Policy

Annual Monitoring

Contents

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Background

1   This document sets out the policy governing Annual Monitoring of programmes. It covers responsibilities, operation of the process, timelines, guidance and associated templates.

2   Annual Monitoring supports the ongoing enhancement and monitoring of the University's provision and has been developed in alignment with the UK Quality Code Chapter B8, Programme Monitoring & Review.

3   Annual Monitoring, by its nature, is a continual cycle of review and enhancement, culminating in an annual meeting where programme performance is discussed. It is supported by both the six-yearly Subject and Academic Partner Periodic Review cycle and the revalidation of individual courses/programmes.

Purpose Statement

4   The review of past performance and feedback on programmes through Annual Monitoring allows the University to:

- Consider evidence to confirm the academic standards of its awards
- Evaluate the quality of students' learning opportunities and experience
- Promote discussion and debate about module and programme performance
- Identify and disseminate good practice
- Strengthen accountability
- Take informed action to enhance its programmes
- Provide Council with the information it needs to make the required assurances to HEFCE (see 40 below)

Applicability and Scope

5   This policy applies to all taught programmes leading to an undergraduate or postgraduate award of the University (including Level 0), wherever they are delivered.

Principles

6   The Annual Monitoring process is designed to:

- Evaluate the academic standard of awards and learning opportunities for students to ensure that they continue to meet the expectations of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and Subject Benchmarks.
- Ensure critical reflection and evaluation of the curriculum and support for student learning.
- Enable continued enhancement in the overall quality of provision and the student experience.
- Identify areas of good practice for dissemination and areas requiring improvement.

Process

7   The Annual Monitoring process will consist of three stages:

- Module Stage
- Subject Stage
- Institutional Stage

MODULE STAGE (throughout the academic year)

8   Module Boards (or joint Module/Assessment Boards) held throughout the academic year are responsible for considering *each* module's delivery, performance and feedback.

9   It is the Head of Academic Department's overall responsibility for ensuring that module monitoring takes place.

10   It is the Module Leader's responsibility at the Module Board (or joint Module/ Assessment Board) to be fully prepared for module monitoring discussions around their modules' performance and delivery in relation to student feedback, external scrutiny and information from any relevant periodic, partner or PSRB reports, in addition to the statistical data set on the module performance, as detailed in the *Board of Examiners' Handbook*.

11   Where a module is taught by an Academic Partner, and the Partner staff are not present to comment on modules, then the Partnership Tutor will take the role of Module Leader, and is responsible for securing the relevant information from the Partner.

12   A Guidance Sheet (AM1) is available to assist Module Leaders prepare. Use of this is optional, but may provide a useful framework for discussions at Module Boards.

13   When reviewing performance, the University considers an acceptable module pass rate (at first attempt) to be a minimum of 85% and average mark to be between 46% and 64%. The table below shows the criteria which may prompt the board to request a Module Review and Action Plan (AM2).

Module	Performance	Action required
Pass rate	84% or below	Module Leader to comment/contextualise against number of students taking the module and where appropriate recommend action to address
Average mark	45% or lower 65% or higher	Module Leader to comment/contextualise against number of students taking the module and where appropriate recommend action to address
Student evaluation response rate	Below 30% response rate	Module Leader to comment/contextualise and where appropriate recommend action to address
Feedback (from students or external bodies)	Poor feedback or that which raises concern	Module Leader to comment/contextualise and where appropriate recommend action to address

14   Where a module's performance falls outside the acceptable criteria, and the discussion does not sufficiently explain or mitigate against the triggering criteria, the Module Leader will be required to complete a <u>Module Review and Action Plan (AM2)</u>.

15   In instances where student module evaluation has not been received at the Module Board, or less than 30% of enrolled students have responded, a Module Review and Action Plan will be required as a matter of course, including an action aimed at increasing students' participation in feedback mechanisms.

16   Where a module has less than 12 enrolled students, the criteria listed above become less meaningful. In these cases, the Module Board is expected to use academic judgement in deciding whether a Module Review and Action Plan is needed.

17   A Module Board Record will be kept by Academic Registry, noting:

- Module performance and feedback
- External examiner's comments (where present or through the *in absentia* report)
- Modules requiring Module Review and Action Plans
- Examples of good practice identified during the discussion

The Module Board Record will comprise part of the Evidence Base at the Subject Stage of the Annual Monitoring process.

SUBJECT STAGE (September/October)

18   The Subject Stage of the Annual Monitoring process enables programme teaching and support teams, University directorate representatives and student representatives to jointly consider a range of evidence relating to the performance of programmes within a subject area.

19   Subjects will reflect JACS codes and /or Teaching Excellence Framework subject areas.

20   Each Subject area, led by Heads of Academic Departments, will be responsible for ensuring a Subject Annual Monitoring Meeting (SAMM) is arranged. In some cases, more than one Subject may be considered at a SAMM, while other Subjects may require more than one SAMM, due to critical mass.

21   The aims of the Subject Annual Monitoring Meeting are:

- To enable teams to engage with programme data
- To promote in-depth peer discussion about programme/subject performance
- To identify good practice for dissemination
- To utilise the data to identify areas for improvement.
- To ensure that standards are being maintained across the subject area

22   The membership for SAMM will consist of the following representatives:

- Independent Chair **–** A senior member of staff with appropriate experience
- Secretary – a member of the Academic Registry
- Heads of Academic Department (relevant to the subject areas)
- Programme teaching teams in subject area(s)
- Student representatives (from a selection of programmes in the subject area)
- Academic Registry representative

- Representation from University Directorates, at the meeting or by correspondence

23   The Evidence Base for each SAMM will consist of the following:

- The Subject Action Plan from the previous year with status updates
- NSS/PTES and UKES data
- Application and recruitment data
- Student retention data
- Progression and Achievement data
- External Examiner Reports and responses
- Destination of Leavers from Higher Education data (DLHE)
- Periodic Review Reports and action plans where applicable
- Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body reports (PSRB) where applicable
- Programme Committee Action Notes
- Employer feedback where applicable
- Module Board Records
- Module Review & Action Plans (as required)
- Student evaluations
- Reports provided by Academic Partners
- Updates on Action Plans derived from external reviews (e.g. Educational Oversight)

24   Members of the SAMM will be given responsibility by the Head of Academic Department for leading discussions on specific sections of the Evidence Base at the meeting, and will be notified of these in advance of the meeting.

25   A standard Agenda (AM3) will be followed at SAMMs, related to the Evidence Base, and notes of the discussions will be kept by the Secretary on the SAMM Record & Action Plan (AM4). Members are encouraged to reflect on the evidence base, particularly around areas for improvement and enhancement, identify themes arising and actions to be planned.

26   SAMMs are expected to consider the following criteria for these sections of the evidence base:

- NSS/PTES and UKES data: minimum 88% satisfaction rating
- Student retention rate – minimum 90% in the first year of a programme
- Programme Progression/Award data:

  o   Progression
       Level 4 to Level 5 - 80% minimum progression rate
       Level 5 to Level 6 - 90% minimum progression rate

  o   Awards:
       Undergraduate degrees – 70% achieving 1st or 2:1
       Postgraduate/Foundation degrees – 90% achievement rate

- External Examiner Reports and responses:

  o   Red require specific actions
  o   Amber may require actions
  o   Green reports may contain examples of good practice

- Destination of Leavers from Higher Education data (DLHE): minimum 70% in graduate level employment

  Module Review & Action Plans: note if actions have been taken.

27 Following the SAMM, the Secretary completes the SAMM Record as evidence of the quality discussions undertaken, and forwards it to the Head of Academic Department(s) for the Subject area (or nominees) who complete the Action Plan section, including the update to the previous year's Action Plan. The SAMM Record & Action Plan (AM4) comprises part of the Annual Monitoring Evidence Base at the Institutional Stage.

Academic Partners

28 The processes to be followed by academic partners are as follows:

	UK-based Partners	**Overseas Partners**
Franchised programmes	Follows Annual Monitoring process at Bucks, with Partner teaching teams invited to Module Boards and SAMMs.	Module performance to be considered at Module Boards with Module Leader role taken by Partnership Tutor.

Partner teaching team to complete (AM5) detailing context and action plan: Partnership Tutor adds comments and takes to SAMM, and following the meeting provides feedback to Partner. |
| Validated programmes

(where Partner has its own robust annual monitoring process in place) | Follow own Partner Annual Monitoring Process and use own documentation

Complete as evidence that process has been followed

Partnership Tutor adds comments.

(AM6) taken to SAMM | Follow own Partner Annual Monitoring Process and use own documentation

Complete (AM6) as evidence that process has been followed

Partnership Tutor adds comments.

AM6 taken to SAMM |

INSTITUTIONAL STAGE (November)

29 Annual Monitoring at Institutional Stage takes place at two meetings:

- Joint Quality & Standards / Education Committee
- Joint Senate / Council meeting

Joint Quality & Standards / Education Committee

30 The following Evidence Base will be considered by the Joint Quality and Standards/Education Committee:

- SAMM Record & Actions Plans
- NSS Results
- University Quality Reports:
  - o Student Achievement Report
  - o External Examiners

- o Student Casework
- o Application of Standards (Academic Qualifications Framework, Regulations and Boards of Examiners)
- o Academic Partnerships
- o Approval & Review of Academic Provision

31   Auditors will be appointed from the membership of joint Quality & Standards/Education Committee to undertake an audit/peer review of the adherence to the Annual Monitoring process.

32   The allocation of Auditors will be undertaken by Academic Registry in consultation with the Chair of joint Quality & Standards/Education Committee.

33   The role of the Auditor is to:

- Report on whether the area to which they have been allocated has fulfilled its obligations in respect of Annual Monitoring and that in doing so has identified relevant issues and initiated action as appropriate. This will be achieved through reviewing the SAMM Record & Action Plans (and/or observation of the SAMM where feasible), or reviewing the University Quality Reports.
- Complete the Auditor's Report (AM7) for discussion at joint Quality & Standards/Education Committee

34   Based on consideration on the Evidence base and the Auditor's Reports, Joint Quality & Standards/Education Committee will:

- Determine whether or not the evidence presented confirms that quality and standards have been maintained
- Confirm that Annual Monitoring has been undertaken with due process
- Identify any themes and issues that need addressing across the University

35   Following the Joint Quality & Standards/Education Committee the Academic Registrar & Secretary has responsibility for the production of the University Quality & Standards Report.

36   Subject Action Plans will be reviewed at Faculty Board meetings, and the status of actions updated throughout the academic year.

Joint Senate/Council Meeting

37   The following Evidence Base will be considered by the Joint Meeting of Senate and Council:

- University Quality & Standards Report (with recommendations)
- University NSS Action Plan
- University quality reports:

  - o Student Achievement Report
  - o External Examiners
  - o Application of Standards

- Research Degrees (recommended by Research & Enterprise Committee)

38   Through presentations, discussions and debate, members of Senate and Council will explore themes arising from the Evidence Base. A Question & Answer session will

enable Council to challenge the University, and to ensure that confidence in the maintenance of quality and standards can be confirmed.

39   Joint Senate/Council will determine whether quality and standards for academic provision across the University have been maintained.

40   On the basis of the consideration at the joint Senate/Council meeting, Council members will also consider the assurances required by HEFCE for the Accountability Return and confirm its agreement with the following:

- "The governing body has received and discussed a report and accompanying action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. This included evidence from the provider's own periodic review processes, which fully involve students and include embedded external peer or professional review"
- "The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes are, to the best of our knowledge, robust and appropriate."
- "The standards of awards for which we are responsible have been appropriately set and maintained."
- "The provider continues to meet the standards of Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines (2015)."

Monitoring and Communication

41   Actions Plans will be monitored during the year as follows:

Action Plan arising from:	Monitored by:
University Quality & Standards Report-recommendations	Senate
Subject Action Plans	Programme Committees, with updates to Faculty Board
Student Achievement Report	Quality & Standards Committee
External Examiners	Quality & Standards Committee
Application of Standards	Quality & Standards Committee
Academic Partnerships	Quality & Standards Committee
Approval & Review of Academic Provision	Quality & Standards Committee
Student Casework	Quality & Standards Committee
Research Degrees	Research Degrees Committee

42   The University will be informed of key outcomes through Digest.

Abbreviations

DLHE	Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (QAA)
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
NSS	National Student Survey
PSRB	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.
PTES	Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
Q&S	Quality and Standards Committee
SAMM	Subject Annual Monitoring Meeting
UKES	UK Engagement Survey