Guidance for Engagement with PSRBs

Date created: July 2017
Date updated: August 2023
Due for review: August 2024

Academic Registry

LIVERPOOL
JOHN MOORES
UNIVERSITY

Glossary

AQSC	Academic Quality and Standards Committee
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
PSRB	Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies
PSRBOP	PSRB Oversight Panel

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. The university's process for engagement with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) applies to all taught undergraduate and postgraduate provision, delivered at Liverpool John Moores University and its collaborative partners.

2. The university recognises the important role PSRBs play in providing assurances to both the university and external audiences with regard to the quality of its programmes.

3. This guide takes into account the definitive list of accrediting bodies that is maintained by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)[1].

4. This guidance is intended to support programme teams' engagement with PSRBs by detailing the university's processes, which ensure that:

   - The outcomes of accreditation activity are monitored, and that any required actions in response to this activity are completed.
   - All information supplied to external bodies is consistent, accurate and, where required, institutionally held data is utilised.
   - Appropriate and accurate information is supplied to PSRBs with regard to the university's policies, procedures and resources.

5. In addition, the practices detailed within this guidance enable the university to:

   - Monitor the status of accreditation arrangements through a range of timely mechanisms.
   - Ensure that engagements with PSRBs provide an opportunity to enhance the student/apprentice learning experience through the identification and sharing of good practice.
   - Publish a register of accredited programmes.
   - Ensure a consistency of approach during all university engagements with PSRBs.

Definitions

6. PSRB is an umbrella term for a very diverse group of organisations, including professional and employer bodies, regulators and those with statutory authority over a profession or group of professionals. They approve, accredit, or recognise programmes in the context of professional requirements and/or standards.

7. The university only recognises as PSRBs those organisations that are listed as such by HESA.

8. HESA provides an opportunity for Higher Education Institutions to support the identification and recognition of new PSRBs[2].

9. Professional bodies that operate outside of the UK, which are not recognised by HESA, for example Nursing Board of Malaysia, or country-specific quality/government oversight bodies, for example the Chinese Ministry of Education will be acknowledged through the university's validation and periodic programme review processes. Information about their approval of Liverpool John Moores University provision will be recorded within the

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[1] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c23061/accreditation_list
[2] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c23061/accreditation_guidance

applicable Design and Delivery Overview/Self-Evaluation Document, but will not be recorded on the university's PSRB Register.

10. The university categorises PSRB activity in the following ways[3]:

   a) Accreditation
   The term 'professional accreditation' covers all the means by which PSRBs officially approve, monitor and review relevant programmes. In some areas, this may involve a series of regular formal visits to the department concerned, whilst in other areas the interactions may be less regular, more informal or largely conducted through correspondence.

   b) Exemption
   The term 'exemption' describes the process by which the PSRB reaches a judgement that successful completion of a programme of study enables exemption from professional body requirements.

   c) Recognition
   The term 'recognition' describes the process by which the PSRB reaches a judgement that a programme of study achieves the professional body's aims.

   d) Prescription
   The term 'prescription' describes the process by which the PSRB agrees that a particular qualification or award of the university meets the criteria of an award, or set of awards, that allow the holder to be registered as a practitioner subject to and protected by Statutory Regulation.

   e) Validation
   The term 'validation' describes the process by which the PSRB reaches a judgement on the suitability of a programme of study to be recognised or continue to be recognised as meeting the necessary academic and professional standards for the award of a degree.

   f) Licence to Practise
   The term 'licence to practise' describes the process by which authority is conferred by a PSRB to carry out professional work in the sphere regulated by that PSRB.

   g) Professional Practice
   Professional practice is a structured learning opportunity for the development of transferable or specific skills, which, in conjunction with other elements of the programme of study are applied within a practical or vocational context. The assessment of such applied learning and skills may be undertaken directly through academic units or externally by a relevant, accrediting PSRB.

11. Where accreditation is referred to in this document it is intended to encompass the broad range of accreditation listed in paragraph 10.

12. Further guidance or advice on engaging with PSRBs can be obtained via the Academic Quality and Standards area of the [Academic Registry Helpdesk](#).

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[3] With permission of Manchester Metropolitan University.

Chapter 2: Variance from the University Academic Framework Regulations

Applying for variance from the Academic Framework Regulations

13. Where it is identified during the validation process that a programme cannot operate in line with the university's Academic Framework Regulations, because of PSRB requirements, an application to operate inside the Academic Framework with variance(s) must be made to the university's PSRB Oversight Panel (PSRBOP)[4]. Applications for variance should be made early in the validation process, and prior to the validation event.   Applications for variance, in relation to student/apprentice progression or attainment, will only be considered against agreed criteria that the variance is a nationally published condition of a statutory body, agency or accrediting/professional body, without which the programme could not be accredited.

14. If there are changes to PSRB requirements, which mean that an existing validated programme can no longer operate in line with the university's Academic Framework Regulations, an application to operate inside the Academic Framework with variance(s) must be made to the PSRBOP[5].

15. Programme teams should discuss the possibility of working without the need for a variance with the Assistant Academic Registrar. It may be possible, for example, to work with professional bodies to agree a resolution to enable the programme to meet the requirements of the PSRB, whilst operating fully in line with the university's Academic Framework Regulations.

16. If a variance is required, the request to the PSRBOP should be made via the Application for Variance form. Prior to receiving institutional-level consideration, applications for variance must be signed-off by the relevant Director(s) of School and Assistant Academic Registrar(s).

17. Details of approved variances are recorded within the programme specification(s), Programme Guide (see Chapter 4), and the Definitive Programme Record, within WebHub.

18. On an annual basis, the PSRBOP receives a report, which confirms the accreditation status of programmes for which a variance was approved on the basis of the requirements of a PSRB.

Withdrawing an approved variance from the Academic Framework Regulations

19. Should a programme team wish to withdraw an approved variance(s) from the university's Academic Framework Regulations, then an Application to Withdraw an Approved Variance from the Academic Framework Regulations must be completed.

20. Applications to withdraw an approved variance(s) require the approval of the university's PSRBOP[6].

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[4] PSRB Oversight Panel meets bimonthly throughout the academic year. Applications for variance proposals submitted to Academic Registry after the applicable PSRBOP paper deadline, will only be considered by the Panel in exceptional circumstances, and at the Chair's discretion.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

21. When seeking to withdraw an approved variance(s), programme teams are required to confirm if the variance(s) was originally proposed, and approved, on the basis of the published requirements of a PSRB. If that is the case, the application **must** also confirm if the withdrawal will impact upon the accreditation/recognition/approval of the applicable programme(s).

22. Decisions on the withdrawal of approved variances are also cognisant of the impact the withdrawal would have upon current and prospective students/apprentices.

23. Prior to applying to withdraw an approved variance(s), programme teams should ensure that they discuss this with the Assistant Academic Registrar.

24. Prior to receiving institutional-level consideration, applications to withdraw an approved variance(s) must be signed-off by the relevant Director(s) of School and Assistant Academic Registrar(s).

25. Following approval of an application to withdraw a variance(s), programme teams should ensure that reference to the approved variance(s) is removed from all published programme information, for example, the applicable programme specification(s). In addition, Academic Registry will update the Definitive Programme Record, within WebHub.

26. Further guidance on the process for seeking permission to operate inside the Academic Framework with variance(s), and/or to withdraw an approved variance(s), can be obtained from Assistant Academic Registrars and the Academic Quality and Standards Team Leader (Monitoring and External Regulation).

Chapter 3: Engagement with PSRBs

27. PSRB accreditation may occur as part of a scheduled university validation/periodic programme review, or as a separate spontaneous/scheduled activity (either for a new accreditation or at the request of the PSRB).

28. At the end of each academic year, the Academic Quality and Standards Team liaises with Programme Leaders to develop the university schedule of planned PSRB activity for the forthcoming year. This schedule is presented at the first meeting of PSRBOP, each academic year, and is monitored by PSRBOP, as a schedule of ongoing PSRB activity, at each subsequent meeting.

Through Validation/Periodic Programme Review

29. Where accreditation activity aligns with a scheduled validation/periodic programme review, the Event Officer will consult with the PSRB/Programme Leader to establish the approach to be taken. Approaches may include a joint validation/periodic programme review event, a separate event or a desk-based exercise. Where possible, it is advised that the timing of validation/periodic programme review activity should be aligned to the timing of any accreditation/re-accreditation/monitoring activity required by a PSRB.

30. Where conjoint validation/periodic programme review and accreditation/re-accreditation/monitoring activity will take place, the Event Officer will assess if it is possible to waive some of the requirements of the university's standard processes, should there be identified cross-over/duplication with the PSRB's process. Requests to waive aspects of the university's standard processes should be made to the Head of Academic Quality and Standards, and approval will **only** be granted in instances where the PSRB's process is judged to be at least as rigorous and robust as the university's.

31. The relevant Director of School should approve all documentation, required by the PSRB, within the planned activities and deadlines for the validation/periodic programme review process.

Spontaneous/scheduled accreditation/re-accreditation

32. Where accreditation/re-accreditation activity considers existing validated provision, outside of the university's validation and periodic programme review processes, the programme team is responsible for confirming the approach, timescales and associated documentation requirements with the PSRB. Once confirmed, the programme team must provide the Secretary of PSRBOP with confirmation of the agreed arrangements via a completed [Notification of Engagement with a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body Proforma](). This summarises the following key information:

    - The applicable PSRB.
    - The purpose of engagement, i.e. accreditation, re-accreditation, monitoring.
    - The nature of engagement, i.e. visit, paper-based engagement.
    - The programmes that are included within the scope of the activity.
    - The agreed deadline by which documentation required by the PSRB will be approved by the Director of School.
    - The agreed deadline by which documentation will be submitted by the programme team to the PSRB.
    - If applicable, the date(s) the PSRB will visit the university or a partner institution.
    - Whether the PSRB require a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee).

- The anticipated date the PSRB will confirm the formal outcome.
- A link to the published requirements of the PSRB.
- If applicable, required support from central professional services teams.

33. In-line with the panel's responsibility for maintaining oversight of Faculties' engagement with PSRBs, completed Notifications of Engagement will be presented at the next scheduled meeting of PSRBOP.

34. Academic Registry will notify the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer if accreditation activity will involve an event or formal visit by a professional body. Where it is expected that senior managers of the university are in attendance during the visit, this will also be confirmed at the point of notification. Academic Registry will communicate this information following receipt of the completed Notification of Engagement. As a result, it is **vital** that programme teams ensure that this information is submitted to the Secretary of PSRBOP in a timely manner.

Support and guidance

35. Support and advice for programme teams, both before and during their engagement with a PSRB, can be sought from the applicable Assistant Academic Registrar and the Academic Quality and Standards Team.

Approval of Submissions

36. The applicable Director of School must approve all documentation, required by a PSRB, in advance of submission. In confirming the appropriateness of a submission the Director of School should consider:

- If the submission appropriately addresses the relevant internal expectations and external requirements.
- Where applicable, institutional data is utilised[7]. Locally held data should not be used.
- References to the university's policies, processes, structures and regulations (including any approved variances) are correct.
- If the submission meets the published requirements of the PSRB.

Process for consideration of Outcomes

37. Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring that PSRB outcomes are reported in a timely manner. The Programme Leader should ensure that the formal outcome/report is provided to the Secretary of PSRBOP, who will ensure that it is presented to PSRBOP for consideration, particularly with regard to any conditions and recommendations that require action.

38. Where accreditation/re-accreditation is subject to conditions and/or recommendations, the Programme Leader should ensure that, alongside the formal outcome/report, PSRBOP also receives an overview of how the programme team intend to address any identified conditions and/or recommendations, including associated timescales.

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[7] Institutional data can either be provided by Academic Registry (upon request) or can be obtained via the university's WebHub facility.

39. Outside of PSRBOP, the Academic Quality and Standards Team Leader (Monitoring and External Regulation) will liaise with the programme team to ensure completion of identified conditions and/or recommendations. PSRBOP will monitor progress and confirm completion through receipt of formal notification from the PSRB.

40. The PSRBOP will receive the full report of the accreditation following the conclusion of the activity.

41. PSRB outcomes/reports will be reported to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) through receipt of PSRBOP minutes and updates from the Chair.

42. The relevant published programme information will be updated with the outcome of the accreditation activity only when completion of any required actions has been confirmed.

43. Programme teams should ensure PSRB outcomes inform their Programme Reflection and Action Plans, as part of the university's monitoring process.

44. A summary of PSRB engagement is received by AQSC on an annual basis.

External Examining

45. Where programmes are accredited by a PSRB, External Examiners are invited to comment, within their annual report, about the management of assessment and the quality of programmes in relation to professional body and professional practice requirements.

46. If a PSRB stipulates that an External Examiner should hold professional registration, this will be checked during the nomination process, and recorded on the nomination form. Following approval of the nomination, confirmation of registration will be recorded in a secure area of WebHub. Ongoing professional registration will be monitored, by the Academic Quality and Standards Team Leader (External Examining), in liaison with the programme team, where this is a requirement of a PSRB.

Staff

47. If PSRB registration of teaching staff is a requirement for the ongoing accreditation of Liverpool John Moores University provision, appropriate records should be maintained by the relevant School to ensure that this expectation will continue to be met throughout the approval period.

Chapter 4: Published Information

Website

48. The institutional PSRB Register and PSRB Procedures are maintained by Academic Registry, and are published on the university's website.

Programme Specifications

49. The programme specification should include the following details of programme accreditation (the relevant section of the programme specification given in brackets below):

   - The name of the PSRB (*Programme accredited by*).
   - The date when the accreditation began and when it is due for renewal.
   - Confirmation of any variances to the Academic Framework Regulations (*Information about assessment regulations*).

50. Programme specifications are published on the university's Course Catalogue following completion of the appropriate approval process. Where PSRB accreditation takes place outside of validation/periodic programme review, it is expected that programme specifications will be updated accordingly.

Programme Guides

51. Information relating to the accreditation of a programme, for example the name of the PSRB, approved variances to the Academic Framework Regulations, and details of any additional requirements for students/apprentices (such as membership fees), are documented in Programme Guides. To enable students/apprentices to access Programme Guides via My LJMU, Programme Leaders should ensure that they are published via the Programme Document Information SharePoint site, following approval by the relevant Director of School.

Prospectus and programme-based literature

52. The university Prospectus and programme-based literature will include, if appropriate, the logo and/or details of accrediting bodies.

Chapter 5: Institutional PSRB Register

53. Academic Registry publishes an institutional register of all PSRB accredited programmes. The PSRB Register records the details of all programmes that are accredited/recognised/validated by PSRBs as defined by the university and HESA. Updates to the register are monitored by PSRBOP, and are made as and when changes and/or additions are confirmed.