QUALITY ASSURANCE HANDBOOK 2018/19

SECTION H: PERIODIC COURSE REVIEW

Contents

H1 Template Contextual Summary Document Template

Introduction

H1:   The Academic Quality Committee (AQC) is responsible for the monitoring of courses to assure the academic standards and quality of student learning opportunities on those courses. It fulfils this function through:

- Annual Academic Monitoring (see Section F); and
- Periodic Course Review (see below).

H2:   Periodic course review is the process by which thorough scrutiny is given to a course, including (at both unit and course level) its curriculum, aims, learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment strategies. It includes consideration of the quality performance data relating to that course over the period since the last periodic course review. Periodic course review is triggered:

- At least every five years to ensure currency and regular quinquennial review as part of a rolling schedule of reviews maintained by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement department (QAE).

- At the request of AQC (for example, in response to serious concerns raised with respect to academic quality or student satisfaction or as recommended by a Quality Enhancement Review Panel) (see Section F). Where such a review is required, an individual periodic course review event will be scheduled. This specially convened periodic course review will not replace the requirement for

the course to be considered again at the next scheduled quinquennial review event (see above).

Scope and Function of the Periodic Course Review Process

H3:   Periodic Course Reviews will consider the health of all courses (undergraduate and postgraduate) managed within that School[1], with the following exceptions:

- FE courses, which are subject to approval by their awarding bodies;
- Research programmes, which are subject to approval under the awarding body's regulations; and
- Collaborative courses, which are subject to a periodic course review event that will take place at the location of delivery, using the same process as described below.

H4:   It is common for course teams reflecting on the health of a course as part of a periodic course review to use this opportunity to enhance the course through making changes to the curriculum. This would include any changes to course content and design, with the exception of the following modifications, which have implications for the academic portfolio and must be approved using the separate processes detailed in Section E:

- Changes to course title;
- Changes to mode of delivery;
- Changes to location of delivery;
- Changes to entry criteria from the standard University norm.

H5:   Where changes would impact materially on the student experience, the timescale for implementation of these changes will be considered through a risk analysis undertaken by the Head of School/OCA Principal and Chief Executive in discussions with the University Secretary and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). This may result in:

- implementation for the start of the next academic year;
- delayed implementation to take effect in the year subsequent to the next academic year; or
- communication with offerees and existing students to determine a suitable timescale for implementation.

Documentary Requirements

H6:   The Head of School/OCA Principal and Chief Executive is responsible for oversight of the preparation and submission of all required documentation in support of the periodic review, including oversight of any documentation prepared by a collaborative partner institution.

H7:   Any documentation submitted for periodic review must first be approved by the relevant School Board of Studies/OCA Curriculum Quality Committee (OCA CDC), following detailed scrutiny to assure the quality of the documentation, including its alignment with University policy and regulations and its clarity in defining the

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[1] Including those courses managed by the OCA Curriculum Quality Committee (OCA CQC)

nature of the programme(s) under consideration. The scrutiny of the documentation must be undertaken by a designated meeting of the School/OCA CQC comprising the Head of School/OCA Principal and Chief Executive (Chair), the proposing Course Leader(s), at least one other Course Leader, the Library Student Services representative and Senior Quality Officer[2].

H8:   The approved documentation must be provided to Quailty Assurance & Enhancement (QAE) at least three weeks in advance of the review event to ensure timely distribution of paperwork to the Panel.

H9:   All courses must present standard documentation as described in this section and Annex 5 of the Quality Assurance Handbook.

Outline Process

H10:   QAE will convene a Panel to consider the course(s) being submitted for periodic course review. The Panel will consider the documentation submitted for review and will attend a periodic course review event which will have the following characteristics:

- Private meetings of the Panel to set the agendas for meetings and confirm the outcomes of the event;
- Meetings with the course team about the course(s) under consideration;
- Tour of the facilities used by the course[3]; and
- Meeting with current students on the course(s).

H11:   In advance of the event, the course team identifies student representatives to meet the Panel as part of their agenda. The student group should include at least two representatives from each year and, where possible, one or two recent graduates of the course. QAE will provide the nominees with a briefing paper about the process and their specific role in the event.

Panels for Periodic Course Review

H12:   The Periodic Course Review Panel will be constituted as follows:

- A Validation Officer will be assigned to the periodic course review to oversee the process and ensure compliance with the University's regulations, policies and procedures;

- Panels will normally be Chaired by a Head of School or equivalent deputy not connected to the School of the course(s) under consideration;

- Panels will comprise sufficient external expertise to cover the subject area(s) under consideration. All Panels must have at least two external Panel members. External members can be academic or professional/industry-based, but there must be at least one academic from within the sector on the Panel;

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[2] The relevant Assistant Campus Registrar and OCA (where applicable) may also attend if so required.
[3] Only applicable to courses delivered by UCA.

- Wherever possible, a Panel will have a student representative from another course as a member. A representative from the Students' Union will be in reserve should a student representative not be found (in order to preserve impartiality, such representatives will not have previously studied on any of the courses under consideration);

- Panels will have at least one internal member from outside of the School within which the course(s) sit, if possible they will be Course Leaders for courses which will be validated or reviewed the following year;

- Where appropriate, representatives from Professional departments will be invited to sit on Panels as internal members;

- Where appropriate, representatives from Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies will be invited to sit on Panels as external members.

H13: External members are normally nominated by the proposing School Board of Study[4]/OCA CQC and should not normally have had any association with the University[5] within the last five years. For the purposes of periodic course review, 'association' is normally defined as having:

- been a member of staff[6], a governor or a student of the University or partner institution;

- had a close relationship[7] with a member of staff or student within the subject submitting the proposal;

- been an External Examiner for the University's academic provision.

H14: The Panel Chair will consider the appropriateness of the external Panel members and the balance of the Panel, before the final Panel membership is confirmed. The final Panel membership will be approved by the Chair of AQC.

H15: In addition to this, the Head of School/OCA Principal and Chief Executive, or their nominee, for the course(s) under consideration is entitled to attend all meetings of the Panel as an observer, at the discretion of the Chair, with the exception of any meetings with students.

Guidance and Training

H16: Panel members receive a briefing paper about the process.

H17: Briefings for new Chairs will be arranged as required by QAE prior to the first event.

Preparation for Periodic Review

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[4] At the discretion of QAE, nominees could include external members of previous panel events (including the previous event of the course). Externals members nominated from the same institution (i.e. UAL) will not be permitted.
[5] University includes OCA
[6] Member of staff is defined as a permanent or sessional member of staff employed for more than 80 hours per annum.
[7] For these purposes, a close relationship includes being a relative, partner or close personal friend.

H18:   QAE agrees the date for each review event with the relevant Head of School/ OCA Principal and Chief Executive and provides AQC with a schedule of events. QAE then prepares the following schedule of deadlines for the course team and Campus Registrars/OCA Registrar:

Schedule of Deadlines[8]:

Action		QAE deadline	Responsibility
Planning and pre-School scrutiny			
Initial planning meeting with the Course Leader to advise on relevant quality process, regulatory and documentary requirements[i]	by	(event – at least 21 wks)*	Senior Quality Officer
Liaise with Learning & Teaching and Library & Student Services on curriculum design and reading lists	by	(event – at least 20 wks)#	Course Leader
Provide first draft of event documentation for review by Head of School and copy in Senior Quality Officer	by	(event – at least 10 wks)#	Course Leader
Identify and secure external Panel members for the event, send CVs to the Validation Officer	by	(event – at least 8 wks)	Course Leader
Send final draft event documentation[ii] for School scrutiny[iii] approval to Senior Quality Officer	by	(event – at least 7 wks)*	Course Leader
Identify and secure internal Panel members	by	(event - 7 wks)	QAE
Nominations for the student representative and the Students' Union representative to be sent to QAE	by	(event - 7 wks)	Students' Union
Panel confirmed by Chair of Panel and Chair of AQC	by	(event - 6 wks)	Validation Officer
School scrutiny meeting (event – at least 5 wks)*			
Scrutinise and approve event documentation for onward distribution to Campus Registry	by	(event – at least 5 wks)*	School scrutiny
Post School scrutiny meeting			
Ensure final approved event documentation is appropriately formatted and updated to include correct unit codes	by	(event – at least 4 wks)*	Campus Registry
If periodic review, send names of students to Validation Officer	by	(event - 3 wks)	Course Leader
Email final approved event documentation to Validation Officer, Course Team and Head of School	by	(event – at least 3 wks)	Campus Registry
Book catering for event	by	(event - 2 wks)	Validation Officer
Send event documentation to Panel	by	(event - 2 wks)	Validation Officer
If periodic review, send invitations and guidance to students	by	(event - 1 wk)	Validation Officer
Date of event – *insert date of event*			
Draft report of event to be approved by the Chair and circulated to the Panel for comment	by	(event + 1 wk)	Validation Officer

[8] For UCA courses only. An adapted version will be created for OCA courses.

Circulate approved report to Course Team	by	(event + 1 wk)	Validation Officer
Submit completed response to Panel outcomes and Appendix A issues to Validation Officer	by	(event + 3 wks)	Head of School/Course Leader

*Timescale indicated is approximate and a date is subject to agreement between the Head of School and Senior Quality Officer (remove * once date is agreed)*

#Timescale indicated is approximate and a date is subject to agreement between the Course Leader and Senior Quality Officer (remove # once date is agreed)

H19:   Panel members are asked to complete a pre-event questionnaire, indicating any particular areas of enquiry they wish to pursue at the event. The Validation Officer will collate these comments and (and when available) circulate to the panel, Course Leader, Head of School/OCA Principal and Chief Executive. Indicative agendas and guidance notes can be made available to stakeholders on request.

The Event

H20:   Depending on the nature of the provision, normally, no more than three courses should be considered in one day for each review event. The scheduling of these events will be discussed with the Head of School/OCA Principal and Chief Executive and QAE.

H21:   The Panel will receive a briefing from the course team (normally the Course Leader and/or the Head of School/OCA Principal and Chief Executive) at the start of each event to summarise the performance of the course over the period of review, set the context for any proposals and to confirm the resources for the course(s).

H22:   In the course of the event the Panel will have the opportunity to tour the learning environment[9], to meet with the course team(s), to meet with current students on the course(s) and to have private discussions to formulate the outcomes.

H23:   The Panel's remit is to consider:

- the extent to which the course is achieving its stated aims and learning outcomes;
- the overall health of the course with respect to student satisfaction and access to learning opportunities (including progression and achievement);
- the academic appropriateness of the curriculum and delivery, with reference to:
  - sector practice
  - professional or industry requirements
  - currency of curriculum
  - employability
  - the Creative Education Strategy, inclusivity of curriculum and assessment and education for sustainable development
  - veracity and appropriateness of course stage data (i.e. learning and teaching strategies and assessment strategies);
- the appropriateness of the learning environment and facilities[10];

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[9] For UCA courses, this will normally be a physical tour. For OCA courses, this will normally be a virtual tour.

[10] UCA courses only

- alignment of the proposals to the UK Quality Code, with specific reference to Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ;
- alignment with the UCA regulatory context[11];
- alignment with the requirements of professional and statutory body requirements (where appropriate).

Periodic Course Review Outcomes and Report

H24: The Panel will determine one of the following outcomes:

a) To approve the course to remain in validation for a stipulated period (normally five years) with no conditions;

b) To approve the course to remain in validation for a stipulated period (normally five years) subject to conditions that must be met to the satisfaction of the Panel within a determined timeframe. If the conditions are not met before the course's period of validation lapses and before the next enrolment point, the course is suspended from recruitment until the Panel is satisfied that they have been met;

c) To suspend the course from validation, indicating areas for further development and timescale for completion. Student recruitment is suspended. The review Panel (or a sub-group) will be reconvened to review the course once the shortcomings have been addressed. Where recruitment is suspended, the course suspension process is invoked (see Section B); or,

d) To withdraw the course from validation. Where a course is withdrawn from validation, the withdrawal process is invoked (see Section B).

H25: In addition, where a Panel approves a course for a further period of validation, it may make some recommendations to enhance practice; these recommendations are addressed through the Annual Academic Monitoring process.

H26: Where good practice is identified it will be formally noted within the outcomes as a commendation.

H27: Where conditions are set, the Panel will need to agree who should consider the responses to outcomes. Where no major issues have been identified, this will normally be the Chair of the event.

H28: A review report summarising the outcomes (previously circulated to the Panel and approved by the Chair) will be sent to the course team within three weeks of the event. The report will be presented to AQC at its next meeting.

H29:   The course team will provide a response to the Validation Officer indicating how conditions have been addressed by the stipulated deadline in the review report. The Validation Officer will seek final approval of the responses from the Chair.

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[11] As determined by the Validation Officer for the event and confirmed in the regulatory addendum of the report

Endnotes for Schedule of Deadlines:

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[i] Further planning meetings may be agreed. Course Leader to refer to: QAH for quality process: Section C for new courses and Section H for existing courses; Common Credit Framework for Taught Programmes 2018/19 for regulatory; and Annex 5 QAH for documentary requirements.

[ii] The final draft documentation for submission to the School scrutiny must be proof-read by the Course Leader for errors and consistency in language

[iii] This is a designated meeting of the School comprising the Head of School (Chair), proposing Course Leader(s), at least one other Course Leader, the LSS representative and Senior Quality Officer