SECTION F: REVIEWS OF SCHOOLS, REVIEWS OF SERVICES, QUALITY APPRAISALS AND INTERNAL QUALITY AUDITS (IQAS)

1. School Reviews

The evaluation of the strategic direction and performance of the School within the University and the audit of the operation of its quality assurance and enhancement arrangements along with an examination of its assessment, teaching and learning and research strategies is undertaken through mechanisms including Quality Appraisals, Subject Review, PSRB Reviews, HEFCE and UNIAC audits and most regularly through the mechanism of the Annual Planning Round. Externality to the process is provided through the periodic audits of HEFCE and PSRBs to which all Schools are exposed.

2. Service Reviews

The evaluation of the strategic direction and performance of the Services within the University and the audit of the operation of its quality assurance and enhancement arrangements is undertaken through mechanisms including Quality Appraisals, UNIAC audits and most regularly through the mechanism of the Annual Planning Round.

3. Quality Appraisals

3.1 The Function of Quality Appraisals

Quality appraisals are an audit of existing practice in a small defined area which is reported to the Quality and Standards Advisory Group. The purpose of quality appraisals is to provide evidence to assist the University in ensuring that its policies and procedures operate effectively and are being implemented consistently across the Institution.

3.2 Types of Quality Appraisal

3.2.1 School/Service quality appraisals may cover a wide range of topics related, but not limited to:
   i) the operation of formal academic committees;
   ii) course documentation;
   iii) course/module evaluation and review mechanisms;
   iv) implementation of teaching and learning strategies;
   v) regulatory compliance;
   vi) the student learning experience.

3.2.2 Service quality appraisals will cover activities, identified on an ad hoc basis, which support the student learning experience. This may include the processes for supporting centrally serviced committees, such as University Teaching and Learning Committee and University Research Committee (and any other committees outside of Registry).

3.3 Evidence Required for Quality Appraisals

3.3.1 The minimum evidence required for each quality appraisal will be specified by at least 1 month in advance and will have an emphasis on evaluating processes against existing University regulations, policies and procedures.
3.3.2 It is the responsibility of the School/Service being appraised to ensure that documentation is prepared in an appropriate format to be presented to the quality appraisal panel.

3.4 Appointment of Quality Appraisal Panels

Panels will normally comprise of a minimum of 2 members of staff not associated with the School/Service where the quality appraisal is taking place (usually 2 members of Registry staff, one of whom normally will be a senior member of the Service). The panel may be accompanied by any member of staff, independent from the School/Service being appraised in accordance with criteria defined by QSAG/Graduate Board.

3.5 Conduct of Quality Appraisals

3.5.1 The schedule of quality appraisals for each academic year will be determined by the Quality and Standards Advisory Group/Graduate Board, on behalf of UTLC/URC, and incorporated into the annual review schedule.

3.5.2 Quality appraisals are paper-based exercises conducted as a desk-based activity by the panel, but if appropriate may include meeting(s) with relevant members of staff and students.

3.6 Reports of Quality Appraisals

3.6.1 It is the responsibility of the quality appraisal panel to ensure that a report of the documentation presented as part of the quality appraisal is prepared in an appropriate format to be presented to the School or Service being appraised to enable them to identify and confirm actions to be taken to address any issues identified.

3.6.2 Reports will detail the conduct observed, draw conclusions and make recommendations.

3.6.3 The Dean/Director or Head of Service, or nominee, will receive the final report and will draw up a formal response and action plan to be presented for consideration by the Quality and Standards Advisory Group/Graduate Board, on behalf of UTLC/URC.

4. Internal Quality Audits (IQA)

4.1 The purpose of an Internal Quality Audit is to scrutinise in-depth areas of rapid change and development or to determine the nature of problems and to report on action and support required where issues of concern have been raised – for example through the annual evaluation process or other review mechanism.

4.2 The precise terms of reference, model of audit, panel membership and means by which the report of the audit will be considered will be agreed with the PVC (T&L)/PVC (R&E) in advance of commencing the Internal Quality Audit.