



BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

1. The Code of Practice for the Periodic Review of Academic Provision describes the process undertaken by the University to ensure the continuing currency, standards and quality of its validated programmes. It is designed to conform to the provisions of the QAA UK Quality Code, specifically *Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review [2013]* (2015). In particular, it takes account of Indicator 1, which stipulates that HEIs *maintain strategic oversight of the processes for, and outcomes of, programme monitoring and programme review, to ensure processes are applied systematically and operated consistently*.
2. All programme teams are required to undertake annual monitoring of their provision and to produce a report for the School Board. In addition, a periodic review of programmes and subjects is conducted at institutional level at intervals of no more than five years. Periodic review requires programme teams to undertake a self-evaluation of their provision over that period and to submit a report of the outcome, accompanied by supporting documentation, to a panel appointed by the Quality Assurance Committee comprising academic staff of the University and at least one member who is external to the institution and possesses the impartiality to the process required; more information can be obtained from QASD. BGU based staff and students, and students and staff in collaborative partner organisations should have an input on the self-evaluation document.
3. In accordance with the QAA Quality Code, the main focus of periodic review is upon academic programmes. However, panels will also consider the wider context of the subject area and School in which programmes are located and the extent to which this has proved effective in supporting their academic health and development. For the purposes of periodic review, programmes in the same subject area will, therefore, be grouped together if and as appropriate. Where programmes include discrete subject components taught by staff in another subject team or School, the programme and the department in which it is located will remain the foci of the review.
4. The schedule of periodic reviews for the following session will be confirmed by the Academic Enhancement Committee at its meeting in the Summer Term.
5. It will be open to review panels to require or to recommend changes to programmes that would require revalidation. In such cases the revalidation will normally take place in the session following that in which the periodic review is held. Where a programme undertakes a revalidation between periodic reviews, the programme will still be subject to review at the normal point within the cycle.

Preparation of documentation

6. The Head of School, working with Academic Co-ordinators for the programmes to be reviewed, will be responsible for leading and coordinating the preparation of the documentation for periodic review. This will comprise
 - (i) a self-evaluation document (SED) for each programme;
 - (ii) the validated document for each programme including the rationale, current



programme specification and module descriptors;

- (iii) supporting evidence;
- (iv) In addition, the Head of School will prepare an overview report for the panel.

7. Each Academic Co-ordinator will prepare a SED for his or her programme. The SED should offer an evaluative and evidence-based account of the delivery of the programme during the period since the last periodic review. Other programme staff, students on the programme, and staff and students based in a collaborative partner organisation should have an input on the SED, for instance as co-authors of relevant sections. Relevant data should be made use of as appropriate. It should contain the following sections so as to reflect the main areas to be considered by the panel and the structure of the report in which the panel will communicate its conclusions.

(i) The continuing appropriateness and currency of the learning outcomes

This section should include a consideration of how the learning outcomes relate to the aims of the programme and external reference points such as the QAA UK Quality Code, the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications*, any European-wide quality assurance recommendations and guidance, relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, and any professional body requirements and/or employer consultation results. Appropriate data (e.g. Destination of Leavers from Higher Education statistics) may be used to support the arguments presented.

(ii) Curriculum design and content in relation to the intended learning outcomes

This section should include a consideration of the nature and effectiveness of the steps taken by the programme team to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes through the design, organisation and content of the curriculum. This would normally involve an assessment of how far the design and content of the curriculum promote the development of subject knowledge and understanding, and subject specific and transferable skills, and how well they equip students for employment or further study. The team should also consider the extent to which the curricular content is informed by current research and scholarship or by relevant occupational and professional requirements. Any incremental changes undertaken since the previous review should be noted here and consideration given to the rationale for those changes and their cumulative effect. It would be expected that the evaluation in this section would be supported by evidence of student achievement and an analysis of feedback from present and past students, external examiners, and employers.

(iii) Learning, teaching and assessment

The focus in this section should be on the delivery of the curriculum. Programme teams may wish to discuss the extent to which recent or innovative techniques are used and how the methods adopted are evaluated. Supporting evidence would include feedback from students and external examiners as well as student attainment demonstrated in assessed work. Programme teams should consider



how effectively the assessment process enables students to demonstrate the learning outcomes and the extent to which it has both a formative function and the capacity to enable internal and external examiners to distinguish between different categories of achievement. The team should indicate how it assures itself of the security and integrity of assessment procedures.

(iv) Learning resources

This section should evaluate the continuing sufficiency of resources, human and physical, to support the chosen strategy for delivering the programme and for supporting students' learning. Matters to be considered might include the expertise of staff, staff development opportunities, technical and administrative support, learning and teaching accommodation, the appropriateness, sufficiency and accessibility of books and periodicals, learning spaces, equipment, and information technology.

(v) e-Learning

This section should evaluate the strategy for the use of e-learning within learning, teaching and assessment.

(vi) Recruitment

In this section of the report the team should review the extent to which the programme has been successful in recruiting to its target over the period since the last review. Trends in student demand, changes in market position, and steps that have been taken in response to these should be noted here. It would be expected that the programme team would give consideration to statistical information relating to gender, age, disability and ethnicity in the context of the Diversity and Equality Policy and widening access, and e.g. data concerning changing markets and societal contexts.

(vii) Student Experience

This section should be used to record any issues affecting the response of students to the programme not covered in previous sections, for example contact with professional support services such as the Library or Student Support and effects of any School of University wide schemes such as personal tutoring arrangement and co-curricular learning opportunities. Teams should draw on the evidence of student reviews, comments by student representatives, the outcomes of the National Student Survey and institutional surveys of student opinion.

(viii) Enhancement

The self-evaluation should conclude with an account of the steps that have been taken and which the team intends to take, or make use of, to enhance the experience of students. This would include a discussion of the way in which it is proposed to address any issues which have been identified through the process of periodic review.



The notes on each section should not be regarded as exhaustive nor are they intended to constrain those preparing the document from drawing attention to what they consider important.

8. It will be the responsibility of the Head of Department to ensure that each SED conforms to the specification above, is evaluative rather than descriptive in character, and is based upon a range of documented evidence.
9. Following his or her approval of the SEDs, the Head of School will prepare an overview report. This should place the programmes within a School and University context and identify any salient issues or cross-cutting themes in the SEDs. The overview report should also evaluate the effectiveness of the School in supporting its portfolio and in securing standards and the quality of the learning opportunities and experience of its students. This should include a consideration of the arrangements that are in place to ensure that information about academic programmes and their assessment is accurate and is communicated clearly and timely to students, staff and external examiners, and how the department assures itself that a systematic approach is adopted to the enhancement of standards and the quality of learning opportunities.
10. The Head of School will then forward the overview report, SEDs, and all supporting documentation to the Academic Quality Manager in QASD at least 15 working days before the date of the review event. Heads of School are advised to ensure that documents are prepared in sufficient time to allow any specified revisions and developmental work to be carried out which may still be required after submission to QASD. The Quality Committee of the University monitors that the processes are timely and may seek relevant assurances from the programme team or the Head of School throughout the preparation of the relevant documentation if and as required.
11. An indicative list of supporting documentation is included in Appendix 1.

The review process

12. The SEDs, programme documentation, and other supporting evidence will be considered by a panel appointed by the Quality Assurance Committee. The panel will consist of a chair and a minimum of three other members, at least one of whom must be external to the University. The Student Union will be invited to nominate a student representative. No member of the panel shall be a member of the programme team or subject area in which the programmes under review are located or contribute to the delivery of any programme which is included in the review. The Chair shall be Deputy Vice Chancellor, Head of School, or a senior member of academic or academic-related staff who is not a member of the School in which the programmes under review are located. The external member of the panel shall be a senior academic with interests and expertise suited to the range of programmes under review. Where it is necessary to achieve adequate coverage of the portfolio under review, additional external members will be appointed. External members will be approved by the Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee and must have had no contact with any of the programmes under review in the previous five years. In particular, it should be noted that external examiners are not eligible to serve on review panels. A senior member of the Quality



Assurance team will act as officer to the review panel. The Head of School may nominate an observer who may be present throughout the review event. However, he or she will play no part in proceedings unless invited to do so by the chair of the panel.

Should any one of the programmes under review be accredited by a professional, regulatory or statutory body (PSRB), a member of the QASD team will help the relevant Academic Coordinator in organising involvement from that body. The body may for instance be content to review and re-accredit the programme at the same event but may prefer to send a team of its own rather than directly participate in the University's review team. This will depend on the regulations of the body in question, and QASD will help to accommodate these as part of (or, parallel to) the University review process to the extent this is possible.

13. The review event will normally take place over two days during which the panel will hold a series of interviews with staff and students associated with the programmes under review. The School will normally be given at least a term's notice of the approximate timing of the review, and at least four weeks' notice of the date of the event.
14. Approximately three weeks before the date of the review event, the Head of School will be required to nominate the following interviewees, subject to the approval of the chair of the panel:
 - members of staff from each programme team, including where possible, one newly appointed member of staff;
 - one hourly-paid or part-time member of staff from each programme team;
 - up to four students from each of the programmes under review including representatives from all stages of each programme and full and part-time modes of study when both are offered, as well as students studying in partner organisations if appropriate;
 - technical and administrative staff providing support to the programmes under review;
 - where possible, external stakeholders such as employers.

The numbers in each group should be regarded indicative and may be adjusted to take account of the size of the programmes to be reviewed and the number of programmes in the subject area or other area of the School under review.

15. By prior arrangement with the chair of the panel and the Head of School, individual members of the panel may attend particular teaching sessions associated with the programmes under review. These observations are not for the purpose of direct assessment of teaching quality, but in order that members of the panel are informed about teaching and learning activities in the relevant programmes.
16. By prior arrangement an individual member of the panel may arrange to observe a meeting of the relevant Departmental Committees.



17. Each member of the panel will by arrangement with the Chair review a sample of core (or other significant) modules. Typically, each member of the panel will review a minimum of one module from each of the programmes under review. It is crucial that by the combination of the samples, all modules are reviewed. Relevant samples of students' work (both examination scripts and coursework) together with the related module handbooks and assignment briefs for each of the modules selected will be provided by the Academic Co-ordinator. These should be provided at the same time as the other documentation (please see the Appendix for a list).

Conduct of the review event

18. At the review event, members of the panel will interview relevant academic staff and students associated with the school, department and programmes, and may pose questions to any other staff present representing the programmes or subject area under review. If deemed appropriate, the panel may interview the Head of another School whose staff make a significant contribution to one of the programmes under review.
19. The interviews with representative staff and students will normally be conducted in the following order:
 - (i) Head of School;
 - (ii) Associate Head of School or equivalent (if appropriate);
 - (iii) Academic Co-ordinators of all relevant programmes;
 - (iv) full-time teaching staff from all relevant programmes, including staff from partner organisations if appropriate;
 - (v) part-time teaching staff from all relevant programmes, including staff from partner organisations if appropriate;
 - (vi) technical and administrative staff from the relevant department;
 - (vii) student representatives from all relevant programmes, including students from partner organisations, if appropriate;
 - (viii) external stakeholders (e.g. employers, representatives of accrediting bodies etc.).

These arrangements may be amended as necessary in the light of circumstances. Interviews may for instance be grouped under themes (as in the report to be written; see below). It is important that the students will be given the opportunity to present their views unobserved by academic staff from the programmes/subject area under review.

20. The preliminary observations and examination of documentation and interviews will allow the panel to review the standards and quality of learning opportunities in the programmes under review. The panel's considerations will be focused on the following aspects of the



provision:

- (i) the continuing appropriateness and currency of the learning outcomes;
- (ii) curriculum design and content in relation to the intended learning outcomes; this will also involve a consideration of a schedule of changes made on the provision during the preceding years/period to be reviewed;
- (iii) learning teaching and assessment strategy including e-learning;
- (iv) learning resources (including learning spaces and facilities, and human resources);
- (v) recruitment to the programmes;
- (vi) student experience;
- (vii) enhancement of quality and learning opportunities (including employability and PSRB accreditation matters etc.).
- (viii) quality of information on the programme (e.g. through information in prospectus entries, brochures, student handbooks, information to/by partner organisations etc.)

These topics will also constitute sections in the final report of the review.

Outcome of the review

21. Following the interviews, the panel will consider its conclusions. The observer may be invited to be present during this stage of the process but will play no part unless invited to do so by the Chair.
22. The panel will decide whether it can have confidence in the thoroughness and integrity of the process of review undertaken by the School, subject area and/or programme teams and, secondly, whether it has confidence in the standards and the quality of learning opportunities and enhancement in all or part of the provision, as well as the quality of information on the programmes or subject area. These judgements will be formally recorded in its report. If the panel does not have confidence in the thoroughness and integrity of the process of review or in the standards and quality of provision, it may recommend to the Quality Assurance Committee that a second review should be carried out after a specified period. The second review may focus on all or part of the departmental portfolio. The panel may identify points of commendation and matters on which it requires or recommends action to be taken. These may include revalidation of one or more of the programmes.
23. Panel members should note that the programmes which are the subject of the review are discrete entities and that the report will need to distinguish clearly between them and identify to which programme team any required or recommended actions are addressed. It is also expected that the panel will seek to draw out common themes between the programmes that it has considered.



Reporting procedures

24. At the end of the event the Chair will provide oral feedback on the panel's main conclusions to the Head of School, Associate Head of School or equivalent, and Academic Co-ordinators. The feedback will include a statement on whether the panel has confidence in the thoroughness and integrity of the process of review and in the standards of the provision and the learning opportunities offered to students, enhancement of learning opportunities, and the quality of information on the provision reviewed. The feedback will also identify points of commendation and any required or recommended actions.
25. The panel's full report will reflect the structure of the SEDs and the topics explored at the review event. It will include an explicit statement regarding whether the panel has confidence in the thoroughness and integrity of the process of review and in the standards of the provision and the quality of the learning opportunities offered to students, in the quality of enhancement of learning opportunities, and the quality of information on the provision reviewed. It will conclude with a list of any points of commendation and required and recommended actions. The draft report will be approved by members of the review panel before being sent to the Head of School, Academic Coordinators and other relevant staff who were present, who may wish to comment on matters of factual accuracy. The resulting final report will then be received and approved by the Quality Assurance Committee at its meeting in the term following the review. The outcome will be reported to the Academic Enhancement Committee and Senate.

The Response

26. One semester after the approval of the full report, the servicing officer will ask the School to provide the Quality Assurance Committee with details of actions taken or planned in response to the panel's requirements and recommendations. If the Committee is not satisfied that there is evidence of an adequate response to all the issues raised, it will refer the outstanding issues back to the School for further consideration.

It is to be noted that any Conditions and Recommendations in the report may also have separate deadlines (earlier or later) by which they need to be addressed. Long-term Recommendations of the review panel should become part of the regular monitoring and continuous improvement done at the academic School and be part of the relevant Annual Monitoring Review action plans. Any Commendations should be discussed and disseminated through relevant media, such as the School Boards.

27. A specific commentary from Head of School on the outcome of any actions specified in the report and an assessment of their impact upon the provision should be included in the next annual monitoring report. If the area reviewed encompassed PSRB accreditation or provision delivered in partner organisations, these should also be addressed in the commentary and action plans as appropriate.

APPENDIX

INDICATIVE LIST OF DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT PERIODIC REVIEW

Maintenance and Enhancement of Quality and Standards

Statistical Indicators

Qualifications on entry
Number of registrations in each year
Number of withdrawals from the programme and number of intercalations in each year with reasons
Progression figures for each year
Summary of degree classifications awarded
First destinations information

Annual Monitoring and Reviews

The Annual Monitoring Reports and associated action plans completed since the last periodic review
Schedule of changes made since the last review (to be completed by/in collaboration with QASD)

Programme Administration and Management

Staff list showing areas of responsibility
Staff CVs
The minutes of department committees for the last twelve months

The above should also comprise provision delivered in partner organisations if and as appropriate.

Student reviews

Examples of module/subject/programme review and analysis
Results of NSS and other internal or external surveys and their analysis

Evidence from other sources regarding overall student experience (incl. in partner organisations if and as appropriate)

External Views

The reports of external examiners and associated action plans for the last two years
Any reports on the provision by external agencies (e.g. QAA or Ofsted) in the period since the last review
Any reports by professional bodies
Reports from other stakeholders/employers as appropriate

Staff Development

Details of staff development activities and research undertaken by members of the programme team
Any notes of guidance for new staff, technical staff etc.

Information to Students and Applicants

Student handbooks including those for placements etc. Module handbooks
Sample of assignment briefs
PDP Proforma
Information for students and applicants in partner organisations

Skills and Training

Study skills handouts
Laboratory guidelines
Fieldwork guidelines
Advice for projects and dissertations

Samples of students' work

Selection of assignments and examinations
Video recordings of presentations and performances

Student Support

Admissions and induction

Prospectus entries and brochures
Recruitment pamphlets and materials
Induction programmes
Advice and guidance leaflets
Guidance for international students (as appropriate)
Guidance for students in partner organisations (as appropriate)

Careers Guidance

Careers information given to students

Learning Resources

Library induction
ICT training
VLE induction
Any evidence/materials regarding estates and facilities, as appropriate

Panel members will be given access to the relevant areas of the VLE.

All of the above shall also include materials from partner organisations if and as appropriate.