HANDBOOK FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF QUALITY AND THE MAINTENANCE OF STANDARDS
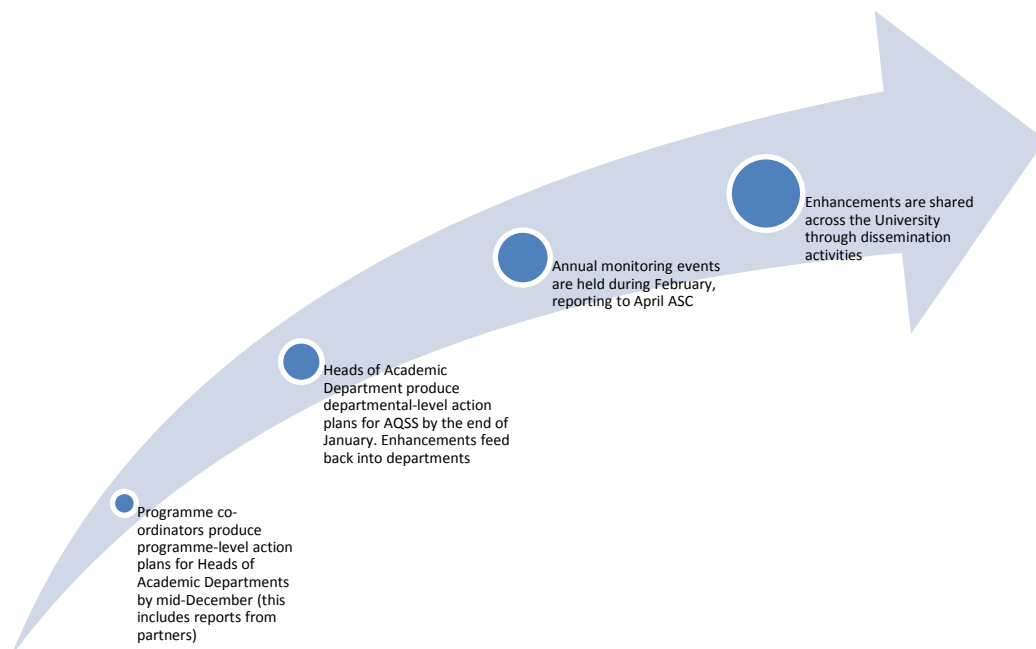
2017/18

This is Section C: ANNUAL MONITORING (TAUGHT PROGRAMMES OF STUDY)

Contents

Enhancements are shared across the University through dissemination activities

Annual monitoring events are held during February, reporting to April ASC

Heads of Academic Department produce departmental-level action plans for AQSS by the end of January. Enhancements feed back into departments

Programme co-ordinators produce programme-level action plans for Heads of Academic Departments by mid-December (this includes reports from partners)

1. Purpose of annual monitoring

Annual monitoring is one of the key elements of the University's quality assurance framework and it is the primary means by which the Academic Board is assured that the University, in discharging its responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operates effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring. It considers the continued alignment of the academic portfolio with the University Strategy and the Learning and Teaching Strategy. Its purpose is to:

- Consider whether students are attaining the intended learning outcomes and whether assessment tasks enable the demonstration of this achievement;
- Consider where improvements to provision are possible in order to enhance the quality of the student learning experience;
- Consider the entitlements of students with protected characteristics (such as disability, gender, BAME etc.).

Academic partners will complete the programme annual monitoring action plan.

2. Guidance on the annual monitoring procedure

Annual Monitoring Panels

AQSS will commission Chairs and members for all panels, drawn from senior colleagues who have appropriate experience in quality assurance. The Quality and Standards Manager will plan and manage the schedule of monitoring activities, usually for the first fortnight of February, including arrangements for panel membership. Colleagues who are new to Chairing will be supported by AQSS (see the Guide for Panels).

AQSS will create appropriately balanced Panels for all Annual Monitoring events. There will usually be no more than 4 members of any Panel (including the Chair and a student).

Staff may not monitor programmes with which they are associated in their own Department, or on which they teach. Student Panel members will usually be nominated by the Students' Union and will be briefed as to their role by AQSS. They are expected to act as full members of the Panel.

Annual Monitoring Meetings

The meeting between the Panel and the Departmental Team will be serviced by a member of staff in AQSS. The Servicing Officer will work with the Chair to ensure that all aspects of monitoring are covered:

- A formal response to any outstanding issues from the previous year
- Formal consideration of the Head of Department's overall summary plan including their response to the data sets

- The identification of any enhancements which the Departmental team may have introduced during the year being monitored, specifically those of which there is evidence of a positive impact
- Compilation of relevant actions, based on the Department's own action plan.

Actions should identify the area for improvement rather than the solution. For example, an action worded thus is appropriate:

The Team was asked to review the mode of assessment (including assessment criteria) for the final year dissertation as follows:
-To consider if the current mode offers enough flexibility to meet the needs of different learners
-To consider if the flexibility on offer can be made more explicit in the guidance
-To consider alternative modes of assessment.

An action worded as follows gives a solution, rather than clearly identify the problem, so should be avoided:

Exploration of alternative timetabling models designed to enhance student engagement.

Some actions are not appropriate to annual monitoring, as these should be pursued through more appropriate mechanisms, such as:

The panel recommended that the team should continue to work with the Estates department to ensure that studio and rehearsal spaces were cleaned thoroughly and regularly.

The Director of Quality and Standards will report annually to Academic Board through an overview report, which will reference cross-institutional themes for consideration.

Document Pack for Department Annual Monitoring

The pack is published by an officer in AQSS at least two weeks ahead of the event, and distributed to all members of the Panel and the Team leader(s). It will contain an outline programme for the activity and a range of secondary rather than primary documentation:

- The Action Plans from the previous round of monitoring;
- The programme-level action plans;
- Responses to external examiner reports;
- The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Guide for Panels

The role of the Chair

- To liaise informally with panel members to clarify the role of each member before the event
- To conduct the meeting in accordance with the agenda, the focus of which is an annual health check of credit-bearing academic provision

- To control timekeeping

- To control discussion and keep to the point, ensuring that searching and analytical questions are raised to ensure Departmental annual monitoring is effective
- To summarise major points as the meeting moves on
- To ensure that everyone who has a relevant contribution to make is able to do so
- To ensure that the objectives of the meeting are achieved
- To collate and deliver all decisions made, with precision

The role of panel members

- To read relevant documents prior to the event
- To provide comments or raise issues as agreed with the Chair

A comment/thanks may be made on the helpfulness of the documentation provided, and the Chair should clarify that, following its discussions with the Team, the Panel may be making actions for enhancing the academic health of the programmes. These actions will build on those identified by the Department in its report and will be summarised at the end of the discussion and provided to the Head of Department's Management Team or equivalent.

Agenda for the meeting

*Panel convenes to prepare an agenda for the morning's discussions to include: -

- actions from the previous round of annual monitoring;
- consideration of the data sets;
- the summary of the previous year, including proposals for development;
- whether programmes would appear to be appropriate, as illustrated in External Examiner reporting;
- whether student support continues to be appropriate;
- enhancement and effectiveness;
- student feedback, NSS/PTES data and External Examiners' reports' responses;
- the action plan.

Panel meets with colleagues from the Department of xx.
Panel establishes recommendations for action for the Department.

* Times will be subject to amendment, depending on the size of the provision, and with mutual agreement of Panel and Team

The Event

Following publication of the document pack (normally two weeks before the event), the Chair will liaise informally with Panel members to clarify the role of each member in terms of dividing up the tasks to be undertaken in preparing for the event

The event itself will start with a <u>private meeting of the Panel</u>, where matters relating to the formal agenda for discussion will be agreed. The Panel will convene about half an hour before the Team(s) begins to arrive, in order to identify the issues which have emerged from consideration of the documentation. The Chair should ask Panel members to identify which areas they will lead on. (The

Chair may decide to concentrate entirely on conducting the meeting, in which case they may ask another member of the Panel to raise those issues which they had identified prior to the meeting).

<u>The main meeting</u>, comprising questions and discussion with the Programme Team(s)
The Chair should ensure that everyone has been introduced and attempt to establish a relaxed atmosphere from the outset. They should explain that the purpose of the meeting is to establish, on behalf of Academic Board, that all programmes are in good Academic health.

<u>Private meeting of the Panel</u> (not necessarily 'in private', unless the meeting has thrown up issues on which the Panel wishes to confer before making its judgement back to the Team).
The Panel may wish to meet in private before providing its summarised feedback to the Department. Team members may contribute to the Panel's exchange of views on the issues to be formulated into actions. Supported by the Servicing Officer, the Chair should summarise and record all actions agreed.

The Department should provide a case study or vignette to ensure the effectiveness of enhancements can be more fully and usefully disseminated rather than a list of good practices which lack detail. Enhancement is considered by QAA to mean 'deliberate steps'. The University seeks consistency rather than uniformity. Diversity in practice is to be welcomed if it enables particular outcomes to be achieved, such as an effective evaluation of the student learning experience, for example. The Panel may consider the following:

Possible matters for consideration
- Responses to External Examiner reports
- How employability is embedded within the curriculum
- How student analytics are made use of
- Vignettes or case studies on enhancements

Students might be directed to consider specifically:
- Is the overall student experience satisfactory?
- How are students supported?
- Responses to the National Student Survey
- How the student learning experience is being improved

Report back to the Team – summarising the actions which are to be made to the Academic Department; the Chair should commence by thanking the Team for its contributions to the discussions, commend the documentation (if appropriate) and confirm (if appropriate) the Academic health of the programmes within the Academic Department. Summarise clearly and carefully all the actions that are being made to the Head of Department's Management Team or equivalent with a view to enhancing the provision. Ensure that the Team is clear on all points.

Reporting after the event

Following the Annual Monitoring event, the Servicing Officer will forward to the Chair for approval a draft plan (taking the form of annotated actions) arising from the meeting. The Chair will ensure that the actions and accompanying text accurately reflect the outcomes and discussions of the meeting. The Chair will make amendments, if necessary, and return the plan to the Servicing Officer as quickly as possible.

The draft plan will then be submitted to all members of the Panel for their agreement and the Servicing Officer will publish the final version of the plan two weeks later. (A confidential copy of the

draft plan is provided to the Head of Academic Department coincidentally with its issue to Panel members, to allow opportunity for the correction of factual errors.) When published, copies of the plan are provided to all members of the Panel and of the Team.

The confirmed plan will be forwarded to the Head of Academic Department (with a copy to the appropriate line manager), with a request to provide responses against each of the actions by an agreed deadline. The completed responses to the actions are forwarded to the AQSS, in readiness for submission to the next available meeting of the Academic Standards Committee Scrutiny Group. The plan will then be forwarded to the Academic Standards Committee. Academic Standards Committee will address any issues presented for its consideration and seek to assure the Academic Board on the health of the Academic provision and the appropriateness of actions taken by Heads of Departments to enhance the quality of the student learning experience. Some issues may be forwarded to Academic Board.

Actions

Although the panel has a broad remit it may not create actions that are out-with its gift, for example, 'a further two posts in the area of x must be created', as this is subject to a separate process, departmental planning. Actions must be achievable, and should identify the issue, rather than the solution, as the Department is best placed to know the optimal solution for its students and staff. Actions relating to procedures or services external to the area under review need to be framed in such a way as to reflect the subject area's interaction with those external. For example, a review may identify that accreditation by a PSRB is at risk due to a resource issue. The process cannot create an action that additional laboratory space be provided, but can recommend that the subject under review consider this area and develop proposals for the appropriate authority within the University to consider. Actions should also directly relate to quality and standards rather than to, for example, the cleanliness of office space.

3. Programme Annual Monitoring

Programme co-ordinators can commence the process of completing their action plans ahead of receiving the data from Planning; for example, it will be possible to identify actions arising from external examiners' reports and from the National Student Survey as early as late August.

Process

- Programme level plans are prepared by the programme coordinator
- Reviewed by the Head of Academic Department

Timescale

Programme-level annual monitoring plans sent by programme co-ordinator to Head of the Academic Department	December 2017

Programme Annual Monitoring

Plans should be concise, clear and focused.

Section I	Indicative sources of evidence
Section II	Action plan

Programme Annual Monitoring Template

Reporting period 2016/17

Department:	
Programme:	

Section I Indicative sources of evidence

1	Student programme handbook
2	External Examiners' reports and responses
3	Student feedback (module evaluations, NSS, PTES, DLHE)
4	Approval/review reports
5	PSRB accreditation reports, where applicable
6	Data from Planning

Section II Programme action plan

Action number	Point for consideration	Source of evidence	Action	Success criteria	Action by whom/when	Progress	Completed (Y/N)
Curriculum development							
		Ie external examiner report					
Learning, teaching and assessment							
		ie NSS, PTES					
Resources and student support (including retention, progression and employability)							
		ie student feedback, DLHE					
Student experience							
		ie DLHE					
Evaluating and supporting student achievement							
		ie external examiner reports					

4. Department Annual Monitoring - Process

- Prepared by the Head of the Academic Department
- Reviewed by the Academic Standards Committee Scrutiny Group
- Approved by the Academic Standards Committee

The Head of the Academic Department will prepare a summary report based, in part, on the programme-level reporting (discussed at a later point in this document) and other sources of evidence. The summary report is considered by a panel, and the resulting action plan should be produced by the Head of Department as soon as possible, which should be signed off by the line manager for the relevant Head of Academic Department. The summary report should be concise, clear and focused.

The Director of the Institute of Education will provide the annual self-evaluation document produced for OfSTED in lieu of the reporting mechanism outlined below. This will be supplemented with the case study.

Timescale

Programme-level annual monitoring plans sent by programme co-ordinator to Head of the Academic Department	December 2017
Department-level summary to AQSS	January 2018
Annual monitoring events	February 2018
Department annual monitoring plans to ASC	April 2018 (reported to ASC and Academic Board)

Template for Department Annual Monitoring

Section I	Actions and outcomes from previous annual monitoring plan
Section II	Summary of the last Academic year
Section III	Comment on issues arising from the analysis of data
Section IV	Case study on enhancements to the quality of the student learning experience
Section V	Action plan

Reporting period 2016/17

Department	
Year under review	2015/16
Author	

Section I   Actions and outcomes from previous annual monitoring

Please insert the action plan from the previous year's annual monitoring here, with updates on action (focusing on quality and standards, whether the desired impact has been achieved and whether actions have been effective).

	Area identified for development	Action(s) proposed	Timescale (specific date)	Responsibility/ resource	Evidence of effectiveness of actions	Progress on action(s) proposed
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						

Section II Summary of last academic year (500-800 words)

This should provide an evaluative and reflective commentary on the Academic provision being monitored for the preceding Academic year, summarising achievements and enhancements to learning, teaching and assessment. Please refer particularly to:

- External Examiners' comments
- Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE)
- The impact of employability initiatives (including links with employers or professional, statutory and regulatory bodies)
- International opportunities for students' learning
- Enrichment of the student experience through staff research activity
- Student evaluations (including the NSS, PTES) and other student feedback

Section III Data

(Data circulated by Planning by early November)

For each of the indicators below, please confirm whether the data provided is broadly in line with that of previous years and note any trends of interest (no more than two or three sentences). Where any indicator is significantly low (*circa* -5% of the absolute difference between the percentages under consideration), this should be identified as an area for development within the action plan and addressed unless it can be attributed to small numbers in the data set.

1	**Number of students admitted (please distinguish between FT and PT if applicable)**
2	**Entry qualifications are consistent with historical data (please reference data)**

3	Entry qualifications are consistent with University norms (please reference data)	
4	Rates of progression to next level are consistent with historical data (please reference data)	
5	Rates of progression to next level are consistent with University norms (please reference data)	
6	Withdrawal rates (please reference data)	
7	Final awards are consistent with historical data (please reference data)	
8	Final awards are consistent with University norms (please reference data)	
9	Students with Protected Characteristics (please reference data) *Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion and belief (including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism), Sex, and Sexual orientation.*	

Section IV Case study on enhancements to the quality of the student learning experience (400-500 words)

A key aspect to gain from is the effectiveness of particular deliberate steps that have been taken by the Department or by then working with/ or at the Department's behest. A reflection on what's been effective and the evidence/measurement of this and what did not work and why might be useful to consider. This will be related to the Learning and Teaching Strategy, including **Global Citizenship and/or Education for Sustainable Development.**

Demonstrate that initiatives in relation to improving the student learning experience for undergraduate/postgraduate students show evidence of effectiveness, please.

Has your practice changed as a result of the outputs from previous case studies?

Section V Department action plan

Please amend the number of rows as necessary. Actions should be SMART.

	Priority identified for development	Action(s) proposed	Timescale for completion (specific date)	Responsibility	Evaluation (what success will look like)	Progress on action(s) proposed
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						

5. Reporting

The report will primarily consist of the Head of Department's action plan, containing identification of areas for development and the contextual discussion for such. Actions identified and addressed elsewhere (such as with external examiner reports and their responses) should not be duplicated. Actions that might be addressed through other processes (such as annual business planning) should also not be duplicated within annual monitoring.

The list of documentation scrutinised by members of the Panel before the event will be detailed here: the Departmental submission; external examiners' reports and their responses; and the 'quality indicators'.

The plan will also indicate those present: Panel/Team/In Attendance.

The action plan is scrutinised and agreed by the Academic Standards Committee Scrutiny Group before submission to Academic Standards Committee.

6. Outputs

- Academic Standards Committee: reviews actions and confirms actions.
- Learning and Teaching Committee: disseminates enhancements to the student learning experience.
- Department/programme boards: monitors progress against identified actions.

7. Report template: Action plan

What actions are appropriate?
- Actions must be achievable, and should identify the issue, rather than the solution.
- Actions should directly relate to quality and standards rather than to, for example, the cleanliness of office space.
- The report will primarily consist of the Head of Department's action plan, containing identification of areas for development and the contextual discussion for such.
- Actions that might be addressed through other processes (such as annual business planning) should also not be duplicated within annual monitoring.

Example of appropriate actions	Example of actions best directed via other mechanisms
The Team was asked to review the mode of assessment (including assessment criteria) for the final year dissertation as follows: *-To consider if the current mode offers enough flexibility to meet the needs of different learners* *-To consider if the flexibility on offer can be made more explicit in the guidance* *-To consider alternative modes of assessment.*	
	'a further two posts in the area of x must be created' (business/strategic planning processes)

Please amend the number of rows as necessary.

Area identified for development **(relating to departmental action plan)**	Context (to be provided by AQSS)	Action(s) proposed	Timescale (specific date)	Responsibility/ resource
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Case study/ies on enhancements to the quality of the student learning experience (400-500 words) to include evidence of their effectiveness.

Documentation

The list of documentation scrutinised by members of the Panel before the event will be detailed here: the Departmental submission; external examiners' reports and their responses; and the data sets.

Attendees

The plan will also indicate those present: Panel/Team/In Attendance