

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

For the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee to be held on 15 June 2015

Paper from the Monitoring and Review Working Group

A working group of the University's Academic Quality and Standards Committee was established in March 2015 to review the University's Annual Course Review process. The Group has met four times since then and has developed proposals for a revised review and monitoring process for taught courses which are attached at Annex A. Membership of the Group is attached at Annex B. It is not proposed that these processes apply to postgraduate research degrees which will continue to be reviewed under existing processes.

The Working Group considered a range of practices for monitoring and review at other UK universities, recognizing that different processes suited different institutional structures. It also took into consideration the introduction of the Education Experience Planning Group (EEPG) meetings and the Autumn Review process which took place in 2013/14 and 2014/15 respectively and how monitoring and review might build on these.

The Working Group's proposals have been considered at the meetings of the Faculty Sub-Committees and the Boards of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies held in May and June 2015. The outcomes of these discussions were largely positive and suggestions were constructive. These were considered at a further meeting of the Working Group and amendments made accordingly.

It is recognized however that further detailed work on the procedures and underpinning systems to support the proposed processes will be required before implementation can take place. It is not therefore anticipated that the process will be introduced at the beginning of 2015/16 but instead will be deferred to 2016/17.

The Academic Quality and Standards Committee is asked to consider the proposed process for monitoring and review of the University's taught courses set out in Annex A for recommendation to Senate, noting that further work on the detail of the procedures and on underpinning systems is required.

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ANNUAL COURSE REVIEW

1. Background

The University has a number of review processes to ensure that its courses are appropriately structured, current, managed effectively, monitor and enhance the quality of the student learning experience and the standards and quality of the institution's learning and teaching provision. The main review processes include:

- Module evaluation (at least once each year)
- Annual course review
- Institutional Teaching and Learning Review (ITLR) (5 year cycle).

Following on from other developments it was determined that a review should take place of the University's Annual Course Review Process. Briefly, the aims were:

- To introduce a fundamentally different process
- Build on the meetings-based approach of the Education Enhancement Planning Group meetings held in 2014, but incorporate quality assurance, standards and student experience and consider whether such meetings should be annual
- Ensure the process is meaningful, useful, respected and avoid duplication and unnecessary administrative burdens
- Be realistic, proportionate and appropriate
- Avoid a problem driven approach but enable concerns to be raised where there are symptomatic indicators of quality issues
- Allow for individual scrutiny of variants to courses
- Introduce a consistent and defined data set to inform the process, enabling identification of concerns, and
- Allow a formal annual opportunity to take account of possible risks attendant upon significant changes to course administration occasioned by (inter alia) PSRB or national requirements.

A small review group was formed, chaired by the Chair of the Quality Assurance Working Group of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC), to which were invited representatives from departments across the four faculties, representatives from the Students' Union, the Chairs of the Boards of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies and serviced by the Teaching Quality team. Following a number of meetings the following proposals are made below on which the views of relevant committees are being sought.

2. Principles

The following guiding principles underpin the approach to the University's monitoring and review processes:

- Provision of enhanced institutional assurance in the standards and quality of the University's learning and teaching provision;
- Enhancement of the quality of student learning opportunities;
- Delivery of risk-based, proportionate processes which enable agility and innovation and include all key stakeholders, including students;
- Reduction of the on-going burdens on academic and administrative colleagues;

- Delivery of professional, effective, collegial and consistent processes which enable and promote academic excellence.

These apply to the approach to annual course review outlined below. In due course a more comprehensive document will be compiled covering all of the review processes outlined in 1 above and below.

3. Proposals

It is proposed to replace Annual Course Review reports with a new process comprising three elements.

3.1 Annual academic monitoring (AAM)

The University already has in place a number of mechanisms to monitor and enhance the quality and standards of its courses. These include various surveys and corresponding action plans, key data, external examiners reports, module evaluation, teaching observations, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) reports, Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings. AAM should build on such mechanisms and draw together relevant data in a meaningful and reflective way in order to plan improvement. The student learning experience should be at the heart of the AAM and EEM (Education Experience Monitoring – see section 3.3 below) processes, to maintain and enhance the student experience and standards. Departments should review all courses each year and may review suites of programmes together providing the review process retains sufficient granularity.

AAM requires departments to pay close attention to indicators of the success of a course such as application figures, retention, complaints, degree results and student feedback. AAM enables departments to monitor closely standards of teaching and learning on courses and to react if problems become evident. AAM reports provide key information to inform the education experience monitoring (EEM) process outlined below.

While the procedures for AAM set out here provide a clear framework, the way in which AAM is conducted may vary depending on each department's size, management structure, and the way its degrees are organised.

Course and departmental levels

There should be a meeting once per year of the course team. This should usually be chaired by an individual with appropriate oversight of the course, which might be the Head of Department, Director of Undergraduate or Graduate Studies, or course leader/convenor, depending on departmental management structures (hereafter referred to as the course convenor). Module leaders should either attend, or submit a report to the chair (which includes module evaluation reports). Student representation is required, and would normally be expected to include the Chair of the SSLC. The meeting should be informed by the information referred to in the guidance within the AAM form.

The AAM form (appendix 1) should be completed as a result of discussions about each of the sections of the form, discussed with student representatives and in relevant departmental meetings. The final report should be submitted to Teaching Quality. The meetings should take place as near to the end of the teaching year as possible. This should be done in the Autumn term for undergraduate courses and in the summer for postgraduate taught courses. While postgraduate taught courses would not yet have completed at this stage, this timing allows current students' views to be taken into consideration and would fall at the end of the taught component of the course.

University level

The advice of chairs of relevant faculty committees was that consideration of AAM reports would be more effective at the University rather than faculty level. As a result it is recommended that reports go to the Quality Assurance Working Group (QAWG) which should draw on a group of reviewers provided by each Faculty sub-committee to review the AAM department-level reports: with each department being reviewed by two reviewers (one a member of the same Faculty, and one from another Faculty).

The reports will be considered at a meeting of QAWG, and will be reported to the relevant Faculty sub-committees. A report from QAWG on any faculty level or institution level themes will be compiled for consideration by Faculties and/or AQSC as appropriate.

Quality Assurance (QA) Outcomes

Any urgent issues will be addressed by QAWG, working with Teaching Quality and the relevant faculty-level committee(s) and colleagues from central departments as appropriate.

Quality Enhancement (QE) Outcomes

The faculty level or institution level themes identified by the meeting of QAWG, and approved by AQSC, will form the basis of faculty teaching and learning showcases, and to inform the themes addressed by the institution-wide teaching and learning showcase.

Key data set

The University is developing a key data set to support the monitoring and review process. Some of the data is already available for UG programmes via the education analytics dashboards, which are supported by Strategic Planning and Analytics (SPA). The key data set will be developed further to:

- a) Provide snapshots at agreed points across the year; timed to be available as annual academic monitoring (AAM) meetings take place (in the first instance as a report provided by SPA to departments);
- b) Include module evaluation data as this process is developed;
- c) Encompass postgraduate taught provision;
- d) Incorporate 'traffic lights' around the key indicators of quality (for example numbers of complaints, numbers of withdrawals);
- e) Explore whether predictive analytics can be developed to identify quality assurance issues with courses or within departments.

3.2 Continuous monitoring

Teaching Quality will monitor the 'traffic lights' system and contact departments during the course of the academic year if any 'amber' or 'red' lights are triggered. The level at which 'amber' or 'red' lights will be triggered will be agreed each year. Some of the trigger levels may vary from course to course, depending on the nature of the programme of study.

3.3 Education experience monitoring (EEM)

EEM is designed to consider teaching and learning provision across a department, and beyond, in the case of departments with joint and collaborative provision. EEM takes the form of a meeting between departments and key members of the University, and is intended to be wide-ranging and to cover both postgraduate taught and undergraduate teaching and learning provision. It is intended to be collegial and supportive, enabling open dialogue on problems and identification of best practice. EEM will take place on a two-year cycle, underpinned by the AAM process and monitoring of the key data set. A schedule will be agreed in advance, which will also need to take into consideration the timing of the Institutional Teaching and Learning Review (ITLR) process.

EEM panels will include senior members of the university and will normally be chaired by a Pro-Vice Chancellor or their nominee. Panels will also normally include:

- the Chair of the Faculty (or their nominee)
- a member of AQSC
- a member of QAWG, BUGS or BGS
- an academic representative from another Faculty
- student representative(s)
- a secretary, from Teaching Quality

Student engagement

At least one student representative will be invited to join the panel, although it may be appropriate in some cases to have students representing different cohorts (e.g. undergraduate, postgraduate). The panel will also invite students from the department to attend the first session of the EEM.

Agenda

Specific issues that the panel wish to address will be notified to the department in advance. The EEM meeting will usually take up to 2.5 hours, with a pre-meeting of the panel to consider the paperwork to support the review (a report that will be compiled by Teaching Quality using data from education analytics dashboards, surveys, DHLE, complaints and appeals, and the University's admissions systems). Any student representatives from the department will then spend approximately 30 minutes with the panel reporting on their experiences and responding to questions agreed by the panel at the pre-meeting. The panel will then meet with senior colleagues from the department, which should normally include as a minimum: the Head of Department or Deputy, the Head of Teaching and Learning and any colleagues with a specific remit for student experience at both UG and PGT levels (eg Director of Student Experience).

Themes

The themes and specific issues for discussion will be notified to departments before the meeting and will be informed by:

- a) the University's own strategic objectives
- b) any issues of concern raised through the annual academic monitoring process or from the 'traffic lights' system.
- c) Any other issues identified by the panel in advance of the meeting.

Outcomes

A draft report will be prepared by the EEM secretary within 10 working days of the meeting and shared with the Head of Department. As soon as the draft is approved, it will be published on the Teaching Quality webpages and should be shared in the department and with students.

Actions should be followed up the appropriate action holders. Any causes for concern should be notified to QAWG by the EEM secretary. Urgent issues will be addressed by QAWG, working with the relevant faculty-level committee(s) and colleagues from central departments as appropriate. Where necessary relating to resourcing issues, the Chair of EEM or QAWG will make a report to the Academic Registrar to inform the Academic Resourcing Committee.

QE Outcomes

Any good practice will be reported to colleagues in LDC and relevant faculty-level committees so that the information can be used to inform future teaching and learning showcase event agendas.

Review

The AAM process will be reviewed after its first year of operation. The EEM process will also be reviewed but at a later date once all departments have undergone EEM.

Professor David Lamburn
16 June 2015

Appendix 1

Annual Academic Monitoring Report: Year 2014-15

Department:	
Faculty of:	
Course(s): (please list full award titles and variants)	
Course Director(s):	
Course Team Members:	
<p>Guidance</p> <p>The Course Director is responsible for completing the Annual Academic Monitoring report.</p> <p>The Annual academic monitoring (AAM) report should be a reflective, focused and concise evaluation of the learning and teaching experiences on the course over the last academic year. Departments are expected to facilitate a course team meeting prior to the writing of the report, and to ensure that everyone involved in the delivery of the course has input into the process. Student representatives should have input into the drafting and consideration of the report.</p> <p>Where possible data will be supplied to departments. The report should be informed by relevant sources of evidence. These should include where appropriate: student progression and achievement data; education analytics dashboards; complaints data; NSS, PTES and PRES results; Warwick Student Survey results; Destinations of leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) data; Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body reports; other student feedback (eg from SSLC meetings; External Examiners' Reports; module evaluation feedback; incidents of cheating. To avoid repetition, reference may be made to action plans already completed relating to eg NSS, PRES, PTES, External Examiners' Reports and DLHE; such action plans should be appended to this report. Course directors should be concise in the completion of the report and are encouraged to use bullet point format. It is expected that action points additional to those noted in other action plans will be brief. The overall report should not normally be more than two sides. Boxes will re-size as necessary.</p> <p>The completed review should be discussed in SSLC meetings and approved at departmental level.</p> <p>Departments will be advised of submission dates.</p>	

Course Team's Commentary
Reflection on the delivery of the course(s) and action taken as a result of the previous review (suggested sub-headings are provided)
<p><i>Student Progression, Awards and Employment:</i></p> <p><i>Course Structure and Assessment Strategy:</i></p> <p><i>Course Delivery and Placements:</i></p> <p><i>Information, advice and guidance:</i></p> <p><i>Other Issues:</i></p>

Identified Action(s) to be taken forward	Responsibility	Timeframe
Action points		

Innovations in the course
Details of innovations and good practice considered to be worthy of further dissemination. This will automatically be copied to the Learning and Development Centre to inform University and faculty Teaching and Learning showcase events.

Append data supplied and other action plans.

Membership of the Monitoring and Review Working Group

Chair	Professor David Lamburn
Representatives of the Faculty of Arts	Dr Jo Lee, (Italian) Mr Robert Horton, Department Administrator (History)
Representative of the Board of Undergraduate Studies	Professor Roger Leng (Chair of Board of Undergraduate Studies)
Representative of the Board of Graduate Studies	Dr Jo Garde-Hansen (Centre for Cultural Policy Studies)
Representatives of the Faculty of Medicine	Professor Lesley Roberts, Pro-Dean (Education), (Warwick Medical School) Ms Lara Cartwright, Assistant Registrar (Warwick Medical School)
Representatives of the Faculty of Social Sciences	Mr Peter Brown (Centre for Applied Linguistics and Chair of Undergraduate Studies Committee of Social Sciences) Mrs Sian Egginton, Administrative Officer, Academic Services (Warwick Business School)
Representatives of the Faculty of Science	Dr Dave Wood (Mathematics and Chair of Science Undergraduate Studies Committee) Professor Amanda Dowd (WMG and Academic Director, Graduate School) (Dr Ehmet Er attending for WMG for meeting 1)
Member of the Strategy and Change team	Dr Eliza Gaffney
Member of the Strategic Planning and Analytics Office	Mr Rory McIntyre
Representatives of the Students' Union	Ms Maahwish Mizra, Education Officer Mr Andrew Thompson, Postgraduate Officer
Secretary	Ms Ruth Cooper, Teaching Quality