



QUALITY MANUAL

UL GLOBAL

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF UL GLOBAL

In line with the University's Strategic Plan, UL@50 (2019 to 2024), UL Global (UL Global) provides a range of services to catalyse the delivery of the institution's international agenda as outlined in Goal 3. It holds overall responsibility for UL partnerships with educational institutions situated outside of Ireland in the context of Erasmus+ and bilateral student and staff exchange programmes, collaborating with the Irish National Agency (the Higher Education Authority) and with the EU Commission, to initiate, fund, manage and promote these partnerships. This work results in the short-term mobility of students, and staff. The predominant role of UL Global is in the provision of two-way facilitation of students embracing the international dimension to education, either as a UL student wishing to be placed internationally, as an incoming student wishing to study at UL, or a staff member wishing to undertake mobility.

To deliver the above, three programme areas operate within UL Global:

- Erasmus /Non-EU Exchanges: The Erasmus/Non-EU Exchanges section organises credit bearing exchange mobility for incoming and outgoing students and staff mobility between UL and EU and international partners under the auspices of various programmes, governed by formal bilateral agreements between institutions across the globe or Erasmus+ agreements for funded activities.
- Full Degree: The Full Degree section markets UL and recruits undergraduate and postgraduate degree seeking students from countries, such as China, India, the Americas, the Middle East and Africa.
- Study Abroad: Study Abroad section organises the fee-paying Study Abroad programme, which offers short-term study placements to international students, largely, but not exclusively, from the US.

The three programme areas work with the transversal areas of student support and international communication and marketing.

Irrespective of section, the backdrop to all UL Global functions is to ensure that all students and staff, incoming or outgoing, are facilitated in a professional, friendly, safe, educationally-worthy, and inviting manner to maximise each individual experience, and expand on these to facilitate a growing number of students and academic partnerships. All of UL Global's current and planned activity aligns with UL's Quality ethos as set out in its [Quality Statement, Quality Policy, and Quality Manual](#).

1.2 Our Commitment to Quality

This Quality Manual demonstrates our commitment to maintaining commendable customer focus, while continually improving the level and quality of our services. Quality is an integral part of our entire business operation and receives formal and informal consideration across the entire UL Global team.

Changes to any processes outlined in this manual, and to our key business processes are controlled using [UL Global's Documentation Control Process](#). The role of the quality team, in conjunction with

UL Global's management team, is to lead the Division in maintaining and developing its Quality Management System (QMS) and prepare all concerned for audits and Quality Review assessments. On behalf of the Director, the Deputy Director is assigned responsibility for overseeing the QMS. The Deputy Director has enlisted the help of staff representing each area forming the UL Global Quality Team. On behalf of UL Global, this team is responsible for a number of key deliverables:

- Supporting QMS development and deployment
- Planning/reviewing annual audits
- Preparing self-assessment reports
- Reviewing Improvement activities and Customer Feedback trends.

The team meet once every month to action the above and matters such as feedback review and action are discussed at team level on a regular basis. A comprehensive overview of [Quality Team Roles and Responsibilities at UL](#) has been outlined by the Quality Support Unit.

1.3 Quality Policy

UL Global's [Quality Policy](#) was created with a mindfulness of the [core principles of Quality within UL](#). It provides a succinct message of our function, ethos, accountability and intent to continually serve and improve. Accordingly, amendments to the Quality Policy, and all UL Global documentation, will be made via the Division's [Document Control Process](#).

“UL Global facilitates the International mobility of staff and students to and from the University of Limerick. In line with the University's Strategic Plan, International best practice, and a customer-centred ethos, the Division delivers an efficient, professional and educational service to its customers and stakeholders in the dynamic and bespoke setting that is International Education. This is attained through a fully committed team, regular customer feedback, a robust network of invaluable stakeholders, and a desire to remain nationally and internationally competitive and renowned in our field.

We aim to achieve this through the embracement of continued improvements through structured regular reviews of our Quality Management System.”

2. CUSTOMER FOCUS

In UL Global, our customers are: Irish and international students, education providers, education agents, university partners and academic and support departments within the University. Based on feedback from the student body, their home and/or hosting institutions, agents, faculty coordinators and leaders and general trends in international education, UL Global sets about serving its varied customer base to the highest standards. Through formal and informal channels, we seek constructive feedback with a view to improving our facilities and ensuring a follow-up element is embedded in all endeavours so we can gauge our success thereafter. All UL Global interactions are handled as promoted through the University's Dignity and Respect Policies in respect of student and staff cohorts, as well as the [Equality and Diversity Policy](#).

Customer Charter

Our Customer Charter is available in prominent locations within the UL Global offices, and is also available on [UL Global's website](#).

Customer Feedback Process

To establish the exact needs and expectations of our main customers, UL Global conduct an annual student survey at institutional and/or national/international levels so we have a direct line to our primary customer base. The survey is organised by the Student Support Officer and a report is generated for review. The report is circulated to UL Global staff, and other UL stakeholders such as Student Affairs, Plassey Campus Centre, ITD, the Graduate School, for review and comment. UL Global then discuss the report at the Divisional monthly meeting. Actions to improve areas resulting from the feedback are added to the Continual Improvements log and followed up on by the relevant staff.

Additionally, the Division analyses feedback from a variety of sources:

- Exit survey conducted by the central UL Quality Office which is returned to UL Global
- Erasmus+ EU Commission questionnaire on the Erasmus academic placement for both student and staff capturing incoming and outgoing students, outgoing staff within the EU, both incoming and outgoing staff outside the EU within the framework of the funded programmes
- UL Student report on the Erasmus academic placement

Feedback from these sources is discussed and appropriately actioned at manager meetings, and the Divisional monthly meetings. Feedback is also discussed at the Annual Review and Planning meeting held each summer. Improvement activities are logged and allocated responsibility, action items, and deadlines in the UL Global Continual Improvements Log.

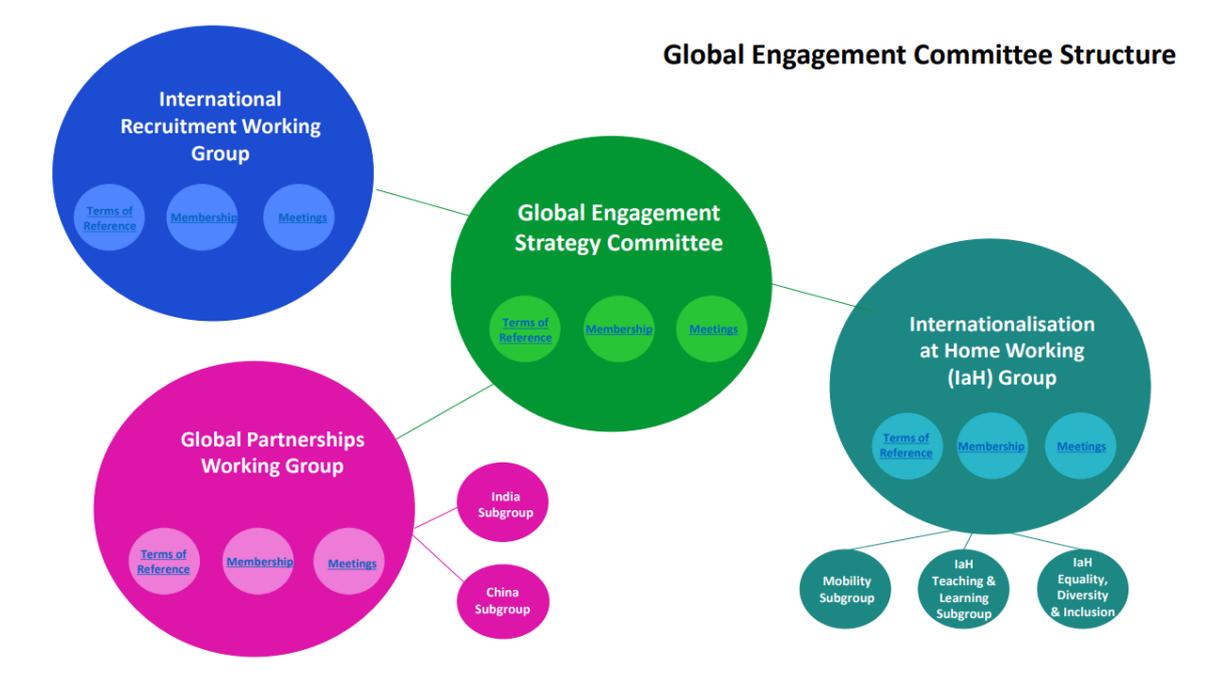
Finally, individually-reported customer feedback is collected within UL Global for recording, and to address where necessary and appropriate. All forms of feedback are logged in the Customer Feedback log. This log records positive, constructive, and suggestive feedback so UL Global can continually note and act on customer input. Trends in the Customer Feedback log are reviewed by the Deputy Director, in conjunction with managers and the Quality Team as necessary, and appropriate actions are noted in the Continual Improvements log for follow-up.

Complaints Procedure

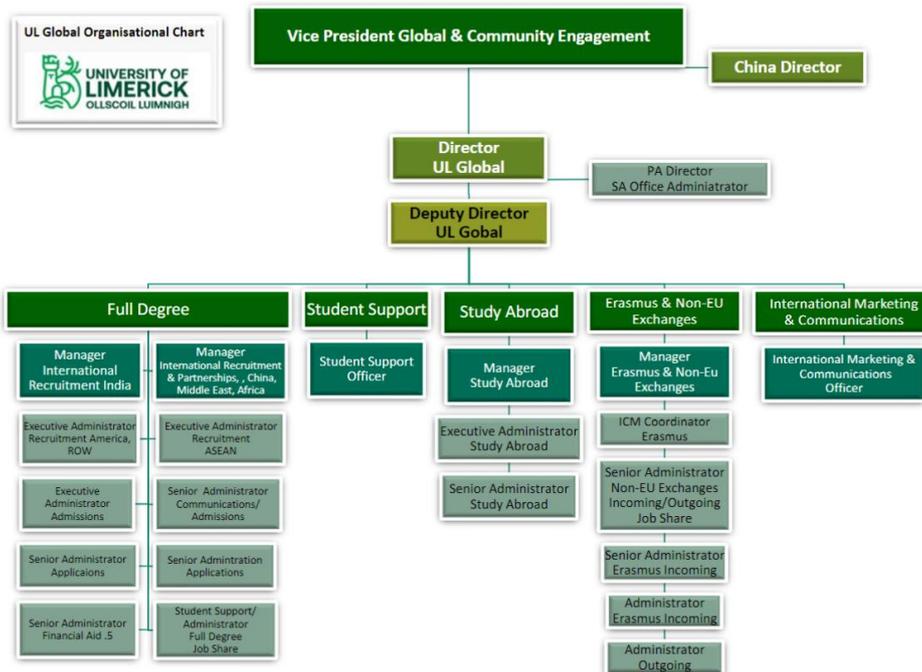
When a customer complaint is received by UL Global, it is logged in the Customer Feedback Log by the staff member receiving the complaint. They will direct it to the appropriate team for investigation. It is then examined by the team who work to resolve the matter internally or liaise with relevant academic departments and support services to resolve the issue, as appropriate. UL Global's response to the complaint is led by the Manager from the relevant section, and clear plans are put in place and monitored until the issue is resolved, and the relevant parties informed. The Manager reports on the process and the outcome to the Deputy Director, and significant outcomes or changes are raised at the Divisional monthly meeting. Key outcomes are recorded in the Customer Feedback log. As outlined above, trends in the Customer Feedback log are reviewed by the Deputy Director, in conjunction with managers and the Quality Team as necessary, and appropriate actions are noted in the Continual Improvements log for follow-up.

3. LEADERSHIP

Global engagement is continually evolving at UL. In 2020, UL revisited the structure, terms of reference, and linkage of all global engagement committees. The newly-established configuration of same is outlined in the following image. Many UL Global staff represent the office across these institutional groups.



The Director of UL Global reports to the Vice President Global and Community Engagement within UL. The Deputy Director in UL Global reports to the Director, as does the PA & Office Administrator, the Student Support Officer and all Section Managers. The Digital marketing Officer reports to the Deputy Director, and in a dual reporting structure, all section managers are supported by the Deputy Director on operational issues. Staff within each section report to the relevant Manager. The Division is structured around the Erasmus & Non-EU Exchanges, Full Degree and Study Abroad sections. Each section team has three sub-functions: (i) management, to oversee promotion and lead the section; (ii) admissions; and (iii) student or staff queries/pastoral care. The Full Degree section covers student recruitment and international partnerships, with a manager dedicated to each, while the Erasmus & Non-EU Exchanges and Study Abroad sections have one manager each. The overall structure is complemented by a cross-functional Student Support Officer and a Digital Media Coordinator. A visual representation of the Division structure is as follows.



The UL Global management team consists of the Director, Deputy Director, International Recruitment & Admission, International Recruitment and Partnerships Managers, Erasmus & Non-EU Exchanges Manager, and Study Abroad Manager.

The UL Global quality team is led by the Deputy Director, and comprises representatives from all sections and at different organisational levels. Decisions on the appointment of quality team members are made at the end of the year via consultation from the Deputy Director with the outgoing team members, and across the office, ensuring appropriate stability and turnover is met. The quality team works with the Deputy Director to communicate the importance of quality to all staff and to ensure that quality of service and procedures permeates all activities of UL Global.

In maintaining and changing the Quality Management System, the regulatory and statutory requirements such as University's Act, Compliance regulations (w.r.t. GDPR, Records, IT Security, Risk etc), Finance and HR policies, are communicated and accommodated within the system. The management and quality teams ensure that an awareness of these parameters permeates all UL Global planning and decisions when leading or amending initiatives.

3.1 Planning

Planning is carried out in an appropriate manner for each service provided by the Division. In all cases, the management team aim to ensure that the correct resource level and experience are in place to support any of these planning structures.

Specifically:

- A Divisional Strategic Plan and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are produced in line with the UL Strategic Plan cycle. The management group and staff of the Division are collaboratively responsible for producing the UL Global's strategic plan. The plan is reviewed and monitored on a regular basis by the management group and through appropriate reporting structures within the Division.

- UL Global holds an annual review and planning day, where UL Global critically reflect collaboratively on the activities of the previous academic year, evaluate outcomes, and plan the focus and activities for the year ahead. Activity and Communications plans are drawn up for the key recruitment markets; USA, China, Middle East, Africa, SE Asia, India and for the Study Abroad activity in USA, Brazil and Japan. Activity plans are drawn up for Erasmus and Non-EU Exchanges, Student Support and general marketing approaches.
- In line with the [University's Performance and Development Review System \(PDRS\)](#), annual personal and professional and development requirements are agreed with section managers for the year ahead.
- Divisional monthly meetings, to include all UL Global staff, serve to review the Division's activity and assists short term planning.
- Section managers hold communication and planning meetings with their section at least once a month.
- The Director of UL Global meets once monthly with the University's VP Global which allows for a formal communication of updates to and from both sides; these are communicated within UL Global as appropriate.
- To meet the fast-paced decision-making and crisis-management that has arisen on foot of the Covid19 pandemic, the VP Global, UL Global Director, Deputy Director, UL Global section managers, Student Support and Digital Marketing meet weekly to discuss associated operational plans of UL Global/UL. The outcomes of these meetings, where relevant, are communicated to the wider staff group by the section managers.
- Each section manager meets with the UL Global Director and Deputy Director monthly focusing on planning and development within the relevant section. The outcomes are communicated by the section manager, where relevant, within the team.
- UL Global also has representatives on several relevant UL committees to ensure that the Division contributes to UL-wide initiatives and can apply subsequent changes in-house thereafter. Examples include the UL Orientation, SI (Student Information system) User Group, Marketing and External Communications, Academic Regulations, VPAR Management Group and, UL Management Committees. A list is stored on SharePoint.

3.2 Management Communication Process

As outlined in Section 3.1, UL Global has a defined and effective planning and communications structure both internally to the Division, and externally across the institution. Additionally, UL Global ensures that communication to external stakeholders and customers remains current and informative through means such as the website, regular newsletters, social media, Campus Connect app and other appropriate channels.

The Quality Management System (QMS) is reviewed at the annual review and planning meeting to ensure its continuing development, adequacy and effectiveness. This review includes assessing opportunities for improvement and the need for changes to the QMS, including the quality policy and QMS objectives.

For the annual review, the agenda includes:

- KPI Review
- Audit Review
- Continual Improvements log: activity and trend review
- Customer Feedback log: activity and trend review
- Staff suggestions and planning
- Supplier Review
- Previous action review
- Quality and Management Objectives
- AOB

In addition, monthly divisional meetings take place to include all staff members, where quality and continual improvement are standing agenda items. All staff contribute to the agenda on Sharepoint in advance of the meeting. The PA to the Director records minutes. At each meeting, previous minutes are read and any outstanding items are discussed and closed off, or additional actions are noted in the minutes.

In addition to the divisional monthly meeting, meetings are held by the Quality Team, at sectional level, and task-specific meetings are held with specific focus on relevant issues. Minutes are retained on Sharepoint, and are managed in line with the [University's Records and Retention Management Policy](#).

4. ENGAGEMENT OF PEOPLE

UL Global is committed to ensuring that staff are competent, empowered and engaged in delivering high-quality service. It is vital that staff are respected as individuals and are involved at all levels. The Division is governed by University policies and procedures for the selection, recruitment, promotion and development of staff. A full list of procedures is available on the [Human Resources website](#).

4.1 Responsibility and Authority

Each staff member is given responsibility and authority for their work content. Each section is responsible for its assigned brief.

The three sections are run separately, but collaborate in matters of policy and other UL Global activities (e.g. orientation), to ensure the services provided are consistent in terms of quality and good practice. Major decisions on policy, procedures, practice and finances are taken with the authority of the Director and/or Deputy Director. Where policy, guidelines and timelines are already determined, the Manager organises the work according to the requirements of the section. In the case of the Erasmus & Non-EU Exchanges section, policy is determined by the EU Commission through the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in Ireland.

4.2 Communication

As mentioned in Section 3, the key to the communications process is meeting structure. These meetings encourage two-way communication: Management -> Employee, and Employee -> Management, through each section. The monthly, and annual review and planning, meetings cater for cross-sectional communications. Additionally, an open-door policy assists the speedy resolution of queries and issues, facilitating two-way communication in an informal but effective manner.

Teamwork is also an essential component of UL Global. The sharing of ideas promotes collaboration and creates an ethos that supports inclusiveness. Since the beginning of the Covid19 pandemic in March 2020, MS Teams has been used as the primary platform for communication as it facilitates working-from-home for all UL/UL Global staff. Traditionally, the methods of communication used by UL Global internally, and externally, include the following as appropriate: face-to-face conversations, email, phone, video-conferencing, webinars, presentations and workshops. Additionally, the UL Global website, social media sites, hardcopy documentation for marketing and rapport-building have been utilised. UL Global also has a significant physical and virtual presence nationally and internationally. Staff partake in educational fairs, institutional visits, conferences, and training opportunities.

The annual Performance and Development Review System (PDRS) meetings conducted with staff also assist in communicating defined goals and objectives along with identifying training and development needs.

4.3 Training and Development

Training and development is hugely encouraged in UL Global, both in terms of refreshing and expanding on existing skills Division-wide. All training is carried out in line with [UL Global's Training and Development Process](#). Opportunities are largely identified through the PDRS meetings. Additional suggestions are presented from individual team members as new requirements evolve. UL Global endeavour to react promptly and professionally to skills gaps; a particular example of this was shown during the summer of 2020 where, despite the significant increased workload brought about by the Covid19 pandemic, and as staff adapted very quickly to working from home, all recruitment staff undertook an intensive Digital Marketing Programme. This equipped the team to deal with virtual marketing in a skilful, timely and effective manner.

It is difficult to restrict training to out-of-hours periods, so cover arrangements are made staff-wide to facilitate staff member(s) who are absent for training purposes. A record is maintained on SharePoint of the type, duration, location, learning objectives, and effectiveness of all training undertaken within UL Global.

4.4 Work Environment and Infrastructure

The Division is based in the E Block, Level Zero, of the campus' main building. Similar to all UL Divisions, UL Global's work environment and infrastructure are agreed and arranged via the University's Space Management Protocol University's Space Management [Protocol](#) and are bound by the [Health and Safety Regulations of the University](#).

5. CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

UL Global regularly and consistently strives to improve on the services we provide. Adherence to the Division's [Internal Audit and Self-Assessment Process](#) ensures continual implementation, maintenance and improvement of UL Global's Quality Management System and of its services by conducting regular audits on all aspects of the QMS. Additionally, UL Global's trained auditors participate in audits and reviews for other departments within UL, and for other institutions on request. This provides excellent opportunities to view the process from a very useful perspective out of which UL Global fine-tunes its own processes and procedures accordingly where relevant and appropriate.

In addition to reasonable suggestions for improvement received informally by UL Global, the Division reviews the following data at regular staff or quality team meetings:

- Customer Feedback, such as annual survey results, student placement reports, customer feedback log trends etc. as set out in Section 2
- Partner discussions
- Audit feedback – internal and external
- UL, and UL Global, Staff input and suggestions
- Key performance indicators
- Customer suggestions and trends
- Focus Group reports

At the meetings outlined in Section 3, discussion and actions are agreed and added to the Continual Improvements Log. This is managed by the Deputy Director. In addition, any staff member may include an activity in the log that they feel should be reviewed and followed up. On a quarterly basis, the quality team reviews the log status and takes appropriate action to ensure the timely closure of Continual Improvement activity.

6. PROCESS APPROACH

6.1 QMS Processes and Activities

UL Global takes a Process Approach to its QMS and Business processes. Support processes, such as Documentation Control, Training etc. are written up along with Key Business processes. A full list of these is given below.

The key Quality Management System processes in operation within UL Global are as follows; details of same are available on the Divisional website, and are also housed on SharePoint:

- Training & Development Process (separate document)
- Documentation Control Process (separate document)
- Communications Process (Section 4.2 in Quality Manual)
- Internal Audit / Self-Assessment Process (separate document)

The key Business Processes in operation in our Division are as follows:

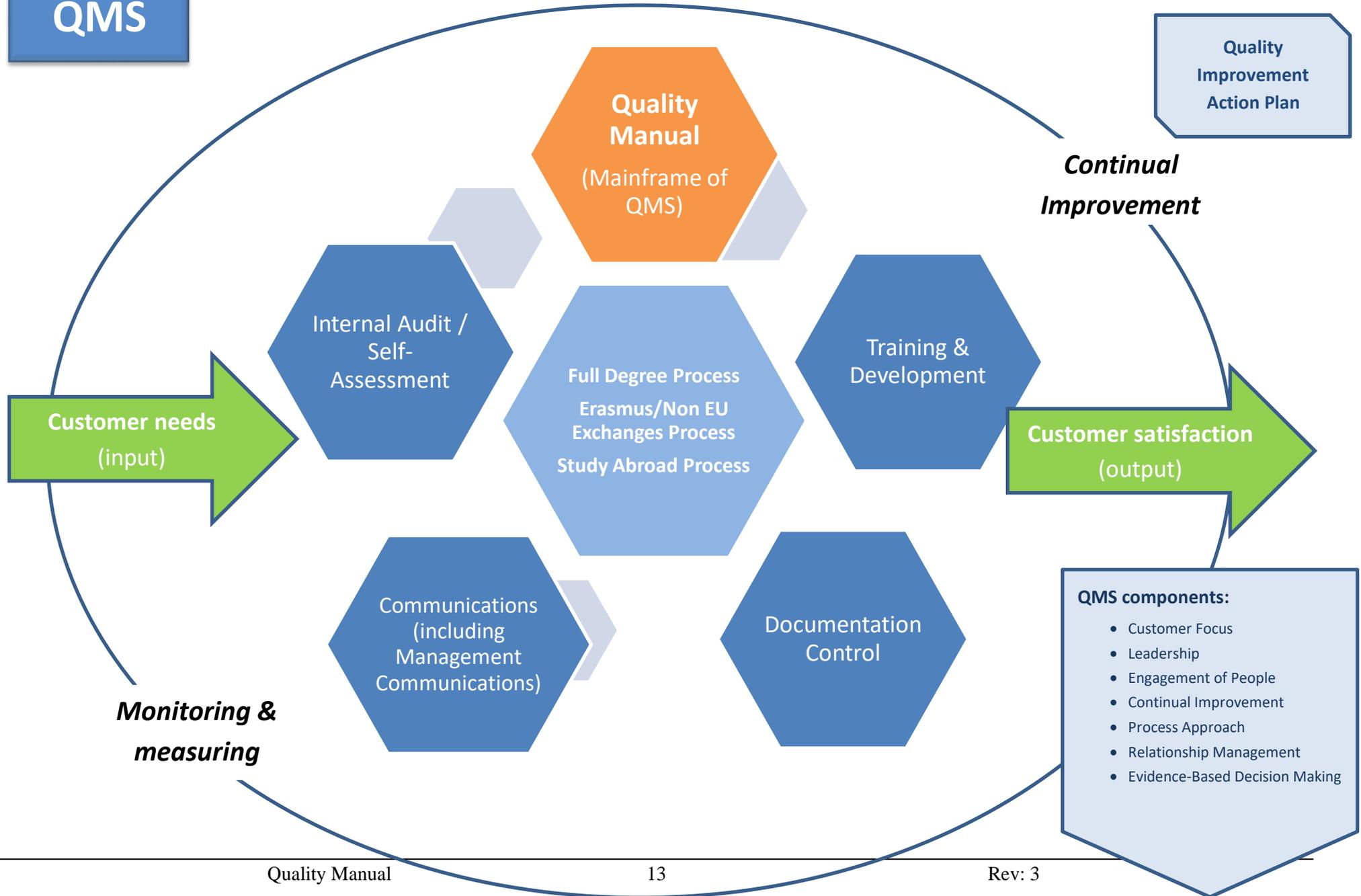
- Erasmus/Non-EU Exchanges Programmes
- Full Degree Programmes
- Study Abroad Programmes

6.4 A Systematic Approach to Management

The following diagram outlines the interaction between the processes of the quality management system. It also outlines the main processes/activities integral to our QMS (displayed in the outer circle). These processes/activities support our key business processes (outlined in the centre). Overall, it displays our systematic approach to management.

The Division's KPIs, as set out in UL Global's Strategic Plan, comprise much of the driving force behind all aspects of the diagram's components; our Planning structures, referred to in Section 3, allow for the delivery of these KPIs.

QMS



7. EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

UL Global ensures that effective decisions are based on the analysis of data and information. UL Global is conscious of the importance of fact-gathering and record-keeping in the decision-making process. It handles all personal data in line with GDPR, and all associated regulations, in consultation with the [University's Data Protection Office](#).

7.1 Analysis of Data

Evaluation of UL Global services is determined through surveys and through individual and group meetings between UL Global staff and students, both from UL and from partner Universities. Academic and staff engagement and open discussion on the UL Global Mobility programme is obtained through a bi-annual meeting of Erasmus and Exchanges Academic Coordinators, who represent all UL Departments which have dealings with UL Global. In addition, feedback is obtained on a one-to-one basis through daily contact with students and staff as individuals. An open-door policy is operated, whereby a student or member of staff may ask to speak to a more senior member of UL Global staff if any problems are being experienced. Financial Aid services assessment is also conducted by the EU Commission, US Federal Government, and the HEA, through reporting and audit procedures.

The primary data collected and measured by UL Global relates to the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set in the Division's Strategic Plan. The Division's KPIs focus on (for example):

- Student numbers and targets, both overall and per section (e.g. full-degree, Erasmus, exchanges, study abroad – and undergraduate, postgraduate etc.)
- Student participation in and use of services offered by UL Global and by UL e.g. Orientation, Counselling, Student Health Centre, customised teaching (language, integration etc), Airport Transfers, Buddy Programme etc.
- Student progression and/or retention
- Feedback from returning students of outbound exchanges
- Feedback from incoming students from Erasmus and Exchange on their experience in UL
- Feedback from academic departments via the Academic Coordinators within faculties
- Feedback from partner institutions via renewal/discontinuation of Agreements
- New initiatives introduced within the Division
- Survey reports and evaluations on services and supports offered

Collection of the data is the responsibility of the individual units as relevant, and is managed in line with the [University's Records and Retention Management Policy](#).

UL Global also complies with the Risk Register process as set out by the [University's Audit and Risk Management Committee](#).

7.2 Strategic Review of Data by Management

Key decisions are made by staff with respect to their own work, and by groups and management at regularly held meetings as outlined in Section 3.

8. RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

UL Global develops partnerships with suppliers that enable it to deliver enhanced value to its customers. To do this, the Division identifies its core competencies and determines where it needs support. Within UL Global, suppliers, contractors and agents are secured as outlined in the relevant procedures. As for all departments within the University, the use of same is bound by the policies, procedures and guidelines of the [UL Procurement Office](#).

8.1 Partners

UL's Strategic Plan demonstrates the University's commitment to the development of both local and global partnerships. Collaboration is recognised as a fundamental aspect of working within UL, across disciplines, departments and faculties within the University as well as collaboration externally, both nationally and internationally. UL Global engages as appropriate with academic and other support departments within UL, and through the University's external partnerships, in the delivery of its services to all student groups. These relationships relate to all aspects of the students' overall lifecycle. All partnerships have been developed on the basis of clearly identified mutual benefit to the parties involved. Development of these global partnerships is managed by the Global Partnerships Working Group; a collaborations toolkit has been developed by UL's Quality Director and is a significant reference point for all UL staff in developing and maintaining partnerships.

8.2 Community Relations

UL Global also communicates with the campus community and, where appropriate, the local community. The local community inputs are considered within the framework of University requirements.

8.3 Communication with Stakeholders

The Division's communication with all stakeholders, referred to above, is outlined in the relevant key business processes.

9. APPROVALS AND REVISION HISTORY

Rev. No.	Date	Approved by:	Details of change	Process Owner
1	14/08/2015	Director	Initial release	Deputy Director
2	27/4/2021	Director	Updated Divisional name change; refresh website links; update Comms process as per QMS audit report; minor textual improvements; link to UL Quality Manual; ref to WFH (Communications)	Deputy Director
3	05/08/21	Director	Global Engagement overview included; additional links to UL policies/procedures added. UL Branding applied more thoroughly.	Deputy Director