University Code of Practice

Periodic Review of Programmes

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Responsibilities:	Programme Coordinators - Students Academic Quality and Standards Committee
Application to collaborative provision:	Mandatory
Contacts:	Head of Academic Quality and Learning
Applications for exemptions to:	Academic Quality and Standards Committee
Report exemptions to:	Academic Board

Summary/ Description:

This Code sets out the University's approach to, and requirements for, the review of its programmes on a six-yearly cycle with provision for a Mid-cycle Review after three years. The process shares the objectives of Programme Monitoring and Review but is designed to ensure a more intense scrutiny.

Periodic Reviews are designed to provide a check on programmes after six years. The Programme Coordinator, building on the Programme Review and Enhancement Plans (PREPs), external examiner reports and student engagement, prepares a self-evaluation document which forms the basis for a review. The review is conducted by a panel comprising a member of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC), a senior member of the academic staff responsible for academic quality and a student, all of whom are not directly involved in the programme under review, and who meet with the Programme Coordinator and other staff following a review of the documentation. A concise report sets out any recommendations and examples of effective and/or innovative practice. Periodic Review reports go to the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC) and the AQSC.

Mid-cycle Reviews are designed to provide an interim check on programmes after three years, again building on the PREPs, external examiner reports and student engagement. Mid-cycle Reviews are conducted by the Programme Coordinator following a review of the documentation. A concise report sets out any recommendations and examples of effective and/or innovative practice. As with Periodic Reviews, the Mid-cycle Review reports go to the QEC and the AQSC.

Further Guidance

See the Introduction to the Quality Handbook (QH:A1) for further guidance and explanations of:

- how the Handbook is designed to work and what it covers and does not cover
- how it is structured
- the 'external reference points' and established practice which have informed each of the Codes
- key concepts and themes
- some suggestions for further reading
- a quick guide to each Code, including definitions and things to watch out for.

This university Code has been written in accordance with the approach approved by the University to enhance clarity involving the following terminology: must = mandatory should = advisable may = desirable. Where these terms are used they are emphasised in bold.

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INTRODUCTION

Authority

1 The Academic Quality and Standards Committee is the final arbiter of the application and interpretation of this code of practice.

Scope of the Code

2 This Code applies to programmes classified by Academic Board as taught and which lead to the award of the University's higher education qualifications (as set out in the Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1)).

Application to collaborative provision

3 Unless specified by the Academic Board, this Code applies to all provision referred to in paragraph 2 whether that provision is delivered by the University or another approved provider in accordance with a formal legal agreement.

PRINCIPLES

4 The University's processes for Periodic Review and Mid-cycle Review are designed to reflect the principles that the review:

(a) Is a process of engagement and reflection between academic staff who designed and deliver and assess the provision, students and professional services' staff informed by quantitative and qualitative evidence, and independent and external experts
(b) is forward looking and focused on actions that can be taken to enhance the student learning experience and/or more effectively secure the academic standards of the award
(c) enables effective practice to be identified and where appropriate to be shared across the programme, school and university
(d) involves engagement with students directly and through their representatives (recognising that different students will engage in such a process in different ways)
(e) makes effective use of the expert opinions of external examiners
(f) provides assurance to students that their views are taken seriously by providing them with feedback on actions being taken and the reasons for not acting where that is considered appropriate
(g) provides effective programme level scrutiny to ensure that the programme remains current, relevant and coherent
(h) provides assurance to the University that its provision is of high-quality and that its academic standards are secure or that where this is not entirely the case deficiencies are identified and improvements introduced
(i) provides assurance to the University that the process is being implemented seriously and effectively.

Confidentiality

5 Feedback provided by students, staff and others **should** be shared with students as part of the process of reflection and consideration of possible actions.

6 Information should not be shared only where:

(a) sharing it would identify individual students (student feedback should be summarised where there are common themes)
(b) it has been provided in confidence for example by an external body (though external bodies should be encouraged not to regard their comments as confidential given the University's commitment to working in partnership with its students).

Student engagement

7 Student engagement means involvement in:

(a) providing feedback on their experience of the programme
(b) making suggestions for improvements
(c) commenting on the suggestions of others (such as a draft action plan)
(d) being informed of the progress against the action plan.

8 Students are encouraged to recognise the value to the University and to future students of giving feedback on their experience and suggestions for improvements even where those suggestions will not directly benefit them, for example, because they have completed the module to which their feedback relates.

CHAPTER I: PERIODIC REVIEW

9 The University will conduct a Periodic Review of each programme no less frequently than every six years. Each review will adhere to sound practice reflecting expectations set out in the UK Quality Code and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. It will include the recognised key features of such a review:

(a) the involvement of external expert(s), normally a member of the AQSC but, optionally and at the discretion of the AQSC, additional external expert(s)
(b) the involvement of a student not enrolled on the programme at the time of the review
(c) the analysis of data
(d) self-evaluation by staff involved in the delivery of the programme drawing on the PREPs and the previous Mid-cycle Review of the programme
(e) a report to the AQSC derived from the foregoing, and including recommendations for improvements to the programme and identifying innovative and effective practice where applicable
(f) feedback to stakeholders, including current students, on the outcomes of the review.

10 Each Periodic Review will be designed to provide the University with assurance that:

(a) the programme is meeting its stated objectives
(b) the quality of the student learning experience is high
(c) the academic standards of the award are being maintained at or above the threshold level
(d) the University's Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) and supporting Codes are being applied effectively to the programme.

11 The Periodic Review will also provide the opportunity to identify areas for development within the programme, including identifying any amendments which would enhance the programme.

12 Each Periodic Review will be conducted by a Panel comprising:

(a) a member of the AQSC who is not involved in directly managing or delivering the programme under review (chair)

(b) a student not currently enrolled on the programme under review

(c) a senior member of the academic staff responsible for academic quality and not involved in the delivery of the programme.

The Panel will have the option to co-opt additional members as required (e.g., the Coordinator of a Programme other than that under review) and will be supported by the Secretary of the AQSC.

13 The Panel will focus on the previous Mid-Cycle Review report and the subsequent three years' PREPs, the external examiner reports, and any review or other activity by an applicable professional, statutory or regulatory body.

14 The Panel will evaluate the documentation and then hold a meeting with the Programme Coordinator and other members of staff involved in the management and/or delivery of the programme. The meeting will be designed to address issues identified by the Panel, enable the Programme Coordinator to raise any issues, and enable the identification of possible recommendations as well as the identification of effective/innovative practice.

15 Following the meeting, the Panel will provide a concise report confirming effective/innovative practice and recommendations and provide this to the Programme Coordinator, the QEC and the AQSC.

16 The AQSC will receive for consideration and approval the final version of each report. The Committee will address any recommendations made to it, and decide appropriate action to take, and will satisfy itself that the review has been conducted appropriately and in accordance with this Code.

17 The Programme Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that students on the programme are informed about the outcome of the review and engaged in the follow-up process. This **must** include:

(a) making available the report provided by the reviewers

(b) involving students in monitoring the action plan.

The Secretary of AQSC will provide Academic Board with a summary of issues and recommendations from each Periodic Review report to facilitate identification of recurrent themes, as the basis for staff development, dissemination of good practice, enhancement of quality systems and other activity.

CHAPTER II: MID-CYCLE REVIEW

18 The University will conduct a Mid-cycle Review of each programme (or cluster of programmes) three years after commencing delivery of the programme and thereafter mid-way between each Periodic Review.

19 Each Mid-cycle Review will be designed to provide the University with assurance that:

(a) the programme is meeting its stated objectives
(b) the quality of the student learning experience is high
(c) the academic standards of the award are being maintained at, and above, the threshold level
(d) the University's Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1) and supporting Codes are being applied effectively to the programme.

20 The Mid-cycle Review will also provide the opportunity to identify areas for development within the programme, including identifying any amendments which would enhance the programme.

21 Each Mid-cycle Review will be conducted by the Programme Coordinator and will focus on the previous three years' PREPs, the external examiner reports, and any review or other activity by an applicable professional, statutory or regulatory body. The Programme Coordinator **may** involve other members of staff involved in the management and/or delivery of the programme.

22 The Programme Coordinator will provide a concise report confirming effective/innovative practice and recommendations and provide this to the QEC and the AQSC.

23 The AQSC will receive for consideration and approval the final version of each report, will address any recommendations made to it, decide appropriate action to take, and will satisfy itself that the review has been conducted appropriately and in accordance with this Code.

24 The Programme Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all students on the programme are informed about the outcome of the review and engaged in the follow-up process. This **must** include:

(a) making available the report provided by the reviewer
(b) involving students in monitoring the action plan.

25 The Secretary of AQSC will provide Academic Board with a summary of issues and recommendations from each Mid-cycle Review report to facilitate identification of recurrent themes, as the basis for staff development, dissemination of good practice, enhancement of quality systems and other activity.

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