

Periodic Course Review Procedure

Introduction

1. All higher education providers are expected to have effective procedures in place to routinely monitor and periodically review their programmes. This procedure is fully aligned with the Expectations and Core Practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) 2015 Part 1.
2. The opportunity to periodically reflect on the academic experience by students, the academic standards achieved, and the continuing currency and relevance of its provision, is central to an institution's quality and standards assurance processes.
3. The School's Academic Standards Committee has oversight and responsibility for the implementation of this procedure.

Aims

4. Periodic Programme Review (PPR) is the process whereby a course or group of courses is reviewed through self-evaluation and peer review. It is normally conducted every 6 years, and has the following aims:
 - To enable the School's Academic Standard's Committee to have confidence in the standards, currency, coherence, and relevance of the provision;
 - To evaluate the effectiveness of the student academic experience including quality of learning opportunities; to identify impact and good practice; and to make recommendations for improvement and enhancement;
 - To evaluate the currency of the programme content and level of student achievement of the course learning outcomes, with reference to any relevant QAA subject benchmark statements, the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications and requirements of any Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs);
 - To evaluate the continuing relevance of the course in relation to the needs of students, the requirements and needs of external stakeholders including employers, and the strategic direction of the School;
5. The review takes place in the context of fostering the continuing process of reflection and evaluation required to improve and enhance the quality of learning opportunities provided and students' academic experience.
6. The review is data-driven, using both qualitative and quantitative data, and recommendations arising from the review form the basis of quality improvement and enhancement plans which are monitored through the Annual Course Evaluation process.

Procedure

7. Reviews will take place at intervals of not more than 6 years according to a schedule agreed by the Academic Standards Committee. Departments may be organised into groups for the purposes of periodic review, such groups to be decided by the Academic Standards Committee.
8. Reviews will be undertaken by a Periodic Review Panel comprising:
 - Chair - A Head of Department of a course not under review appointed by the School's Director
 - At least one other Head of Department
 - At least one external reviewer with subject expertise (depending on the number of courses being reviewed) and, if possible, an alumnus drawn from recent graduates
 - At least one student from outside the department
 - The Registrar
 - The Quality Assurance Manager, who will act as Review Manager.
9. External Reviewers will be nominated by the relevant Head of Department and selected by the School's Director.
10. The Panel will be provided with a document set to review, which will, as far as possible, make use of existing documentation including:
 - The School's Corporate Plan
 - The Self-Evaluation Document (to be completed by the Department in the form attached at Appendix 1)
 - Report of last PPR and action plan (if relevant)
 - Current Course Handbook and all module outlines
 - Current Subject Benchmark Statement(s)
 - The most recent external examiners' reports
 - Annual Course Evaluation reports and action plans for the last 3 years
 - Graduate level employment rates (DLHE)
 - Achievement and retention rates
 - Current list of tutors and visiting tutors
 - 50:50 reporting tool data

Scoping of the Review

11. A preliminary meeting of the Panel members will be held at least one month prior to the review meeting to agree the structure and timing of the review meetings, the required attendees and to identify key areas for discussion which the Panel wish to pursue.
12. The key areas for discussion will be indicated to the department in advance of the review meeting.

The Review

12. The review will take place on one day and will form a series of meetings with: (i) the head(s) of the department(s) under review, (ii) any senior tutors (iii) current students on the course(s). These meetings will focus on the areas agreed by the Panel at the scoping meeting, as well as current challenges and examples of enhancement and good practice. Immediate generalised feedback will be given at the end of each meeting.
13. At the conclusion of these meetings, the Panel will have a final meeting to agree its main findings (strengths and weaknesses), actions and recommendations (including any recommendations for the School).

Outcomes of the Review

14. A Summary Report of the Periodic Review will be drafted by the Review Manager and reviewed by the Panel before being sent to the Head(s) of Department for comments on factual accuracy, normally within 2 weeks of the Review meeting.
15. Based on the outcome of the Review meetings, the Panel, through the Summary Report will confirm that:
 - Each department under review has secure control of the academic standards of the School's awards;
 - Learning, teaching and assessment are effective in allowing students to achieve those academic standards, and programmes are current, coherent and relevant and are aligned to external reference points;
 - The student academic experience fosters a culture of partnership and supports students to achieve their intended award;
 - Departments are effective in enhancing their provision;
 - Innovation and good practice is identified, evaluated and shared, and impact measured.
16. Each department under review will consider the Panel's recommendations and confirm any actions to be taken in response. Progress against these will be monitored through the Annual Course Evaluation Procedure.
17. The Summary report and the department's action plan will be reported to the Academic Standards Committee.

This procedure was approved in September 2019

Self-Evaluation Document for Periodic Course Review

Section 1: Context (maximum 1 page), which should address a summary of the course under review; a summary of staff and other resources; a summary of relationships with PSRBs or other stakeholders (including collaboration with other Departments)

Section 2: Context (maximum 1 page), which should address a summary of the course under review; a summary of staff and other resources; a summary of relationships with stakeholders (including collaboration with other Departments)

Section 3: Evaluation drawing on the assembled documentation and data, addressing each of the following topics. The evaluation should highlight matters of particular concern to the Department and areas of good practice:

Topic 1: Relevance, currency and coherence of the course

Evaluate briefly developments in the course since over the last 5 years with reference to:

- changes in the national context;
- trends in student demand;
- employer expectations and career opportunities;
- external examiners' reports;
- Annual Course Evaluation;
- feedback from students and advisory panels

Topic 2: Students' Educational Experience

Evaluate how effectively learning, teaching and assessment support student achievement through consideration of how:

- Teaching provides effective stimulation, challenge and contact time;
- Curriculum design is effective in stretching students to develop independence, knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect their own potential;
- Assessment and feedback are used effectively in supporting students' development, progression and attainment;
- Resources are used effectively to aid students' learning;
- Students are exposed to and involved in research and/or professional practice;
- Students from all backgrounds are supported to achieve;
- Students acquire knowledge, skills and attributes that are valued by employers and that enhance their personal and/or professional lives.

Topic 3: Enhancements

- Highlight innovations and developments that have improved the student's experience and outcomes
- Provide a plan for further enhancements, including how these will be taken forward, the timeline, and process for evaluation.