Course Management

HANDBOOK

May 2022
Contents
Course Management
HANDBOOK ........................................................................................................................................... 1

What is the purpose of the handbook? .................................................................................................... 3
What is the scope of the handbook? .......................................................................................................... 4
How to engage with the handbook? ........................................................................................................ 4
Summary of the Seven Areas .................................................................................................................... 4

1. Course Team Management and Leadership ............................................................................... 7
2. Course Design, Development and Review .................................................................................. 7
   New course design .......................................................................................................................... 7
   Course Development and Review ...................................................................................................... 8
3. Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions .................................................................................... 8
   Recruitment and Admissions .......................................................................................................... 9
4. Pre-Arrival, Transition, Orientation and Induction ..................................................................... 9
5. Student Support and Student Procedures ................................................................................ 10
   Student academic development and welfare support ................................................................. 10
   Leadership and management of students’ engagement, retention, progression and achievement ...................................................................................................................................................... 10
   Management of Student Extenuating Circumstances ................................................................. 11
   Fitness to Study / Fitness to Practise ............................................................................................ 11
   Academic Misconducts and Disciplinaries .................................................................................... 11
   Student academic appeals ............................................................................................................ 12
   Student complaints ....................................................................................................................... 12
6. Student Voice and Engagement ................................................................................................ 13
   At module level ............................................................................................................................. 13
   At course level ............................................................................................................................ 13
   At School’s level .......................................................................................................................... 13
7. Course Administration and Delivery ......................................................................................... 14
   Delivery of approved course ......................................................................................................... 14
   Resources, timetabling and specific events ................................................................................. 14
   Assessments, reassessments, Boards of Examiners .................................................................. 14
   External Examiners and Professional Bodies ............................................................................... 15
What is the purpose of the handbook?

The handbook sets out all activities that are essential to the efficient programme design, delivery, and management of a successful taught course. In line with our Learning and Teaching Strategy, our courses at Rushmore Business School (RBS) are aimed to:

- Attract students by igniting a passion for learning, enthusiasm, and helping them to appreciate the course’s value.
- Retain our students throughout their studies by keeping the course content current and pertinent, but also by ensuring that students receive support with their academic and professional development as well as with their wellbeing so they can continue to get the most of their time with us.
- Consistently offer an excellent experience to all students, regardless of their course, of their background and circumstances.
- Enable our students to achieve their personal best so they can graduate successfully and be ready for the next stage on their career pathway and personal journey.

All members of a course team play a part in the realisation of these goals.

The Course Team comprises of an Academic Director, academic staff for the course, but also course administrators, managers at various levels in the Department. The precise role of each member of the team varies. The handbook is written to cover all key course activities, the job description in each course for the course team member is provided at the start of each semester and is agreed by the Management.

The Academic Director is responsible for the day-to-day management of a course’s operational matters, and that they will therefore ensure that the activities listed are completed, even if they do not carry them out themselves, or, sometimes, do not even lead on them. The Academic Director is supported by Module Leaders and Personal Tutors and, for courses with collaborative partners, academic link tutors and partner academic link tutors.

Some academics also have additional responsibilities for specific areas such as admissions or outreach. In addition to this, the management of the Departments, such as Heads of Departments retain oversight of specific elements relating to the course, such as budget, setting targets, monitoring student data, line management and other human resources matters.

The approach of this handbook is deliberately action-focused and intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the tasks to be undertaken for any course to run well. The Course Team has the responsibility for the tasks and should be shared across at various times during the academic year, so that the spreading of workload is balanced for all.
What is the scope of the handbook?

The course team will undertake the responsibility of ensuring the teaching activities, their workloads, mental health and wellbeing are well managed by the Academic Director.

How to engage with the handbook?

The handbook is organised in a thematic way, covering seven key areas in the design and development of a course and the management of a course team. Many activities associated with each area may need to be performed concurrently, and the handbook is therefore not organised in chronological order. You may wish to engage with the handbook as a whole or refer to it at a time when you have queries about a specific area of activity.

Some elements of the handbook may not apply to your course, and you may also have additional tasks not listed in this handbook, because each course is unique, and because Departments function slightly differently.

More information is available in the Course Handbook and or on Moodle, the VLE of RBS.

Summary of the Seven Areas

1. **Course Team Management and Leadership**
   - Communication
   - Division of roles/tasks
   - Staff induction and development
   - Academic Board
   - Change management

2. **Course Design, Development and Review**
   - Course and module aim and learning outcomes
   - L&T and assessment strategy and activities
   - Employability
   - Sustainability
   - Academic calendar
   - Regulations/PSRB
• Course modifications
• Continuous Improvement Plan
• Periodic course review

3. Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions
• Open Days and other events
• Publicity
• Prospectus
• Outreach
• Clearing
• Alumni

4. Pre-Arrival, Orientation, Induction and Transition
• Course Essentials
• Welcome Week
• Sense of belonging
• Inclusivity
• Learning Communities

5. Student Support and Student Procedures
• Personal Tutor
• Student Engagement Monitoring
• Course evaluation
• Peer mentoring
• Extenuating Circumstances
• Cause for Care and Concern
• Fitness to Study/ Fitness to Practise
• Academic Misconducts
• Appeals/Complaints
6. **Student Voice and Engagement**
   - Module and Lecturer’s Evaluation
   - Course Representatives
   - Staff-Students Liaison Committee (SSLC)

7. **Course Administration and Delivery**
   - Timetable
   - Course handbook
   - Moodle -VLE
   - Learning resources and equipment
   - Health & Safety
   - Assessment schedule
   - Marking and moderation
   - Boards of Examiners (BoE)/ Exam Board
   - Archiving of student work
   - External Examiner
1. **Course Team Management and Leadership**

The aim is to set up and implement good communication channels within the course team, to allow the swift exchange of information and opinions and to ensure the team knows its priorities, and the respective responsibilities of each team member.

Furthermore, to ensure below:

- Set up good communication channels with hierarchy (Line Manager, Head of Departments, Academic Director, etc.), to ensure reciprocal exchange of key information relating to the course and broader Business School’s news.
- Set up good communication channels with other Course Team and Professional Services (Employability and Skills, Timetabling and Attendance, Learning Skills Team of Learning Developers and Librarians, etc.) to resolve issues and to improve the course and student experience.
- Keep up to date with changes to RBS policies, procedures, and processes. Ensure that where necessary or appropriate, the course team attends relevant training on these.
- Ensure course representation at all committees and other required events/groups.
- To conduct Exam board and to ensure the meetings are minuted.
- Ensure all module leaders use the Module Handbook.
- Support the induction of new staff for module and course matters, in agreement with their line manager, e.g. assessments procedures, etc.
- Consider the professional development of all members of the team.
- Oversee the staffing required for the day-to-day delivery of the course. Report staff absence or performance issues that may impinge on course quality or delivery to the relevant line manager.
- Assist in the recruitment and selection of staff if required which entails the completion of relevant training.

2. **Course Design, Development and Review**

**New course design**

- The Academic Team is responsible for the mounting of any new programme with the collaboration with Course Team members and industry experts.

They should:
- Determine the course aims and learning of the programme
• Design the course learning, teaching and assessment strategy to incorporate the development of students’ graduate employability skills and attributes in line with the key principles
• Design modules to reflect the course aims and learning outcomes, and to allow for a seamless learning transition and progression between semesters/trimesters and between levels of study.
• Draw up a clear assessment strategy which allows students to meet the course learning outcomes and incorporates plenty of formative activities and regular feedback.
• Determine academic calendar to follow

Course Development and Review

• Share the team’s good practice with others within and beyond the team e.g. presentation at Departments level and Management level.
• Maintain currency of subject knowledge by engaging in research and knowledge exchange. Keep updated with the changes occurring within the industry/sector/area relevant to your course and seek feedback from relevant stakeholders.
• Use course data and feedback from stakeholders (staff, students, Regulators, external examiner, employers, service users, etc.) to determine necessary amendments to be made to the course.
• When changes have been made to a course following any of the above processes, ensure that current students who are going to be affected by the changes are informed of the changes.

3. Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions

For the activities in this section, consult with Marketing and Recruitment Team, in particular the Marketing Manager who acts as a conduit through to the services provided by the wider central marketing team including market research, social media strategy and delivery, and design and production.

The Marketing Team ensures:
• the course has clear marketing plans and a strategy that targets the most appropriate applicants given the discipline. This includes, for approved courses, setting up and ensuring the delivery of outreach and other recruitment events and tools, which may include the participation of staff, current and former students.
• the smooth running of Open Days and materials used
• Regularly check the currency of all course’s prospectus entry and of any recruitment publicity material, including digital means as appropriate.

• In the course publicity, make the most of the successes of staff, students and alumni to raise the profile of the course, e.g. a specific award won, a student project with impact in the community, successful alumni in the news.

Search for examples of innovative marketing practices to replicate from other courses at Rushmore Business School or other institutions.

Recruitment and Admissions

• Monitor annual student intake targets and liaise with the Department management who set future recruitment targets.

• Ensure that the Admissions Team is aware of changes made to the course so that they can communicate them to prospective students

• Respond to queries from the Admissions team within a timely manner and advise the Student Support Services (Undergraduate or Postgraduate)

• In conjunction with the Faculty Operations team, organise (if applicable) interviews or auditions schedules for each admissions cycle.

• Liaise with Admissions for applicants who wish to be considered for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as per the RBS’ procedure.

4. Pre-Arrival, Transition, Orientation and Induction

• Plan and schedule a comprehensive range of activities for Welcome Week to provide new students a smooth transition to RBS, support early engagement and establish a sense of belonging within the cohort, being mindful of specific student groups. Work in collaboration with the Student Support Team to provide the induction at the start of the academic year for new students.

• Coordinate the induction of new students and ensure students are given a chance to meet the Director, Academic Director, course team administrative and technical staff during their induction.

• Ensure new students are aware of the support and guidance available to them beyond the course team, encourage them to make use of these services and invite representatives of these services to briefly present them.
• Ensure new and returning students are aware of their Learning & Research Librarian so that literacies (i.e. academic, information and digital literacy skills) and study skills (i.e. academic writing for specific contexts, presentation and critical thinking skills) can be developed from the beginning of their academic journey.

• Consider the inclusion of activities organised by and for students at induction and throughout the year, within and beyond the curriculum, to create a cohort or course learning community.

• Design and deliver reorientation and transition activities for returning students (including those returning after an interruption) and students with advanced standing or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) at all levels in the course.

• Ensure all students, new and returning, knows about Personal Tutor. Same must be assigned within a few weeks of start of the semester.

### 5. Student Support and Student Procedures

**Student academic development and welfare support**

• Engage with the RBS Services and be familiar with the variety of services offered to students, including the Student Support Services, other activities such as CV writing, academic writing, etc.

• Ensure the Personal Tutor system is working effectively for all students, and that Personal Tutor monitors student academic and welfare issues and discuss emerging themes (e.g. if many students report financial difficulties). Ensure timely responses to student issues and either provide advice or refer them to another service, counselling, etc.

• Ensure adequate cover for academic and pastoral support throughout the year, and especially during reassessment periods or periods when some team members may be away.

**Leadership and management of students’ engagement, retention, progression and achievement**

• Regularly analyse data relating to student retention, progression and achievement using the Student Management System. The data need to be analysed through various lenses, including that of student ethnicity, gender, background, mode of study (part-time, full-time), maturity (i.e. older than 21), registered disability. Additional data should be considered, on number of complaints, appeals, misconducts, extenuating circumstances which can be obtained from the Student Support Services Office, registry@rbs.ac.mw
• Formulate, implement and monitor an action plan at course level to address issues highlighted by the data. Provide a detailed account of your actions as part of the continuous improvement plan.

• Monitor all students’ progress to ensure that they are performing to their capability. Pay special attention to the progress of late joiners, students who have made use of extensions, students with a poor attendance record, or returning from a period of interruption, and generally, students that you and your team deem “at risk” of disengagement. Offer students appropriate support or signposting to other services.

• Report student attendance (or lack thereof) to meet the Immigration Compliance requirements.

• Work with placement staff to maximise student opportunities to gain work-related experiences and access a range of meaningful interactions with employers.

• Encourage the course team to work closely with the Academic Team, Learning & Research Librarian in order to embed literacies (i.e. academic, information and digital literacies) and skills for study and employment, working in partnership to develop targeted interventions that aim to enhance academic success.

• For final year students, make them aware of the Alumni services of the Business School.

• To support graduands and graduates, including attending the graduation ceremonies and ensuring references are supplied

Management of Student Extenuating Circumstances

• Be familiar and engage with the RBS Procedures and other awarding bodies concerning Extenuating Circumstances (EC).

• Take send documents to the Board and communicate decisions on EC requests to student and have a record of same.

Fitness to Study / Fitness to Practise

• All students must be fit to sit for any assessment. To kindly see the Programme Manager if any issue in submitting or sitting for any exams.

Academic Misconducts and Disciplinaries

• For academic misconduct - Engage with the RBS’s Academic Misconduct Procedures/ Policy.
• Understand what types of student action falls under the Academic Misconduct Procedures and what steps to take if they believe a student has engaged in misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, contract cheating, examination irregularities). If required, conduct Informal Stage processes or refer the matter to the Academic Director where a Formal Investigation is felt to be required.

• Design your assessment to minimise opportunities for academic misconduct to occur. Identify potential academic misconduct in marking, referring the matter to the Academic Director in a timely manner and keeping an appropriate record of cases for checking purposes. Undertake training in the use and interpretation of Turnitin scores to fully understand the difference between weak academic skills and deliberate plagiarism. For course staff undertaking investigations, ensure they are confident about the relevant Stage requirements/ outcomes, reporting processes post-investigation and interaction with Board of Examiners (both in terms of decisions and timeframes).

• For disciplinary - RBS has set procedures in place, please contact your Programme Manager.

Student academic appeals

• Understand the Academic Appeals procedures and process, which a student should use if they wish to request a review of a decision made by a Exam Body.

• Be clear about who to refer students to if they require advice and support about appeals (e.g. Student Support Services).

• The Academic Board is responsible to look at the Appeal.

• Provide timely responses as appeal cases are subject to clear timescales for each step in the process, including appeals received during the reassessment periods.

Student complaints

• The RBS Student Complaints procedures and process are clear about who to refer students to if they require advice and support about complaints (e.g. Student Support Services, Personal Tutor, etc).

• If needed, undertake a first stage discussions with the student, and attempt to resolve complaints at the most immediate level, or escalate the matter to the relevant Head of Department or Academic Director.

• To provide timely response to the student for any complaint case filed at formal investigation stage.
6. **Student Voice and Engagement**

Within the team, promote a culture of pro-actively hearing and responding to the student voice and of working with students to improve the course and their experience of it. This is done at several levels:

**At module level**

- The Quality Team ensures all Module Evaluation are set up on each module via Survey Monkey to all students. Encourage students to complete both the Mid Module and End of Semester Evaluation exercises.

**At course level**

- Ensure module leaders analyse the student feedback and provide a module report at the end of each module, including analysis of students’ results, for the Examboard.
- Ensure course reps are elected each year, for each level of study.
- Build a good relationship with course reps to ensure they feel able to discuss any issue the cohort may have with you. Be prepared to support the reps if they wish to organise activities/events to promote the student voice on the course.
- Set up dates and organise a Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) at least twice per academic year and ensure staff and all student representatives are invited.
- Circulate the SSLC minutes and work on action points (or liaise with those who can help with the action points) in order to close the feedback loop, so that students are aware that you have taken on board (whenever possible) their comments.
- Ensure student feedback and SSLM actions are fed into the course continuous improvement plan.

**At School’s level**

- Make students aware that throughout the academic year, there are opportunities for them to share their views on a range of subjects, experience, give testimonials, etc.
7. Course Administration and Delivery

Delivery of approved course

Ensure that module leaders and administrators align their learning material, activities and assessments to the approved course and module to deliver high quality learning experiences to students on the course.

- For each cohort, produce a Course Handbook using the most up-to-date RBS template and make it available to all students. Upload it into Moodle, VLE.
- Update all modules and course materials for each cohort. Before the academic year starts, ensure a timetable has been sent to the students with the modules which will be run in that academic year.
- Ensure module leaders promote and maintain currency of learning resources available from the library (including digital resources) and complete relevant forms to request additional ones.
- Consult with the Internship team to identify suitable employability and enterprise resources to support teaching and work-related experiences. Discuss any other needs you may have for additional support in arranging meaningful interaction with employers (e.g. internship, external guest speakers and any other classroom support required).
- Identify operational issues that are impeding the effectiveness of the course and work with the team (and beyond if needed) to resolve them.

Resources, timetabling and specific events

The Academic Team has the responsibility to:

- Ensure timetables adhere to RBS requirements and follow the relevant RBS Academic calendar.
- Submit your timetable changes to Academic Director so that the centrally held timetable is kept accurate.
- Ensure changes of venue or cancellation of sessions are effectively communicated to students and Student Support Team as soon as possible.
- make sure a copy of the Timetable is uploaded onto Moodle.

Assessments, reassessments, Boards of Examiners
• Be familiar with the RBS Assessments Frameworks/ Regulations and Awards processes and provide appropriate advice to students when needed. This includes awareness of how this link with support procedures such as, request for extensions or, as required, deferral of assessment beyond the Board of Examiners, with academic misconduct procedures and appeals/complaints, amongst others.

• Produce a calendar of assessments deadlines for the course, to avoid, whenever possible, the bunching of deadlines for students within the course whilst ensuring the relevant calendar requirements are met.

• Ensure that all deadlines for work submitted via Turnitin and drop box set for submission on Moodle.

• Oversee arrangements for marking and moderation for all modules following Marking Procedures, including for reassessments periods. These arrangements must guarantee that assessments marks/ grades and feedback are returned within 15 working days of the deadline for assessment submissions, and that marking of after-deadline submissions is done (albeit beyond the standard marking times).

• If applicable, recommend a variation to the assessments for students who require reasonable adjustments.

• Prepare the necessary paperwork for the Progression and Award Boards (Exam Boards)
  • If needed, ensure chair’s actions are taken to add or rectify marks to students’ profiles.
  • Keep a note of EC decisions and, where appropriate, cross-check EC decisions about students against their results to ensure the appropriate mark or Board of Examiners decision is confirmed.
  • Ensure support is available to students when results are published, and during reassessment periods, including advice about appeal information and support.

External Examiners and Professional Bodies

An External Examiner (EE) is appointed to ensure:

• appropriate information is handed for verification and is given an opportunity to comment on all assessment questions/ briefs (first assessments and reassessments).

• module information and assessment are provided

• The course team must ensure the EE is informed of the dates when they should review samples of students’ work. Ensure they are aware of the Board of Examiners’ arrangements.

• Make the EE report available to the course team and discuss, at Exam Board, how amendments can be made to the course to respond to the EE’s recommendations, Formal report to be shared with the Module Leader and kept for any regulator usage.
• For courses with an external body (PSRB), liaise and maintain relationships with the external body, organise visits and ensure renewal of membership if appropriate.