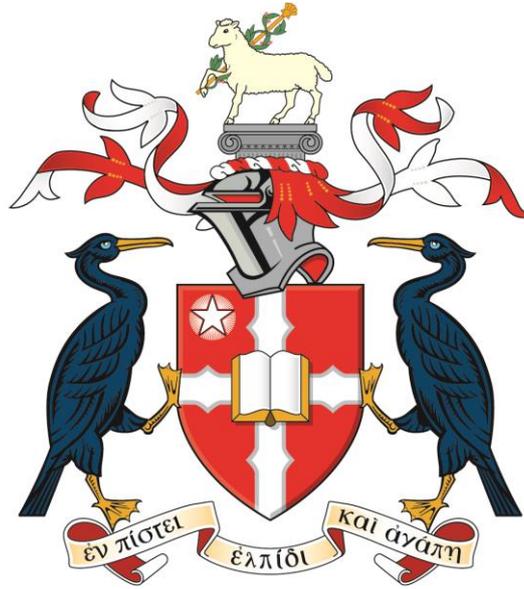Liverpool Hope University

Enhancement Strategy

Version: 1.0

Version Control

Document: Enhancement Strategy V1.0

LTC Review: June 2015 (also consideration by Rectorate Team)

Senate: June 2015

University Council: July 2015

Implementation date: 1 September 2015

Version History   Following discussion at Learning and Teaching Committee and Rectorate Team, a separate Enhancement Strategy has been developed to provide an overarching framework for enhancement across the University. Prior to this Enhancement was a core component within the University's Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy. The Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy has been superseded by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and a separate Enhancement Strategy developed.

Supersedes: Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy (see above)

Frequency of Review: Each Academic Year

Policy owner/s: SAQA and the Director of Learning and Teaching Development

1. Background:

As set out in the University's Mission and Strategic Plan (Vision 2020) Liverpool Hope University is concerned both with knowledge and competence in academic disciplines, and also with the formation and, indeed, the transformation of its students into graduates prepared for making a difference for good in the world. At the heart of the University is the idea of the Collegium: a community of scholars, comprising both academic staff and students, who together work within a nurturing environment to stimulate and foster scholarly advancement. Hope staff work with and through Hope students to form participants in learning (rather than its recipients) and to engender personalised learning (rather than mass teaching). 'Our Approach to Higher Education' sets out the core principles and priorities of the institution, including an expectation that all staff take responsibility 'for quality, for improving teaching and deepening learning'.

2. Purpose and Definition:

This document provides an overarching framework for enhancement across the University, reflecting the sector wider definition of enhancement as '**the taking of deliberate steps [at provider level] to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities**'.[1] Hope's approach to enhancement includes the expectation that while final responsibility lies with Senate (via its committees) the process should operate at all levels of the organisation.

(Note: It is not the intention of this framework to set out the University's enhancement priorities, to prescribe a response or to determine the appropriate mechanisms for review and evaluation; this is the responsibility of the relevant committees[2], management bodies and the Hope Collegium more widely. Rather this document articulates key underpinning principles, the model of enhancement embraced and core responsibilities across the institution.)

3. Principles:

Quality enhancement is informed by the following principles. It is:

1. Aligned with University's broader mission, strategies and values ;
2. Data informed[3], outcomes-focused and critically reflective, taking into account a wide range of evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, generated from internal and external activities and reference points[4];
3. A collaborative endeavour, focusing not only on academic programmes but also on the wider contributory and supporting activities which underpin the student learning experience;
4. Undertaken within an environment within which innovation and creativity are valued and where such activities are encouraged through institution-wide initiatives such as the Communities of Practice[5]

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[1] Annex 2, Higher Education Review: A Handbook for Providers, QAA 2015; 'at provider level' reflects the expectation of the Quality Code.
[2] http://www.hope.ac.uk/aboutus/governance/committeesandminutes/committees/
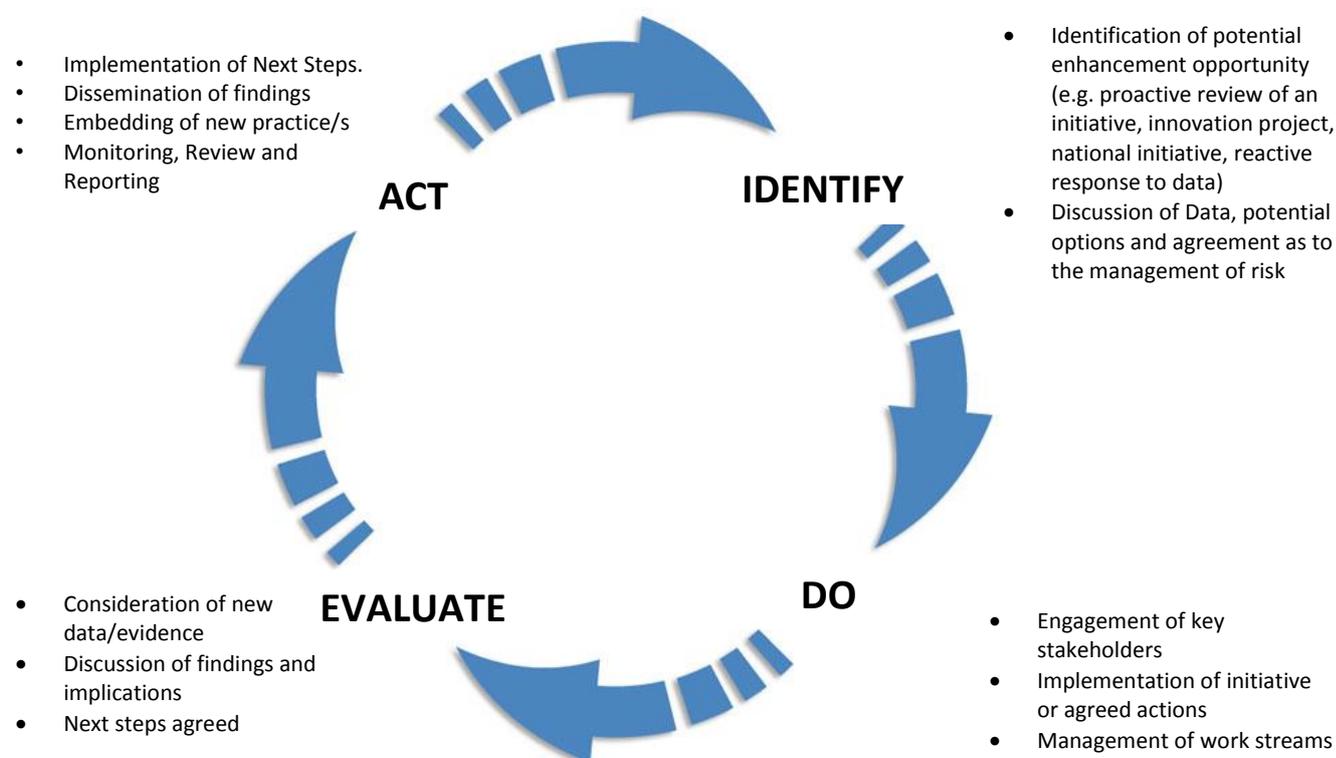[3] See Appendix 1
[4] By providing mechanisms for whole university dialogue, target setting and strategy, which are situated alongside robust governance and quality assurance structures, the University aims to promote the continual and systematic improvement of learning opportunities and student experience.
[5] See Appendix 2

5. Holistic, encompassing major strategic initiatives at University level as well as more local activities;
6. Embedded within routine academic quality review and assurance activities[6] and/or arising as a result of specific projects or initiatives which themselves arise from a strategic and joined-up approach;
7. Inclusive, open and transparent and itself the subject of critical evaluation and review;
8. Concerned with the engendering of a community ethos which promotes and encourages self-criticality and which identifies and disseminates features of good practice;
9. Inclusive of students, both through the full inclusion of students in the formal structures of the University's deliberative structures, for example SSLCs, FQLT, Academic Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee, and also attentive more widely to the voice of students;
10. Attentive to the voice of other stakeholders such as staff, professional bodies, employers and institutional partners.

4. Quality Enhancement Framework (IDEAs):

Reflecting the need for enhancement to be both systematic and deliberate, a structured approach to enhancement which aligns with strategic aims and makes full use of a range of different data sources (including routine quality assurance processes[7]) should be adopted. This will ensure that enhancement activities are appropriately instigated, implemented, monitored and evaluated. An illustration is provided below.

ACT
- Implementation of Next Steps.
- Dissemination of findings
- Embedding of new practice/s
- Monitoring, Review and Reporting

IDENTIFY
- Identification of potential enhancement opportunity (e.g. proactive review of an initiative, innovation project, national initiative, reactive response to data)
- Discussion of Data, potential options and agreement as to the management of risk

EVALUATE
- Consideration of new data/evidence
- Discussion of findings and implications
- Next steps agreed

DO
- Engagement of key stakeholders
- Implementation of initiative or agreed actions
- Management of work streams

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[6] See Appendix 1
[7] Quality assurance processes provide insight into core academic quality matters by drawing on a range of evidence at different levels and are therefore one source of intelligence to support enhancement activities

5. Structures and Governance:

In keeping with the principle of collegial responsibility, all members, units and levels of the University are concerned with quality enhancement. The academic and governance structure outlined below is the accountable hierarchy of committees which guide policy and strategy development and establish direction and goals. As such, they have a key role in providing oversight and direction to University wide enhancement priorities and activities.

However, quality enhancement may occur at any organisational level, including individual and team reflections on practice and wider networks and programmes. A number of integrated mechanisms are in place to capture and disseminate local examples of good practice, including peer review, performance review and Annual Review and Enhancement procedures[8], staff fora and the Communities of Practice[9]. A central feature of the framework therefore is the focus given by core academic governance committees to the wider Collegium and the 'voices' of staff and students.

Overseen by **Senate**, the **Committees of Senate** comprise the formal governance structures designed to provide robust, systematic and methodical systems for the strategic oversight and enhancement of University systems and processes related to:

- Curriculum, Academic Standards and Academic Quality Assurance (Academic Committee and sub-committees)

- Learning, Teaching and Assessment practices, Student Experience and the Learning Environment (Learning and Teaching Committee and sub-committees)

- Scholarship, Ethics and Research Degrees (Research Committee and sub-committees).

Academic Schools, Departments and Faculty-level sub-committees on learning, teaching and research report to the Committees of Senate via **Faculty Boards**.

Additionally, **University Council** is responsible for overseeing the business and affairs of the University. This includes determining mission and policies as well as ensuring the financial solvency of the institution[10].

The University also periodically convenes a range of University-level management entities that are designed to allow rapid response to emerging issues and areas of enhancement within the University. These bodies, namely Rectorate Team, Senior Management Team (SMT) and Heads of Department, are able to direct enhancement activity to areas of need or strategic importance. Through direct connection with the Deans and Heads of Department, important information and strategic activity can be disseminated to all University staff in an efficient and targeted manner, allowing responsive enhancement of activity in all areas.

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[8] See Appendix 1
[9] See Appendix 2
[10] See the University Committee Structure for further details

The University's committee and management structures are supplemented by a network of communicative pathways and participatory methodologies, generating data and recommendations which are reported to relevant bodies. These include, for example, the Liverpool Hope University Network of Communities of Practice, Learning and Teaching Days, Student Sounding Boards and Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC). These structures provide an open framework that allows all staff and students to directly participate in critical dialogue related to enhancement activities. Such mechanisms are also designed to promote an agile and responsive approach to the identification and communication of potential areas for enhancement.

6. Monitoring and Review of Strategy

- Learning and Teaching Committee (as the body responsible for oversight of Learning, Teaching and Assessment, Student Experience and the Learning Environment across the University) shall provide an Annual Report to Senate on the Enhancement of Student Learning Opportunities in a format agreed by the Committee;

- The Committees of Senate shall periodically review their activities to ensure that the principles and approach outlined within this strategy are being adhered to and that there is a unified and strategic approach to enhancement in those areas for which they have institution-wide responsibility;

- Within the Annual Review and Enhancement process, the Heads of Department Report and Dean's report explicitly consider enhancement activities and impact;

- Internal Audit undertake regular reviews of the University's Internal Control framework and inclusion of enhancement as a focused review will be considered when determining the internal audit priorities and programme.

- Recommendations for further developing the University's approach to enhancement will emerge from the routine activities undertaken at all levels and intelligence gained from a variety of for a (see Illustration in Appendix 2). The strategy itself will be subject to annual review.

- External Review (including PSRBs; Ofsted; QAA).

Appendix 1. Summary of Key Academic Quality Processes and Data

A. Key Routine Academic Quality Review Mechanisms and Processes include:

1. Programme Approval, Re-Approval and Modification (Major and Minor)
2. Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE)
3. Departmental Review
4. Procedures for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative Provision
5. External Examiner System
   For the above, see http://www.hope.ac.uk/aboutus/governance/academicquality/
6. Service Area Review (within Student Support and Well-being)
7. PSRB (re)accreditation processes
8. Formal 'Student Voice' Framework
   See http://www.hope.ac.uk/gateway/students/studentvoice/
   a) Annual University level course evaluation surveys
   b) Presence of elected SU officers at formal University Committees
   c) Presence of elected student representatives at other meetings
   d) Involvement of Students in Departmental Review
   e) Involvement of students in major modification of awards/approval of new awards
   f) Involvement of students in the work of academic Departments, including Staff-Student Liaison Committees
   g) Involvement of students in the work of university service units
   h) Involvement of students in University level consultation
   i) External surveys (such as the NSS) and Internal Course Evaluations
9. Peer Observation
   See http://www.hope.ac.uk/aboutus/governance/policiesandstrategies/
10. Staff Performance Management System.
    See https://www.hope.ac.uk/gateway/staff/policiesandprocedures/
11. Research Degree Supervisor/Director of Studies Appointment Process
12. Research Degree Examination Team Appointment Process
    For the above, see
http://www.hope.ac.uk/research/postgraduateresearch/pgrinformationforstaff/

B. Data at Hope

Hope systematically gathers and uses data to inform practice and enhance available learning opportunities for all students. The University does not however subscribe to a prescriptive or limiting concept of any particular form of data and believes in building evidence-informed practice through a range of quantitative, qualitative and discursive methodologies.
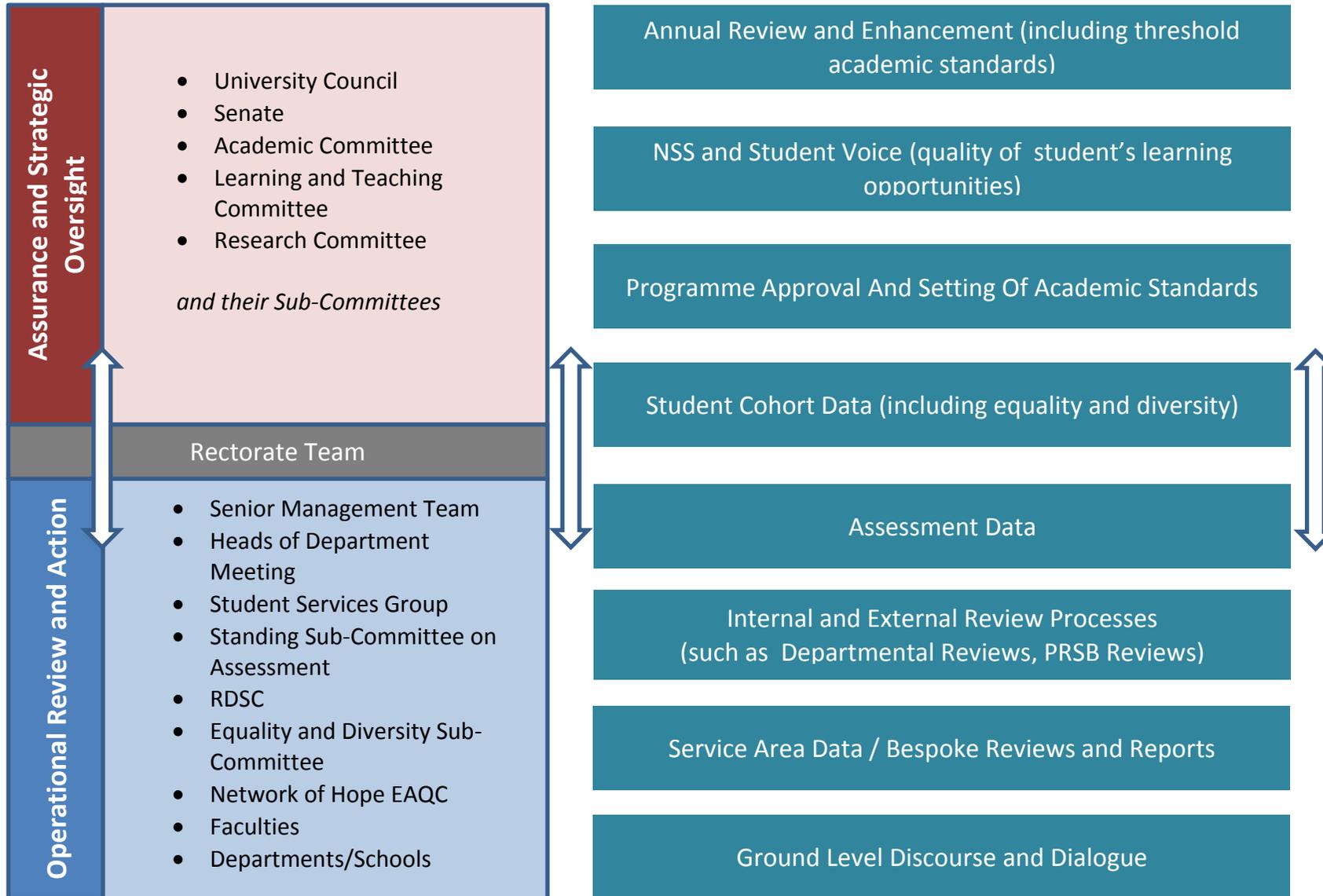
Key Enhancement Data includes but is not limited to:

- Quantitative and qualitative measures of student satisfaction and the perceived quality and efficacy of systems, processes and learning opportunities. The primary source is data arising from the Student Voice framework. The University also undertakes focused surveys on the Induction experience, Residential Life and the effectiveness of Learning Support Plan implementation.
- Student engagement data[11], including attendance and submission of assessments, and use of library and Moodle.
- Student cohort data (FTE and headcounts, entry profiles, entry profile, progression, achievement and attrition); this includes equality and diversity data based on entry profiles, NSS data in relation to protected characteristics and degree and progression profiles.
- Participatory networks allowing for communication between the Hope Collegium and the decision-making structures of the University. These include, for example, the network of Communities of Practice, Learning and Teaching Days, and staff fora.
- Periodic and systematic internal review of programmes (including those collaboratively delivered), service areas and appropriate university initiatives.
- External review data, such as from External Examiners, PSRBs, OFSTED and the QAA.

The illustrative table below identifies the committee and management bodies which establish strategic parameters and consider core data sets. The Annual Review and Enhancement process is integral to this and incorporates a wide range of evidence, such as statistical data on student retention, achievement, progression and completion; External Examiners reports; outcomes from internal or external review; insight into the student experience (drawn from a variety of sources such as course evaluations, SSLC, NSS, etc.). Other inputs such as moderators' reports (for collaborative provision, as applicable), feedback from partners, and reports and feedback from PSRBs and employers are drawn on where appropriate.

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[11] To support overview of key matters impacting on student learning opportunities and retention.

Illustrative Overview

Assurance and Strategic Oversight

- University Council
- Senate
- Academic Committee
- Learning and Teaching Committee
- Research Committee

and their Sub-Committees

Rectorate Team

Operational Review and Action

- Senior Management Team
- Heads of Department Meeting
- Student Services Group
- Standing Sub-Committee on Assessment
- RDSC
- Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee
- Network of Hope EAQC
- Faculties
- Departments/Schools

Annual Review and Enhancement (including threshold academic standards)

NSS and Student Voice (quality of student's learning opportunities)

Programme Approval And Setting Of Academic Standards

Student Cohort Data (including equality and diversity)

Assessment Data

Internal and External Review Processes (such as Departmental Reviews, PRSB Reviews)

Service Area Data / Bespoke Reviews and Reports

Ground Level Discourse and Dialogue

Appendix 2. The Communities of Practice

The formal document outlining the development and philosophy of the Liverpool Hope Network of Communities of Practice can be found here. The Communities of Practice are a University-level deliberate initiative, creating space for both academic and other staff to reflect on existing provision and practice and consider how, in the light of experience, feedback and data, the University community as a whole may go forward. In 2014/15, the 6 main communities of practice were centred on Assessment, Classroom Practice, Curriculum, Educational Technology, Learning Outside the Classroom and Student Experience.

These communities are not primarily assurance-focused but rather enhancement-driven and were developed with the specific intention of ensuring that the whole academic community engages in dialogue relating to learning and teaching—underpinned by the principles of Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Enhancement detailed in the University's strategy documents—and to feed into the wider enhancement framework relating to the quality of student learning opportunities. Communities of Practice meet regularly across the academic year and are also a key component of the University's programme of Learning and Teaching Days.

In summary, the Communities of Practice contribute towards the enhancement framework of the University in the following key ways:

(i) Provision of a structured deliberative space for dialogue and reflection in relation to learning and teaching and the enhancement of the student learning experience;

(ii) Opportunity for groups and individuals to share good practice and learn from each other;

(iii) Facilitation of identification of areas for enhancement arising out of the sharing of experience, data and feedback; this information can then be 'fed forward' into Faculty and University management and committee structures.

(iv) Provision of further opportunities for staff development in specific and targeted domains.