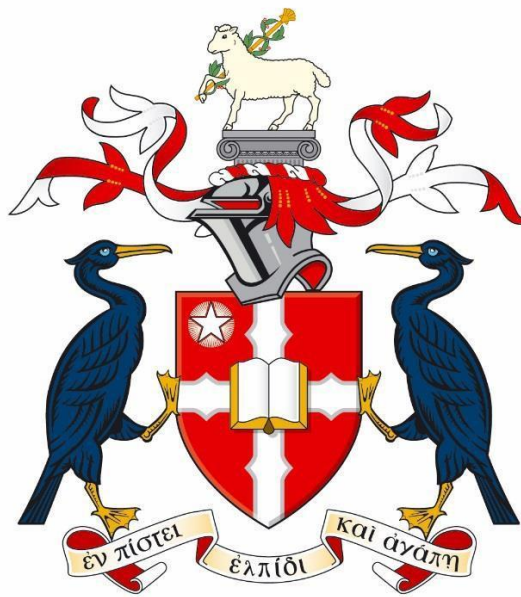


# Liverpool Hope University



## **Academic Quality Handbook 10 (QH10):** Seeking and Maintaining Professional Accreditations

## **Version Control**

### QH10 - Seeking and Maintaining Professional Accreditations

March 2020	New Quality Handbook Approved	Version 1
January 2021	Update to include change of Committee Titles following the implementation of the new Schools system. References to “University Executive Committee” and “Dean” corrected.	Version 2

## Introduction

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

This guidance is intended to support programme teams' engagement with PSRBs by detailing the University processes for seeking and maintaining professional accreditation, which ensures that:

- The outcomes of accreditation activity are maintained and monitored, and that any required actions in response to this activity 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.

In addition, the processes 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 learning experience through identification and sharing of good practice;
- Publish a current register of accredited programmes on the University's website;
- Ensure consistency of approach during all University engagements with PSRBs.

## The Accreditation Process at Hope

Accreditation for specific courses is held for both Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses. The University does not hold any accreditation for PGR courses. In addition to course accreditation, the University holds accreditation for the Business School (AACSB) - this accreditation is not directly linked to the courses. A register of Accreditations is maintained by the University Accreditations officer and can be found [here](#).

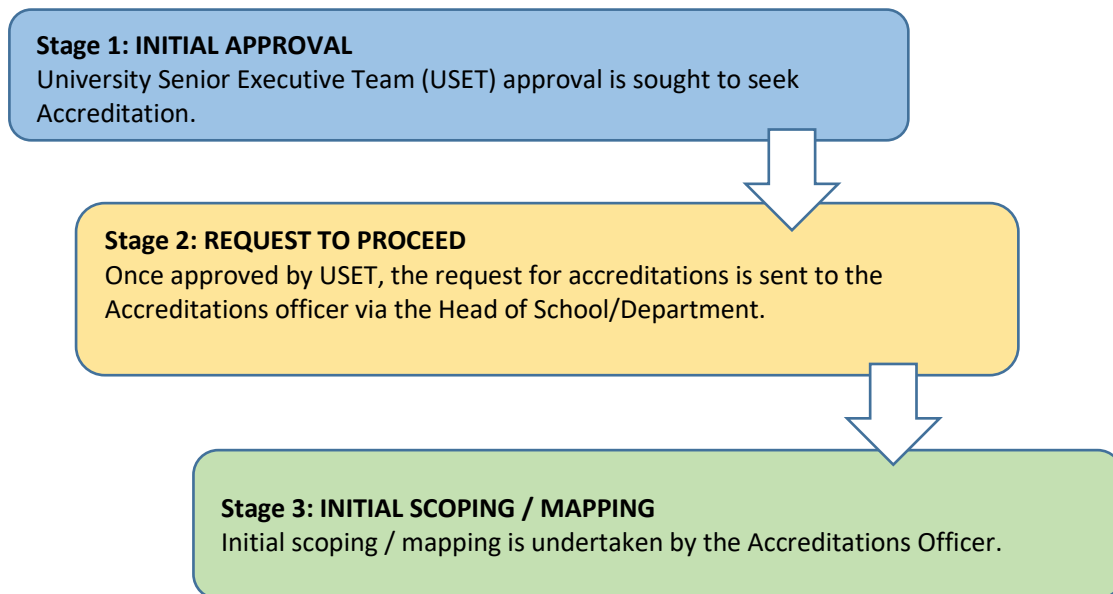
Oversight of Accreditations is managed by the School/Departmental Board and the Partnerships and Accreditations Committee.

Accreditations can be sought for current and new provision as follows:

### **(a) Seeking Accreditation for Current Provision**

The process for seeking accreditation for current provision has three key stages:

- Stage 1: Initial Approval for a professional accreditation,
- Stage 2: Request to Proceed,
- Stage 3: Scoping / Mapping.



### **Stage 1: Initial Approval**

The first stage in seeking professional accreditation by a Department/School is initial approval by University Senior Executive Team. A proposal is taken by the relevant member of USET for scrutiny before approval to proceed is given or the request for accreditation is rejected.

### **Stage 2: Request to Proceed**

Once a request to seek professional accreditation has been approved by University Senior Executive Team, the request is forwarded to the University Accreditations Officer via the Head of Department/School or the relevant member of USET.

### **Stage 3: Scoping and Mapping**

Initial scoping / mapping is undertaken by the University Accreditations Officer, which includes the following procedures:

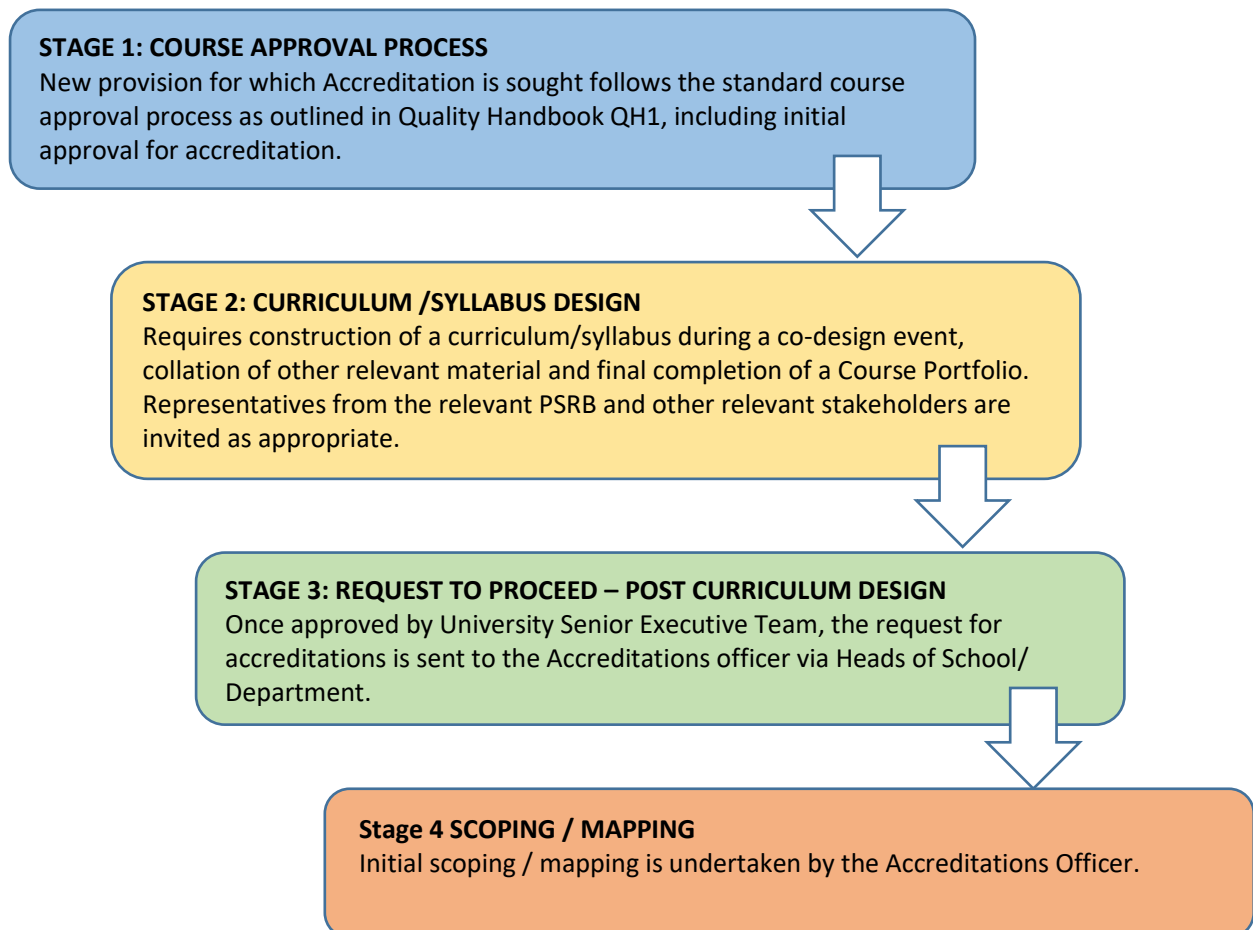
- financial considerations / costings / budget planning;
- reading/interpreting Accreditation guidelines/handbooks/policies;
- specific Accreditation requirements are identified and information shared with Head of School/Subject leads (this can include such things as SSRs, course entry requirements, staff resources, or Lab resources);
- Timelines/PSRBs deadlines are considered (often the Accreditation body has set dates across the academic year for submissions);
- staff briefings take place on the Accreditation process and roles/responsibilities allocated;
- accreditation application forms are populated (normally provided by the PSRB);
- evidence is gathered /verified;

- submissions are signed off by the Head of School/Department;
- Application is submitted to the PSRB via their prescribed method (some via an online portal, some email, others a hard copy).

## (b) Seeking Accreditation for New Provision

The process for seeking accreditation for new provision has four key stages:

- Stage 1: Course Approval Process as outlined in Quality Handbook QH1, including initial approval for accreditation,
- Stage 2: Curriculum/Syllabus Design via a co-design event, to include PSRB stakeholders, as appropriate,
- Stage 3: Post Curriculum/Syllabus Design - approval granted for seeking professional accreditation,
- Stage 4: Scoping / Mapping.



### Stage 1: Course Approval Process

Course approval for new provision for which accreditation is sought must follow the standard course approval process, as outlined in Stage 1: Approval to Proceed with an Initial proposal for New Provision in the Quality Handbook 1 (QH1): Principles of Course Design and Approval.

## **Stage 2: Curriculum / Syllabus Design**

Every Course, whether credit bearing or otherwise, must go through the process of course design. This must involve the design of a detailed curriculum and syllabus. In some instances, this will be a very simple process directed by a specific need for PLD. In other cases, such as the design of new awards of the University, this will be a longer process that requires a full co-design approach, involving external colleagues. The detailed approach for each type of provision is explored in the relevant Quality Handbook: See Appendix 1.

In all cases the curriculum/syllabus must be contained within an appropriately structured Course Portfolio which is built from the relevant Course specification Document. Other aspects of the Course Portfolio will vary dependent on the types of provision being approved. Construction of the Course Portfolio should be undertaken on the online approval system which will provide the appropriate fields for entry. Once the online documentation is complete the system will forward it to the relevant Head of School/Department for checking prior to moving to the approval stage.

## **Stage 3: Request to proceed – Post Curriculum Design**

Once a request to seek professional accreditation has been approved by University Senior Executive Team, the request is forwarded to the University Accreditations Officer via the Head of Department/School.

## **Stage 4: Scoping and Mapping**

Scoping / mapping is undertaken by the University Accreditations Officer, which includes the following procedures:

- financial considerations / costings / budget planning;
- reading/interpreting Accreditation guidelines/handbooks/policies;
- specific Accreditation requirements are identified and information shared with Head of School/Subject leads (this can include such things as SSRs, course entry requirements, staff resources, or Lab resources);
- Timelines/PSRBs deadlines are considered (often the Accreditation body has set dates across the academic year for submissions);
- staff briefings take place on the Accreditation process and roles/responsibilities allocated;
- accreditation application forms are populated (normally provided by the PSRB);
- evidence is gathered /verified;
- submissions are signed off by the Head of School/Department;
- Application is submitted to the PSRB via their prescribed method (some via a portal, some email, others a hard copy).

## **(c) GDPR - Information /Data sharing**

Where appropriate (by request of the PSRB) a data sharing agreement is produced and signed by both parties. In all other cases, data sharing with PSRBs is covered in the University's [Student Privacy Notice](#).

## **(d) Review by the PSRB**

The PSRB determines the type of review which will be undertaken, either desk based or site visit.

### **(i) Desk Based Review**

The PSRB reviews the submission and a decision is made on whether accreditation is granted. Formal notification is sent by email or letter.

### **(ii) Site Visit**

A panel is convened by the PSRB and the Accreditations Officer/Head of School arrange the visit (this includes preparing the Programme for the visit, hospitality, staff, and student briefings, etc). Staff/students are interviewed in line with the specific accreditation requirements. Verbal feedback is normally given on the day of the visit which is followed by formal written notification (email or letter).

## **(e) Accreditation Decisions**

Decision on the award (or refusal) of accreditation is made in writing (usually via email). Outcomes vary depending on the specific PSRB but can include:

- Accreditation awarded;
- Accreditation awarded with recommendations/conditions;
- Accreditation refused – no appeal/ with appeal.

If there are conditions and/or recommendations, an action plan is produced and roles allocated to meet the specific conditions/recommendations.

On completion of the recommendations/conditions, PSRB is notified and accreditation granted.

## **(f) Register of Accreditations**

Once an accreditation is officially granted, the PSRB is added to the University Accreditation Register and P&A Committee informed. The Register is monitored monthly to ensure compliance with the University's rules and regulations and the regulations of the various PSRBs.

## **(g) Marketing and Communications**

Communications / Marketing strategy when an Accreditation is awarded consists of:-

- Official logos/branding sourced from the PSRB (often PSRBs send their branding Guidelines to ensure CMA compliance).
- Notification is sent to External relations to:
  - Update the Prospectus;
  - Make any necessary changes to Hope's Website;
  - Update subject leaflets;
  - Update faculty/School Webpages;

- Promotion of the Accreditation via Hope bulletin.
- Notification is sent to official University Partners (only where the accreditation awarded relates to provision delivered with the partner).

## Monitoring of Accreditations

The process for the monitoring of accreditations is as follows:

- (i) A number of PSRBs have an annual monitoring process which includes a declaration of 'no changes'; this process is managed by the Head of School / Subject lead.
- (ii) Throughout the accreditation period, the University is required to notify the PSRB of any changes which may affect the Accredited status – each Accrediting body has its own rules with regards to notifying changes and these are closely monitored by the Academic Lead, the Accreditations Officer and the Partnerships and Accreditations Committee.
- (iii) Via the university wide action plan which details dates for annual monitoring and reaccreditation<sup>1</sup>
- (iv) If it is a requirement of the PSRB to have staff registered with the Professional Body, the Head of School/Department is responsible in ensuring the requirement is continually satisfied<sup>2</sup>.
- (v) If there is an SSR requirement, it is the responsibility of the Head of School/Department to ensure the SSR criteria is maintained<sup>3</sup>.

### Updating Discover Uni/ HESA records

When an accreditation is awarded, the Accreditations Officer, notifies Hope's Data returns team of the specific accreditation as specified by HESA. The Accreditation code is added to the HESA returns and the HESA code automatically updates Discover Uni<sup>4</sup>.

### HEAR Records

The HEAR record includes a section on PSRBs which includes a statement on the specific Course Accreditation. This process is managed/monitored by the Registrar's office, the Head of School, the Academic Lead and the Accreditation's Officer.

### OFS Notifications

The OFS regulatory Framework states that the "*Loss of accreditation by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB)*" is a reportable event and as such, Accreditations are monitored very closely by the Academic Lead, the Accreditations Officer and the Partnerships and Accreditations Committee. If Hope withdraws from an accreditation or Accreditation is withdrawn, the OfS is notified as per [OfS Regulatory framework for Higher Education in England](#) (Section 494, para h).

<sup>1</sup> Accreditation Action Plan is held and managed by the Legal Services Department

<sup>2</sup> Currently, CIEEM, AFN, BASRaT have this requirement

<sup>3</sup> Currently BASRaT and BPS Accredited courses have an SSR requirement.

<sup>4</sup> HESA produces a full list of all recognised accreditations/and PSRBs, which can be found [here](#).