

Programme Review

Procedure for the Annual Review of Programmes

Responsible Office	Academic Governance and Policy
Responsible Officer	Head of Academic Governance and Policy
Approving Authority	Academic Board
Date of Approval	25th January 2022
Effective Date	25th January 2022
Related Procedures	N/A
Related University Policies	N/A
Amended (if applicable)	
Supersedes	Quality and Standards Checks
Next Review Date	January 2025

Introduction

The University is committed to regularly reviewing and enhancing its programmes of study, to ensure that curriculum content remains up to date, that feedback from students, staff and external examiners is responded to, that students experience is enhanced, and that degree programmes deliver good outcomes for students, supporting them into employment or further study.

The Programme Review process forms a point of reflection and planning for academic staff to consider areas for improvement, share good practice, and report on programme level initiatives. The process is informed by key datasets for student achievement, satisfaction and graduate outcomes; with institutionally set thresholds and KPIs reviewed annually in line with internal strategic objectives and external regulatory requirements.

The requirements for programme areas in respect of the Programme Review process will depend on performance in the Academic KPIs; with an enhanced 'Active Monitoring' process for certain subject areas identified on an annual basis.

The Programme Review process has been designed to ensure that the University meets its obligations under the Office for Students 'B Conditions' and the UUK Framework for Programme Reviews. This regulatory context requires the University to:

- Ensure that its programmes are well designed, provide a high quality academic experience and ensure student achievement is reliably assessed (Condition B1).
- Provide all students with the support they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education (Condition B2)
- Deliver successful outcomes for students that are recognised and valued by employers (Condition B3).
- Ensure qualifications hold their value over time in line with sector recognised standards, and meet the academic standards as described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (Conditions B4 and B5).

The principles that underpin the design and operation of the Programme Review process are as follows:

- **Proportionality:** The enhanced requirements for subject areas in the 'Active Monitoring' category focus effort where impact will be greatest. Active Monitoring is action and timeline focused; but also provides an opportunity to build key support interventions in place for programme teams, through, for example extra training or specialised consultancy.
- **Listening to Students:** Student satisfaction data forms a key KPI used in the Programme Review process; and subject leaders will also be reflecting on the student voice in their Plans and Reflections. Senior Academic Reps have the opportunity to input into the discussion and monitoring of Plans and Reflections at SQMCs.
- **Engaging Academic Staff:** Academic staff are supported in their drafting of Plans and Reflections, with guidance from Academic Governance and Policy, and dedicated subject level meetings with members of the senior management team and the Vice-Chancellor. This creates a review process that is built upon conversation and understanding of the nuances and differences across discipline areas, and the better sharing of good practice across subject teams.
- **Data Driven and Enabling Enhancement:** A set of Academic KPIs determines which programmes require Active Monitoring, but also guides subject teams where indicators

are flagged and there is a need for improvement. Detailed data dashboards also provide further granular information to support reflection and understanding. Plans and Reflections will also include the opportunity to share good practice, and consider how strategic enhancement themes are being addressed at subject level.

Procedure

A. Planning and Data Release

Task	Procedure
A1. Academic KPI Setting	<p>Briefing paper submitted to Academic Board (July) outlining external data environment; and the arrangements for the inclusion of markers within the Academic KPIs.</p> <p>Academic KPIs will be at subject level where possible; unless chosen KPIs and datasets suggest otherwise.</p>
A2. Active Monitoring and Local Enhancement Programmes Identified	<p>The Academic KPI grid is released and circulated by the Vice-Provost. This identifies within it which subject areas are categorised as in 'Active Monitoring' and those that are in 'Local Enhancement'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Active Monitoring: A small number of programmes will be considered as requiring Active Monitoring. These will be considered based on the triggers and thresholds defined within the Academic KPI grid. Programme/Subject leads whose programmes are within Active Monitoring will be required to develop Active Monitoring Plans (AMPs), which are characterised by enhanced monitoring, reporting and action planning activities. Members of the senior management team are involved to guide and monitor AMPs.● Local Enhancement: The majority of programmes will meet thresholds as required across the Academic KPI indicators, and instead will be required to undertake Local Enhancement Reflections (LERs). These are focused on identifying areas for improvement identified through quantitative and qualitative data, highlight areas of good practice and consider alignment to strategic objectives and thematic focus. Delivery of actions within LERs is the responsibility of the Schools through the SQMCs.
A3. New Provision, Franchised and Validated Provision	<p>New programmes will be included as part of the Academic KPI grid after one complete year of operation; even if datasets are incomplete. Heads of Schools will agree with the Head of Academic Governance and Policy whether new reporting for new programmes with incomplete Academic KPIs can be aggregated at subject level or required to complete a Local Enhancement Plan at programme level. This will be considered in a risk based manner (e.g considering the amount of shared provision or whether the programme is in a new discipline area).</p> <p>Franchised and Validated provision will also be included as part of the Academic KPI grid, even if datasets are incomplete.</p>

A3. Templates and Guidance circulated

Academic Governance and Policy set up and circulate to Programme/Subject Leaders the Active Monitoring Plan and Local Enhancement Reflection templates within a Google Drive Space.

Academic Governance and Policy provide guidance to staff to prepare their Reflections and Plans in advance of their Reporting Meetings, including reference to any areas of thematic focus for that year, reminders of timings, process and guidance for programme modifications and access to data dashboards to supplement reflection and action planning.

Academic Governance and Policy are responsible for tracking Plan and Reflection submission through a tracking document. Chancery to have access to confirm Reporting Meeting dates.

A4. Reporting Meetings Scheduled

Chancery schedule Reporting Meetings as follows:

- Active Monitoring Reporting Meetings for early September. Attendees include the Vice-Chancellor, PVC Student Experience, Vice-Provost, Head of School and the Subject/Programme Leader.
- Local Enhancement Reporting Meetings for September and October. Attendees include PVC Student Experience, Vice-Provost, Head of School and the Subject/Programme Leader. The Vice-Chancellor may also attend the Local Enhancement Reporting meeting.

Centre for Educational Partnerships to schedule Reporting Meetings for each Partner (to include BSU staff as follows: Associate PVC Educational Partnerships, PVC Student Experience, Link Tutor/s, Head/s of School).

The meetings for cognate subject areas; or those where programme leaders cover a number of courses can be scheduled together. The meetings for collaborative partners can be scheduled at partner level, rather than School or subject level if required.

B. Development and Discussion

B1. Drafting of Plans and Reflections

Programme/Subject Leaders draft Plans and Reflections, ready to present and discuss at Reporting Meetings. Academic Governance and Policy to provide advice and guidance.

B2. Reporting Meetings Held

The Active Monitoring Meetings will consider

- The flagged indicators in the Academic KPIs, and the reasons for these
- The draft Active Monitoring Programme plan, and agree the actions required
- Agree timescales for delivery of actions and follow up meetings
- Agree central University interventions and support (e.g dedicated training/workshops with teams, use of external consultancy).
- Consider curriculum modification, redesign or suspension.

The Local Enhancement Meetings will consider

- Any flagged indicators in the Academic KPIs, and the reasons for these
- The draft Local Enhancement Reflection, highlighting good practice and consideration of strategic enhancement themes.
- Proposals for action to enhance the student experience, including curriculum modification

C Committee Oversight

C1. Education Committee Report	Education Committee to receive a report on urgent/important institutional actions from subject areas under Active Monitoring (September); and copies of Active Monitoring Plans. The Education Strategy Tracker to be updated with actions and risks, which are considered for inclusion on the Strategic Risk Register.
C2. SQMC Consideration of Plans and Reflections	SQMC to receive Plans and Reflections (November); discuss progress on actions and approve associated curriculum modifications. Heads of School to report institutional level risks to the Education Committee (December); and record School level risks on School Risk Registers.