

## **The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education – Aide-mémoire for reviewers evaluating learning resources**

The SCONUL/UCISA Working Group on Quality Assurance produced this Aide Mémoire to assist Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) reviewers when they are evaluating learning resources under the procedures of Academic Review. It aims to supplement guidance contained in the QAA 'Handbook for Academic Review'. The QAA has made the Aide Mémoire available to Review Chairs when they are being trained for subject review.

In the current transitional period prior to the full implementation of the process of Institutional Audit in England, the Aide Mémoire continues to be used in the training of subject reviewers carrying out 'developmental engagements' in a number of higher education institutions.

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This Aide-mémoire is designed to assist you in evaluating the library and computing services elements of learning resources support for the subject and to supplement the guidance in the *Handbook for academic review*.

There will be differences of emphasis and structure from one institution to another. You should be guided by the aims and outcomes laid out in the self-evaluation document when evaluating the appropriateness of the learning resources support for the subject concerned and the effectiveness of their deployment. Both the intended programme outcomes and their support also need to be viewed within the context of institutional strategies and policies. This Aide Mémoire will provide you with a general checklist of issues to be explored with computing and library service providers, the academic staff and the students.

### **1 Strategy, planning and liaison**

- 1.1 Is there an overall strategy for the deployment of learning resources?
- 1.2 Does this strategy support the intended programme outcomes?

- 1.3 Is it being effectively facilitated in terms of the provision of learning resources and thus appropriate learning opportunities for these students?
- 1.4 How do the computing and library services become aware of course development and review?
- 1.5 How do the computing and library services become aware of the intended learning outcomes?
- 1.6 Do these arrangements work well, meeting the real needs in a timely fashion?
- 1.7 How do the library, computing and teaching staff communicate with each other, and how well does this work?
- 1.8 How do the library and computing staff communicate with students, and how well does this work?
- 1.9 In what ways are students and staff encouraged and enabled to make effective use of the range of library and computing services available?
- 1.10 What mechanisms are in place for making teaching staff aware of the opportunities which new information and communications technologies offer to add value (appropriateness and effectiveness) to teaching delivery and student learning opportunities?

## **2 Evaluation and feedback**

- 2.1 How are the appropriateness and effectiveness of computing and library services to the intended learning outcomes and to the quality of student learning opportunities evaluated?
- 2.2 How is this fed back into service improvement?

## **3 Provision for the courses being evaluated**

The following issues of adequacy (quantity) and effectiveness (quality) of provision could be explored together with discussions about how any perceived difficulties are being addressed, with the aims and intended outcomes in the self-assessment document as the principal point of reference.

### **3.1 Relevance of learning materials**

- 3.1.1 Are the available library and computing resources effective (quality) and adequate (quantity) to support the taught courses, in particular in respect of books, periodicals and electronic information resources, datasets, software, on-line learning environments and equipment?
- 3.1.2 How are these learning resources, and the means of their delivery, selected and updated?

### **3.2 Availability and accessibility**

- 3.2.1 How well-matched are the availability and locations of the services to the needs of the students?
- 3.2.2 How accessible are the library and IT facilities for all groups of students (e.g. part-time, disabled, distance learning)?
- 3.2.3 How adequate (quantity) and effective (quality) is the library study accommodation for student needs?
- 3.2.4 How adequate (quantity) and suitable (quality) are the workstation and other computing and data networking facilities for student needs?
- 3.2.5 If the course is fully delivered by distance learning, do its students have adequate and effective provision of learning resources?

### **3.3 User support**

- 3.3.1 What skills training is offered to students and staff?
- 3.3.2 What arrangements are in place for promoting services and responding to enquiries? How effective are they?
- 3.3.3 What steps are taken to enhance and update skills of library and computing staff in order to ensure the quality of support services?

This Aide-mémoire was revised for The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education by members of the joint Quality Working Group of:

SCONUL (Society of College, National & University Libraries)  
UCISA (Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association)

It is available on the SCONUL web site at  
[http://www.sconul.ac.uk/quality\\_ass/index.htm](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/quality_ass/index.htm)

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