessment Committee.

Students will be advised in the handbook that the external examiner's report will be available to all students for the purpose of quality assuring the degree programme. The name, position and home academic institution of the external examiner appointed by the OU will be included in the student handbook.

## SECTION 6 Student Support

Section 9 of the Student Handbook provides all students with information on the administrative and technical support that is available from staff. Please refer to the Student Handbook for further detailed guidance where necessary.

## 6.1 Guidance from Section 9 of the Student Handbook

**Induction**
After enrolling and at the beginning of the first session students will complete an induction. The student induction will be arranged with a teaching member of staff. Student induction will include:
- An overview of training facilities
- Discussion of student handbook content
- Introduction to relevant instructors
- Discussion of course outline
- Outline of assessment requirements for the course/training program
- Supply of reading lists/text book references as appropriate

Induction is an important part of commencing any program of study. Students should take this opportunity to satisfy any questions related to the program, student facilities, access to support services or any other information required.

**Personal Tutoring**

The personal tutoring system provides every student with one member of staff who gets to know them as an individual, who keeps an eye on their overall academic progress and who is concerned for their general welfare. On one hand, the pastoral side of the role can often be simply a friendly conversation at the start of the meeting. On the other hand, the academic/developmental aspect of the role offers the chance for students to discuss their development beyond their formal studies. Tutorials can be used by students to sound out their thoughts, ideas and concerns with an experienced professional, who can guide them in the right direction, personally, professionally and academically.

The intention behind the College's Personal Tutoring Strategy is that all students:

- are given the opportunity to reflect on their learning and academic progress and to discuss and formulate appropriate strategies to fulfil their potential during their studies at the College;
- are equipped with a lifelong approach to learning enabling continuing personal and intellectual growth;
- are provided with pastoral support which is tailored to their needs, enabling them to take full advantage of their time at the college to develop and maintain a healthy and happy outlook on life;
- develop an awareness of the need for professional and career development and receive guidance on the planning and recording of skills development throughout their studies in order to realise their career aspirations;
- experience the benefits of working with peers and academic tutors within a supportive atmosphere.

**Role of Personal Tutor**
At the beginning of the programme of study, each student will be allocated a personal tutor to act as your adviser throughout your studies; the personal tutor is responsible for facilitating a student's overall development. S/he will meet the student at least once in each semester to monitor progress and  encourage on-going academic development. Meetings may be face-to-face, by telephone or over the internet and a record of what is discussed will be kept. The personal tutor is the official first point of contact for any student.  Personal tutors should:

- Arrange a minimum of 3 formal meetings with their tutees, of which 2 must be one-to-one, with further opportunities for them to drop in
- Take an interest in all their tutees and their activities;
- Be well informed on their academic progress;
- Agree a timetable for seeing each of their tutees on a regular basis;
- Set aside times when their tutees can consult them;
- Provide clear directions for appropriate points of contact in an emergency;
- Ensure that students know the contingency arrangements when personal tutors are absent from College for any length of time.

**Study Skills Support**
Good study skills enable students to be better organised, read and take notes effectively, research and produce essays, and be better prepared for exams. In order to help you develop effective study skills, the College offers a wide range of services, including one-to-one support, and the Study Skills Packs. On the VLE, there will be a series of packs, which cover a variety of topics as follows:

Academic Reading and Writing
- Proof reading
- Reading and note-taking
- Writing your assignment
- Scientific report writing
- Business style reports
- Writing your research proposal
- Formatting & writing your dissertation

Research & Referencing
- Harvard referencing
- Critical analysis of a journal article
- Reviewing literature and paraphrasing

Group Work and Presenting
- Working in groups
- Presentation Skills
- IT Skills

Assessment, and Exams
- e-Submission
- Making the most of feedback
- Revision
- Approaching exams
- Time management

**Careers Advice**

Students may have a very clear idea of the career you want to follow once you graduate. Alternatively, a programme of study may offer a wide range of career options.

The College's Careers Adviser can help students understand their options and offers many ways of helping students to be more successful in landing their next role.. The College's Careers Adviser can be contacted by email on Careers@ada.ac.uk. The comprehensive package of help the team can offer you includes:

- Careers advice
- Information on job-hunting
- Guidance on creating or improving your CV
- Application and interview skills training
- Regular careers fairs introducing you to local, regional, national and international employers
- Advice and support on paid and unpaid work placements
- Volunteering opportunities
- Self-employment and entrepreneurship support

**Counselling & Student Welfare**

Student welfare provides personal and individual learning and welfare support to all students throughout their time at the College. If a student is unhappy or worried, there is always someone who will listen and give support. We aim to ensure that our students' years at the College are happy, fulfilling and successful.

The College's counselling service provides confidential counselling for any student who has personal problems affecting their work or well-being. It doesn't matter how small or large you think the problem is - the counselling service is there to help students find ways of dealing with it. Everything that is discussed is kept completely confidential.

**Disability Support**

Teaching and Learning

The College will endeavour to meet all students academic support needs, wherever possible, and has procedures and resources in place to serve this purpose. We aim to provide a high quality service for disabled students and are committed to making all possible reasonable adjustments to prevent disabled students from being placed at a substantial disadvantage.

The College may not always be able to meet every individual's need in every instance, therefore early contact with a learning support adviser is recommended. In summary we can provide advice or make arrangements in the following areas:

- Study related assessment of needs
- Assistive technology and training in the use of this technology
- Exams

- Liaison with the personal tutor and module leader

<u>Learning Support – Disclosure of a Disability</u>

The College is committed to supporting all its students and to taking all reasonable steps to adjust practices, procedures and circumstances that adversely affect students with disabilities. It seeks to foster an inclusive community and to prevent anyone from being marginalised or unable to realise their potential. To this end, it has in place a number of ways to ensure that students with disabilities are not disadvantaged. Often, these meet students' needs as a matter of course (for example, the standard provision of audio aids in the class rooms or the advance posting of course material on VLE). However, while the College attempts to fulfill its duty to anticipate students' needs, there are occasions when the right support and necessary changes can be arranged only if the College is aware of a student's particular situation. For this reason, students are encouraged to disclose any disability to the College. This can be done either:

- by contacting the learning support adviser who will arrange a confidential one-to-one meeting to discuss the issues and possible adjustments to College practices or arrangements. If the student then decides that they would rather keep their circumstances private, the matter will go no further, except that a confidential note will be made that the matter was discussed.

or:
- if a student prefers, they may speak to any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable. If the student then decides that formal disclosure is in their best interest, a confidential meeting with the learning support adviser will be arranged to discuss the issues.

## SECTION 7 Work-based and Placement Learning

### 7.1 Work-based and Placement Learning Policy

**Purpose and scope**

- The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles and processes which apply to the development, delivery and monitoring of work-based and placement learning.
- The framework ensures that the College is providing a high quality, consistent learning experience for all students on work-based and placement learning activity.

  This policy applies to the following:
- Year and semester-long placements; ( Higher Level and Degree level Apprenticeships)
- Module length or short-term placements; (Foundation Degree)

**Definition of a Placement**
For the purpose of this policy, a placement is defined as: any work-based, employment or practical experience that is part of a student's programme of study at Ada, fulfils intended learning outcomes and is credit-bearing. Although the student is registered at the College and remains subject to College regulations, direct supervision is transferred to a host supervisor for a set period of time.

**Principles**
- The following principles underpin the aims of the College's Work-based and Placement Learning Policy:
- The College has ultimate responsibility for the quality, academic standards and student experience wherever the learning takes place and whoever provides it.
- Any work-based, employment or practical experience that is part of a student's programme of study should contribute to the overall learning outcomes of his/her programme.
- All work-based or placement activity must be appropriately approved, monitored and reviewed to ensure the quality of the student experience and the continued appropriateness of the work-based or placement activity.
- Clear guidance must be available to all those involved in work-based and placement activity, including College staff, students and placement provider

**Placement Development**

### Work-based or placement activity in taught programmes

The following principles are considered in embedding work-based or placement activity in the taught programmes:

The design of the placement enables students to achieve specific intended learning outcomes, at the appropriate FHEQ level given the timing of the placement within the programme:

Where the placement is assessed:

- that the proposed methods of assessment and feedback are appropriate to the intended learning outcomes and the structure of the placement
- that mechanisms will be put in place to ensure the security and consistency of assessment and marking procedures
- that all staff involved are suitably trained
- There are appropriate management and communication structures in place with the placement provider and students.

### Modules which incorporate WBPL
All new modules and amended modules are considered for approval via Boards of Studies and the relevant Faculty Dean. The relevant section of the module specification should be completed to provide information on:

- Support for the placement
- Assessment (if placement is assessed rather than Pass/Fail)
- Assessment criteria for individual pieces of assessments
- Any assessments must be linked to intended learning outcomes on Module Specification

### Identifying, approving and advertising placement opportunities
*Sourcing Placement Opportunities*

Where it is the College's responsibility to source placement opportunities for students, the following
clear information should be provided in advance to all eligible students:

- Key benefits of the placement to the students involved
- Skills/knowledge requirements (especially where these vary between placements)
- Required training/checks
- All relevant deadlines
- Details of the application process
- The significance of the placement for the programme (credit value, assessment, etc.);
- Any available sources of funding (including for transportation and housing if relevant).

If students are responsible for securing placement opportunities, the following information should be
provided:

- Clear guidelines on any support available from the Academic Unit and/or from Careers;
- Necessary steps to have the placement approved by the unit (see below);
- Alternatives to completion of a placement if it is not possible to source a placement opportunity.

**Approving and vetting a Placement**
The College must have a procedure in place to approve any placement opportunities that have been sourced by the student and to ensure that the placement activity is appropriate to the intended learning outcomes of the programme and at the appropriate FHEQ level.

It is the College's responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of students when on placement or work-based learning. A risk assessment must be undertaken by the Academic Unit prior to the student going on placement, including in cases where the placement opportunity has been sourced by the student. A visit to all new placement providers should be undertaken by a member of staff whenever possible.

**Quality Assurance and Monitoring**
*External examining*
All external examiners for a programme that incorporates work-based or placement learning – whether long or short – should review the placement as an aspect of provision, including sample learning agreements, assessments and marking criteria.
Arrangements should be made, wherever possible, for external examiners to communicate with anyone involved in the teaching and assessment of placement activity, including students and placement providers where appropriate.

**Learning and Teaching Review**
The Learning and Teaching Review (LTR) SWOT analysis should consider placements as an aspect of provision. The subject review panel should wherever possible meet with staff involved in organising placements and with students who have undertaken or are undertaking placement activity.

**Annual Monitoring and Review**
The college should reflect on work-based and placement learning in its annual report, highlighting any particular concerns or issues that have arisen and/or examples of best practice that may be shared more widely across the Faculty or institution. Sources of evidence should include student, placement supervisor and external examiner feedback.

**Student feedback and evaluation**
The college must ensure that mechanisms are put in place to systematically receive feedback on placement activity from students. This may include module, placement and/or stage evaluations. Boards of Studies should review student feedback, with all discussion outcomes fed back to the student body.

**Handbooks**
The college must ensure that all students and placement supervisors are provided with student handbook, to include at minimum placement aims, roles and responsibilities, and key contacts.

**Placement tracking**

The college is responsible for maintaining accurate records on the dates and locations of student work-based and placement learning activity. These must be readily accessible to the institution on request.

**Student Records and Achievement**
The college is responsible for ensuring that placement activity undertaken by students is appropriately reflected in relevant documentation.

**Health and Safety**
The College has a legal obligation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of students undertaking a period of work-based or placement learning.

The College s must ensure that risk assessments have taken place prior to the placement activity, including those for which the student has sourced the opportunity.

**Insurance**
All UK placements are covered by UK law; therefore the placement provider takes legal responsibility and liability for the students while in the workplace.

**Student Attendance Monitoring**
The College must still implement regular attendance monitoring arrangements (weekly) and obtain monthly confirmation from the placement provider that the student is attending.

**Legal agreements**
All students must sign a student learning agreement, and this must be kept on file by the College.

In some cases, a wider legal agreement may be required covering any specific Intellectual Property Rights or Data Protection issues that may arise from the placement.

**Student Support**
The College must provide clear information to students – prior to beginning the placement – on all of the following areas. Key points are noted here

**Induction and Placement Supervision**
All students must receive an appropriate induction during the first week of their placement. This should include a health and safety briefing if appropriate.

All students must be provided with a named supervisor at the placement site. A meeting must take place between the student and the supervisor within the first five days, when the learning agreement should be finalised and signed by all parties.

**Arrangements for Personal Tutoring**
Personal Tutors should contact their tutees at least once per semester
Depending on the type of placement, it is good practice for the module leader/project supervisor and/or the Degree Programme Director to contact/visit the student at least once during the placement.

**Students with Disabilities**

The College has responsibility for ensuring that any Student Support Recommendation has been reviewed and that any necessary adjustments are put in place to enable the student to succeed on placement. Although the College is responsible for communicating with the placement supervisor about any student needs, they must have the consent of the student in order to do so. The student may also communicate directly with the placement supervisor about his/her needs.

### Learning and Teaching
*Student Learning Agreement*
A student learning agreement must be drawn up in collaboration with the placement supervisor, clearly stating the expectations of the work-based or placement learning activity and the learning outcomes that the student will achieve during the placement.
The student learning agreement must be signed, by the end of the first week of placement, by both the placement supervisor and student. The agreement must be kept on file by the College.

### Assessment and Feedback
The College must ensure that:
* Any summative assessments completed while on placement are secure and conform to all College policies on the submission of work and return of feedback;
* Any summative assessment is linked to the intended learning outcomes of the placement and the programme;

### Roles and Responsibilities
*Academic Unit*
The College is responsible for:
* Developing placement activity that allows the student to meet the intended learning outcomes of the module/programme;
* Developing assessment activities for the placement that are linked to appropriate intended learning outcomes;
* Enabling the student to obtain an appropriate placement either through finding placement activities themselves or providing the students with appropriate guidance for them to source placements independently;
* Approving all work-based and placement providers and ensuring that a risk assessment is completed. Visits to all new providers should take place to ensure a safe and healthy experience for the student;
* Ensuring that appropriate induction and briefing sessions are provided to students prior to and during their work-based activity or placement;
* Ensuring that all placement providers are given sufficient training and guidance on their roles and responsibilities. Where placement providers are involved in the formal assessment of students, the Academic Unit should ensure that staff are fully briefed on the policies and expectations;
* Making available and maintaining records of contact points for students and placement providers;
* Ensuring that all required adjustments have been put in place for any student who requires them;
* Ensuring alternative means of achieving the learning outcomes if for whatever reason the placement is unable to take place;
* Monitoring the attendance of students on placement;
* Monitoring the progress of students on placement and ensuring that students have regular contact with College staff, including with personal tutors and/or research supervisors;

- Keeping accurate records of duration and location of all students on placement;

**Student**

Students are responsible for:
- Signing a placement learning agreement with the employer if required, in collaboration with their placement supervisor, within the first week of placement activity and signing an appropriate legal agreement if necessary;
- Meeting the norms and expectations for professional conduct while on placement as ambassadors for the College;
- Disclosing any information that may have a bearing upon their ability to undertake the work-based or placement learning;
- Familiarising themselves and complying with the placement providers' policies and procedures;
- Familiarising themselves with the aims and intended outcomes of the placement and engaging fully with the opportunities provided to them;
- Maintaining contact with College staff;
- Alerting the placement provider and the College to any issues which may prevent the progress or completion of the placement;
- Complying with the placement providers' legal duties, including Intellectual Property Rights and
- Confidentiality.

**Placement Provider**

The work-based or placement providers are responsible for:
- Providing a safe environment for students, including a full induction at the start of the placement covering all aspects of health and safety;
- Signing a student learning agreement if required, in collaboration with the student, that establishes key objectives and learning outcomes for the placement;
- Providing learning opportunities that will allow the student to meet the intended learning outcomes of the placement and the programme;
- Identifying a named placement supervisor/mentor and ensuring that they are appropriately trained and fully aware of their roles and responsibilities;
- Arranging for the student to assign Intellectual Property Rights, if relevant, before the commencement of the placement
- Ensuring any reasonable adjustments required for students are fully implemented

## SECTION 8 Future proofing, maintaining quality through growth

Ada is exceptionally focused on the quality of teaching and learning and assessment. The Academic Board and relevant sub-committee will focus on ensuring high standards from day one for Ada's HE provision.

Since commencing FE provision in September 2016 the College has piloted a number of strategies to ensure consistently high standards in terms of teaching and learning and curriculum planning and revision.

As of March 2017, a three-pronged strategy will be adopted that focuses on:
- Effective quality assurance through day-to-day/operational

- Effective quality enhancement through termly reviews
- Effective quality enhancement through governance structure arrangements.

These are outlined in more detail below:

Day-to-day / Operational delivery:

- Every morning there is a 10 minute CPD for all teachers and lecturers at Ada. They plan them all these sessions out for each half term and allocate them out to different people.

- Every week, every teacher or lecturer at the College has an observation that lasts at least 15mins. There is then a 20min meeting scheduled for feedback. The person that observes is frequently a peer and sometimes the coaching is reciprocated (eg find pairs that can learn from each other). Senior Management are also observed to make this process feel inclusive

- They use video to inform their practice and regularly review their own teaching to identify areas of improvement

Termly Reviews:

- All staff are given a one hour coaching training session and given a document that provides pointers and tips. It is based on 'leveraged leadership' methodologies.

- The feedback from observations are shared in a online folder which all can access.

- Those that need more assistance or are on a development plan just have more of these observations - frequently by senior leadership.

- All staff submit all their decks for the following week to a shared folder to be reviewed by the leadership team who provide feedback.

- All new faculty members provide lecture plans as well as slides for their module in advance. If their teaching is unsatisfactory this process is extended until necessary standards are reached.

- Every term lecturers presents their student's learning data to the leadership team and or Teaching, learning and assessment sub-committee.

Effective quality enhancement through governance structure arrangements:

- The College will ensure there is a board of examiners for each degree programme

- The College will ensure there is relevant expertise on the Academic Board and the sub-committees. Initially this will be through inviting external candidates while the College builds its own robust faculty

- Ada will conduct its own annual quality review. This will form the basis of the annual OU self-evaluation submission and the College is excited to work with the OU to understand more about their approach to this process.

- Ada will continue to seek feedback and input from its industry partners in the QA and QE processes seeking to learn from industry best practice in agile working environments

## SECTION 9 External Review

### 9.1 QAA Review

The College has applied to HEFCE for registration and recognition as a degree delivery institution and this process is now underway.

The College will therefore be subject to scrutiny by the QAA. The College is seeking to recruit HE specialist knowledge onto its Board of Governors to ensure that there is appropriate expert oversight. The Board has some specialist knowledge at present through Chris Payne from NCG Group who have degree awarding powers and he has oversight of their HE provision. However the Search committee of the Governing body is looking for a candidate with suitable HE experience to provide relevant expert input.

NCG group have offered to provide formal and informal 'peer' inspection and observation sessions to support Ada to establish high quality QA and QE processes during its initial years of delivery.

The Clerk to the Board of Governors has compiled a detailed overview of the proposed new requirements of the Board of Governors in regards to self-reporting in line with the AoC (Association of Colleges) recommendation.

The College continues to consult with the OU and other Colleges in regards to the changing requirements of QAA in regards to reporting and inspection but by May 2017 will be ready for inspection should this occur.

### 9.2 The OU Review

An annual self-evaluation report will be compiled by Ada College in the format and template required by the Open University of all its partner institutions. The College looks forward to working with the OU to understand the requirements of this self-evaluation that will be reviewed by the College's Academic Board, the sub-committee of the Board of Governors and the Board of Governors itself before being submitted.

Ada College will then pro-actively work with the OU to incorporate its feedback and recommendations into its policies, procedures and processes to ensure an on-going and sustainable approach to quality assurance and enhancement.

The 5-year re-validation point provides a specific opportunity for more detailed assessment of the on-going relevance of the degree programmes and a deep-dive review of the QA and QE processes to ensure they are robust and scalable to larger student volumes.

**Annex 1:**

## Guidance on Student Questionnaires

*Good Practice*

It is intended that this guide should be read by, and be useful to, all members of staff who are responsible for designing and distributing student questionnaires. While the final responsibility for implementing an appropriate student questionnaire format and mechanisms for the subsequent analysis of data must rest with the individual academic, these guidelines are strongly commended.

1. Student questionnaires should be distributed at least once a year for each module within the programme.

2. A separate questionnaire should be distributed after the completion of the entire degree programme, the structure of which should reflect the aim of assessing the whole programme and not just its constituent parts.

3. The questionnaires should concentrate on the effectiveness of the teaching on the module as perceived by the student, and should not address the syllabus.

4. To aid analysis of data, it is recommended that a five point Likert assessment scale is used to allow students to express their level of agreement with the statements on provision, i.e.

   Strongly agree - 5
   Agree – 4
   Neither Agree nor Disagree - 3
   Disagree – 2
   Strongly disagree – 1
   "Non-applicable" is also a valid response.

5. Questionnaires can be read using electronic systems to enable on-line completion and to assist the data analysis. It is advisable to retain the use of the five point assessment scale for electronic questionnaires in order to ease comparability with previous years' data. The academic team may use a Student Questionnaire template (see Appendix 2) if they wish.

6. The following headings represent the recommended areas to be covered by the core element of the questionnaire, although it is accepted that the individual questions may vary depending on the type of teaching employed (e.g. when lectures do not represent the main mode of teaching):

   **A. ATTENDANCE**
- What percentage of the total course do you estimate that you attended (please indicate)?
- Questions to be answered using the 1-5 assessment scale.

   **B. MODULE STRUCTURE**
- The module aims were made clear at the start. The course aims were met.
- Teaching sessions were well-prepared and presented in a logical order.

   **C. ASSUMED KNOWLEDGE**

The starting standard was at the right level for me.

   **D. SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL** (where issued)

The hand-outs/reading lists were useful.

   **E. TEACHING DELIVERY**

- The lecturer was audible and the subject matter clearly explained. The pace of teaching was at the right speed.
- Slides/overheads and other teaching aids were adequate and well-prepared.
- Online materials and activities were clearly structured and presented and integrated well into the module (including VLE).

   **F. STUDENT PARTICIPATION** (where applicable)

- Student participation was encouraged during the module.
- When active participation online was required (e.g. discussion forums, online development of materials, collaboration) this was managed and supported effectively.

**G. WORKLOAD AND FEEDBACK**

- The workload was manageable.

- The criteria used for marking and assessment were clear in advance.

- The feedback provided on my coursework was helpful in developing my understanding of the subject.

- Feedback on my coursework was provided within one calendar month.

- Feedback was provided by the supervisor on research projects/dissertations/long essays on at least one occasion.

**H. INTEREST**

The teaching was stimulating and helped make the subject interesting.

**I. TEACHING SUPPORT FACILITIES** (optional where applicable)

- The computer terminals provided were adequate for my needs. The space provided was sufficient for my needs.

- I was able to access all the recommended reading for my course.

**J. INDIVIDUAL STUDENT COMMENTS**

- An adequate space should be provided on each questionnaire to allow the student to add any additional comments. Such comments should be positively encouraged.

7. There should be student involvement in the design of the questionnaire.

8. The assessment of central facilities should be undertaken separately is a matter for the respective head of the administrative/service areas who should seek appraisals of their services through the distribution of questionnaires to a randomly selected number of students.

9. A report, summarising both the analysis of quantitative data and the commentary written by individual students, should be produced.

10. The analysis of data should be conducted by the academic team t and a summary of the results produced should be forwarded to the Staff-Student Consultative Committee (SSCC) and the Faculty Teaching, learning and Assessment Committee (TLAC). It is recommended that analyses of questionnaires should be retained for a period of time in to allow individual staff to consult them as and when appropriate.

11. It is recommended that there are mechanisms in place to ensure students receive feedback from student questionnaires, including analysis of the data and summary of comments. The College should provide an opportunity for collective comment by students (possibly through SSCCs) on data from questionnaire responses and where relevant, to receive the reaction of module tutors.

12. A high response rate is an essential part of any questionnaire survey. Various techniques for improving response rates include:

    • the distribution of questionnaires unannounced during a timetabled teaching session towards the end of the course;

    • the postal distribution of questionnaires.

    • sending regular (perhaps staggered) e-mail reminders for electronic questionnaires to the students, or using the VLE to prompt students to complete the survey.

13. In consultation with students, a decision should be reached as to whether the questionnaire should be anonymous or not.

14. For small teaching groups a seminar to discuss the course may be considered to be more appropriate than the use of a questionnaire. However (and in line with 9. above), a report on the discussion should be forwarded to the LTAC.

# Student Questionnaire Template

*This template may be used and adapted for student questionnaires. The following headings represent the recommended areas to be covered by the core elements of the questionnaire, with suggested questions (although individual questions may vary depending on the type of teaching employed).*

Feedback on your learning experience on the course/module/programme *[delete as appropriate]* is extremely valuable and will help us to make improvements in future years. We would be most grateful if you could answer the following questions. There is also an opportunity to provide comments at the end of the questionnaire.

| a. Attendance | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| What percentage of the total course do you estimate that you attended (please indicate)? | | | | | | |
| % | | | | | | |
| **Please mark chosen answer with an "X"** | Definitely agree | Mostly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Mostly disagree | Definitely disagree | Not applicable |
| **b. Module Structure** | | | | | | |
| 1. The module aims were made clear at the start. | | | | | | |
| 2. The module aims were met. | | | | | | |
| 3. Teaching sessions were well-prepared and presented in a logical order. | | | | | | |
| **c. Assumed Knowledge** | | | | | | |
| 4. The starting standard was at the right level for me. | | | | | | |
| **d. Supplementary Material (where issued)** | | | | | | |
| 5. The hand-outs/reading lists were useful. | | | | | | |
| **e. Teaching Delivery** | | | | | | |
| 6. The lecturer was audible and the subject matter clearly explained. | | | | | | |
| 7. The pace of teaching was at the right speed. | | | | | | |
| 8. Slides/overheads and other teaching aids were adequate and well-prepared. | | | | | | |
| 9. Online materials and activities were clearly structured and presented and integrated well into the module (including VLE). | | | | | | |
| **f. Student Participation (where applicable)** | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. Student participation was encouraged during the module. | | | | | | |
| 11. When active participation online was required (e.g. discussion forums, online development of materials, collaboration) this was managed and supported effectively. | | | | | | |

**g. Workload and Feedback**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. The workload was manageable. | | | | | | |
| 13. The criteria used for marking and assessment were clear in advance. | | | | | | |
| 14. The feedback provided on my coursework was helpful in developing my understanding of the subject. | | | | | | |
| 15. Feedback on my coursework was provided within one calendar month. | | | | | | |
| 16. Feedback was provided by the supervisor on research projects/dissertations/long essays on at least one occasion. | | | | | | |

**h. Interest**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. The teaching was stimulating and helped make the subject interesting. | | | | | | |

**i. Teaching Support Facilities (optional where applicable)**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18. The computer terminals provided were adequate for my needs. | | | | | | |
| 19. The space provided was sufficient for my needs. | | | | | | |
| 20. I was able to access all the recommended reading for my course. | | | | | | |

**j. Student Comments**

Please feel free to comment here on any aspect, positive or negative, of your learning experience on the

course/module/programme *[delete as necessary]*.