

Quality Assurance Framework and Policy4

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Ownership: School Principal

This document describes the overall framework, with its aims and purposes, along with an overview of the policies and processes in place for quality assurance.

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KEDS Quality Assurance Framework

King's Evangelical Divinity School places high emphasis on ensuring standards of quality are consistent, achievable, appropriate and measurable. The key considerations of the framework are as follows:

- The framework should be aligned with the validating partner's strategic plan. The quality assurance framework should support mutually-agreed goals and objectives.
- The framework should reflect (voluntarily) the UK's QAA Quality Code for Higher Education.
- The framework should be flexible and adaptable. Both KEDS requirements and the validating partner's needs may change over time, so the quality assurance framework should be able to adapt to these changes.
- The framework should be transparent and accountable. KEDS should be transparent about its quality assurance practices and accountable for the results.

By following these guidelines, KEDS can develop a quality assurance framework that will help the school to ensure the quality of their academic provision.

Aims and Expectations

This aims and expectations for the KEDS quality framework are as follows:

Establish a clear vision and mission for quality assurance. What do we want to achieve in terms of quality assurance? What are the key values that will guide its quality assurance efforts?

Develop a comprehensive quality assurance policy and procedures. This document should outline the college's approach to quality assurance, including its key principles, processes, and responsibilities.

Enable quality assurance as a responsibility for the leadership team. The leadership team should be responsible for overseeing quality assurance efforts and ensuring that they are implemented.

Conduct regular internal reviews of academic provision. These reviews should assess the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in all academic programs.

Appoint an external examiner to review academic programs. In association with the validating partner, an external examiner will be involved to provide valuable feedback on the quality of assessment and content of academic programmes.

Proactively engage with the validating partner on matters of quality assurance. The partner has a comprehensive framework and high expectations concerning quality assurance. KEDS will engage positively and proactively in fostering a partnership in quality assurance.

Continuously improve quality assurance. Quality assurance is an ongoing process. The school should regularly review its quality assurance practices and make changes as needed.

Quality Assurance Policies and Processes

KEDS has comprehensive policies and processes in place to ensure the quality and integrity of its awarded qualifications. These policies and processes cover all aspects of the student journey, from the development of courses to the assessment of students.

Course Development and Design

KEDS has a rigorous process for developing and designing courses. This process ensures that all courses meet high standards and that they are relevant to the needs of students. They are always designed in partnership with the validating partner.

Programme Approval, Monitoring and Review

All programmes at KEDS are subject to approval, monitoring and review by the leadership team. All programmes are reviewed annually and require sign off by the School Principal, the external examiner and re-approval by the validating partner. This ensures that programmes continue to meet our standards and that they are responsive to the needs of students.

Programme Modifications

KEDS has a process for modifying programmes. This process ensures that any changes to programmes are made in a way that maintains the quality of the qualification. Programme modification must always be done in consultation with the Academic Director and the School Principal. In addition they require sign off by the School Principal, the external examiner and approval by the validating partner.

Accreditation of Prior Learning

KEDS offers a process for students to have their prior learning accredited. This allows students to have their previous learning recognised and counted towards their degree. We adhere strictly to the requirements set by the validating partner. We do not make formal 'predictions' or guide applicants on the likelihood of a particular decision.

External Examining

The external examiner plays an important role in ensuring the quality of teaching and learning at KEDS. External examiners are academics from other universities who are invited to review courses and provide feedback on their quality. KEDS will nominate an external examiner in partnership with the validating partner.

Student Admissions

KEDS has a rigorous process for admitting students. This process ensures that all students admitted to KEDS meet our high standards.

Student Academic Misconduct

KEDS has a policy on student academic misconduct. A policy sets out the procedures for dealing with students who are suspected of academic misconduct.

Student Appeals

Students have the right to appeal against certain decisions made by KEDS. KEDS has a process for handling such student appeals.

Assessment

KEDS has a comprehensive policy on assessment. A policy sets out the principles of assessment at KEDS and the procedures for assessing students.

Schedule of Awards

KEDS publishes programme and module specifications that set out the requirements for each degree. This ensures that students know what they need to do to achieve their degree.

Extenuating Circumstances

KEDS has a policy on extenuating circumstances that sets out the procedures for students who are experiencing exceptional circumstances that may affect their academic performance.

Provision of Teaching and Courseware

KEDS faculty are expected to ensure the following principles for teaching quality management underpin all academic provision. This is overseen by the leadership team.

1. That continuous improvement of the student experience is at the core of all teaching and learning activities
2. That all members of staff take a personal responsibility for the quality of their contribution to the student experience

Courseware is the set of teaching materials accompanying a given module and may include audio or video recordings, written notes, study guides, interactive exercises, student information and guidance or any other material that a student is expected to use during the course of study. In most cases, courseware is original material produced KEDS staff but it can include additional “third party” material from:

- Visiting academics
- Published journals, books or extracts thereof
- Academically suitable online material or websites
- Other third party material deemed useful for academic study

Senior faculty members take responsibility as module leaders for the creation of courseware. They may, however, be supported by other members of faculty.

In addition, the design, production and final delivery of courseware must always be overseen and approved by a member of the KEDS leadership team. In particular, all use of “third party” material must be reviewed by the leadership team before delivery.

Where KEDS courseware is created by junior faculty, it is KEDS policy to ensure that all such material courseware is peer reviewed by a senior faculty member. In addition, all existing courseware is subject to ongoing oversight and periodic review as appropriate by the KEDS leadership team.

Quality assurance of the final packaged module courseware is ensured by the School Principal.

The purpose of such peer observation of teaching is to ensure consistency in teaching provision and to enhance learning and teaching across the school, and to provide an opportunity for reflection and development of teaching practice.

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education

KEDS does not offer degrees validated or accredited by a UK institution with degree awarding powers. As such, the UK Quality Code for Higher Education as provisioned by QAA does not apply. Nevertheless, on a voluntary basis, KEDS seeks to adhere to Quality Code, recognising the value of its recommendations and requirements. The most recent version of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education is available at www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code

In alignment with this Code, KEDS sets the following expectations:

Expectations for standards

- The academic standards of courses must meet equivalent requirements of the national qualifications framework as outlined in the Code.
- The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.

KEDS will:

- ensure that the standards for qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks outlined in the Code.
- ensure that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

- ensure that the standards of awards via KEDS are credible and equivalent as those awarded directly through a UK University.
- ensure that external expertise, assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent.

Expectations for quality

- Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
- From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

KEDS will:

- ensure that there is a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.
- ensure that there is high quality design and delivery of courses.
- ensure that there are sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
- ensure that there are sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
- ensure that students are actively engaged both individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.
- ensure that there are fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.
- ensure that students are supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes

Quality Assurance Statement

KEDS will take responsibility for the maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of academic standards in partnership with a recognised validating partner. KEDS shall provide all necessary staff, physical and financial resources to carry out teaching, assessment, tutorial care, welfare support and administration for its programme and its students. All programmes shall be subject to continuous monitoring and periodic review procedures by KEDS and the validating partner, as appropriate.

KEDS commits to having a primary concern for the interests of students and for the provision of resources sufficient to ensure the satisfactory quality of the learning environment.

Assessments and Examination

The conduct of assessment shall be consistent with the principles and regulations of the validating partner and reflect an equivalent standard to awards offered by UK Universities with degree-awarding powers. The procedures for the conduct of assessment and examination shall be set out in an agreement with a recognised validating partner.

Each module delivered is the subject of an evaluation, which takes place at or towards the end of module delivery. This evaluation is provided online through each respective module's VLE. Tutors will encourage students to complete the evaluation forms.

Working with External Examiners

External examiners play an important role in ensuring the quality of education at KEDS. They provide an independent perspective on the assessment process and the curriculum, and they help to ensure that students are receiving a high-quality education that meets the requirements of the validating partner.

The responsibilities of external examiners include the following:

Moderating the assessment process: External examiners review a sample of student work to ensure that it is marked fairly and consistently by KEDS. They also provide feedback to the internal examiners on the assessment process, and they may recommend changes to the marking methodology or the of different assessment methods.

Advising on the curriculum: External examiners review the curriculum and assessment materials to ensure that they are up-to-date and meet the requirements of the relevant professional bodies. They must be consulted on any new modules, programmes or significant changes to them.

Ensuring academic standards: External examiners compare the performance of students at KEDS with the performance of students at other HE institutions. They also consider the overall standards of student achievement in the light of the validating partner's standards and requirements.

For quality assurance purposes, the leadership team will ensure:

- The distribution of external examiner reports to relevant staff.
- The external examiner reports are formally reviewed and discussed as part of QA measures.
- The implementation of changes to teaching and assessment practices in response to external examiner feedback.
- The documentation of any recommended changes not implemented and the reasons why such decisions were made.

This policy is intended to ensure that KEDS make effective use of external examiner feedback to improve the quality of courses and provide students with the best possible learning experience.