

This guidance document is primarily intended for Directors of Studies, members of programme teams, and administrative staff who are involved in preparing documentation for Degree Scheme Reviews conducted under the process set down in QA13.

**Degree Scheme Review**

**Guidance for Preparing a Course Evaluation Document**

1. **Scope:** The purpose of this guidance document is to support the production of a Course Evaluation Document as part of a Degree Scheme Review process. The full procedures, roles and responsibilities are set out in [QA13](https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/qa13-degree-scheme-review/) Degree Scheme Reviews.
2. **Purpose of Degree Scheme Review:** A Degree Scheme Review (DSR) is a developmental periodic review of a course of study (or set of cognate courses), undertaken with the aim of enhancing the course while providing a robust mechanism by which the University can assure itself of and record the quality of the course. A DSR offers an opportunity for a Department/School to step back from the day to day running of a course, and to reflect on its current position and future development.
3. **Responsibility for the Course Evaluation Document:** The Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring that a Course Evaluation Document (CED) is prepared within the Department/School. The Director of Studies may invite other members of the course team to take a role in drafting the CED. It is expected that the CED will draw upon wide-ranging consultation in the Department/School/partner organisation and with any other Departments involved with the course. It is advisable to start planning for the Review, early, ideally several months before the event itself, allowing plenty of time for discussion, reflection, gathering evidence and drafting. (See also section 6 below on timings).

Where cognate courses, which are not variants of each other, are reviewed together a separate CED should be produced for each course. Where courses are variants of each other this might be undertaken through one CED.

You are encouraged to establish a dialogue at an early stage with other University staff. For example, if one of the areas that you have begun to identify as an area for improvement is e-learning, then talk to the e-Learning team in the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office to establish what options and support might be available. Similarly, if an intended new area of development is likely to have implications for staff support, talk through the options with the Academic Staff Development team. You may know of another Department that has already made progress in a particular area, and there is an opportunity to benefit from their experience. By getting this input at an early stage, you will ensure that the inputs and outputs of the review process make use of best practice and are more likely to be realisable.

1. **Aim and Content of Course Evaluation Document:** The aim of the CED, which should be no more than fifteen pages in length, is to provide the Review Panel with a reflective and self-evaluative, as opposed to descriptive, analysis of the course. The development of a SWOT analysis – identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the course – has been found to be highly valuable and can be included in the evidence set (see 5 below). Where possible draw upon existing data, and avoid unnecessary duplication.

The CED should not be a lengthy document. Keep it succinct and remember that the CED acts as the basis for a dialogue between you and the Review Panel.

A CED is an evidence-based reflection on what is believed to be working well in the course(s) and the aspects where there is scope for development and improvement.

A CED should be:

* + **full and frank**, not attempting to hide problems
  + **balanced**, not forgetting to cover strengths
  + **developmental**, offering thoughts on how to improve what you do
  + **inclusive**, covering all aspects of the course (including placements/work-based learning (see [QA6](https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/qa6-placement-learning/)), collaborative provision (see [QA20](https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/qa20-collaborative-provision/)), exchanges/study abroad (see [QA37](https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/qa37-student-exchange-arrangements/)), use of e-learning and/or distance learning (see [QA41](https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/qa41-distance-learning-provision/)) and all students (including part-time students, mature students, distance learners, disabled students and international students)
  + **evaluative** the emphasis should be on your evaluation of how effective and successful you believe the various aspects of the course to be. You are NOT expected to provide a detailed description of what you do, although some background information may be necessary to set the scene. The evaluation may include asking yourself the following types of questions:
    - what evidence do we have that this particular approach (e.g. teaching or assessment method, use of e-learning, placement provision, exchange provision) is of benefit to the student learning experience?
    - how do we know that this is the best approach - what is the benefit of this approach in preference to other approaches?
    - are changes necessary/desirable? Why is the proposed new approach preferable and how do we know this is the best approach for this course? What support might be necessary for staff and students to ensure a new approach is successful?

These questions are not intended as an exhaustive list but may facilitate your reflection.

Where appropriate, please outline any action or support you believe to be required at School, Faculty, and/or University level, for example, identifying additional academic staff development needs to support a new area of practice or adoption of e-learning.

5 Evidence: The CED should be supported by an evidence base. This should, where possible, draw upon existing data, and avoid unnecessary duplication. The evidence base will usually include:

* course specifications including up-to-date course descriptions
* previous annual monitoring reports
* trend analysis of statistical data on progression and assessment
* reports from professional or regulatory accrediting bodies
* External Examiners’ reports\*
* Student survey data including National Student Survey, UK Engagement Survey etc where applicable and programme evaluation data;
* feedback from students (e.g. SSLC minutes, summary reports of on-line unit and course feedback)
* previous DSR report and action taken in response
* unit descriptions (where appropriate);
* information made available to students, such as course handbooks.

\* it is suggested that a minimum of three years’ data be provided in the evidence base.

The aim is not merely to illustrate the opinions given in the CED but to provide views on the course from a variety of perspectives such as:

* staff opinion
* student opinion representative of the diverse student body
* External Examiners’ opinions
* the opinion of recent employers of students graduating from the course(s)
* views expressed by professional institutions as a result of the accreditation process.

(Note that TQA/subject review scores are no longer current indicators of quality. Reference should not therefore be made to these in the evidence base (including course specifications).

5 **Timing and Circulation:** The draft CED should be submitted to the Head of Department/School and the Department/School Learning Teaching and Quality Committee for comment before the approved version and supporting evidence-base is forwarded to the Assistant Registrar in the Faculty/School for the DSR panel. The CED needs to be available to members of the Review Panel at least three weeks in advance of the DSR meeting. The Assistant Registrar in the Faculty/School will assist you in planning submission deadlines and the timing of the event in consideration of the schedule of meeting dates and deadlines.

**6 Further Advice:** Your first port of call for advice regarding DSRs is the Assistant Registrar. In the Faculty/School. Where necessary, the Assistant Registrar may obtain further advice on the procedure for DSRs and related documentation from the Quality Enhancement Officer in the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office.

Academic Registry

September 2023

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**Degree Scheme Review**

**Course Evaluation Document[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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| **1. COURSE(S)** |
| The name of the course(s) within the scope of the review: the award and mode of study (e.g. part-time, distance learning).  Please attach the course specification for this course(s). |
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| **2. Process** |
| Please outline briefly the process of consultation which has been followed to produce the Course Evaluation Document (CED). |
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For each of the following sections please structure your response as follows:

* + background details – a concise descriptive overview
  + evaluation using evidence from all relevant sources and reference points;
  + reflection on the points raised in the evaluation in order to highlight the issues for development and further discussion.

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| **3. Context** |
| Please outline briefly the context in which the course is offered noting how it relates to the mission and strategy of the Department/School and University. What particular strengths and characteristics define the course? The context might include reference to:   * meeting international, national, regional or local needs * preparing students for employment, further study, or the first stage of professional practice * widening access to education and employment.   Please discuss any issues regarding recruitment and admission that arise from your evaluation of statistics. |
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| **4. Educational Aims** |
| Please provide a statement of the educational aims of the course. |
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| **5. Learning Outcomes** |
| How do you know that intended learning outcomes remain relevant? Are learning outcomes regularly updated? You may want to refer to:   * the aims, context and strengths outlined in Section 2 above. * external reference points, e.g. relevant [subject benchmark statements](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements), [Sector Recognised Standards](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/securing-student-success-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/)   How are staff, students and External Examiners made aware of the intended learning outcomes? |
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| **6. Curriculum** |
| How do you ensure that the structure and content of the course are designed and developed to permit achievement of the learning outcomes? You may want to refer to:   * the levels and modes of study * coherence, flexibility and the extent of student choice * current research and scholarship in the discipline * encouragement of self-reflective lifelong learning   When considering the above, you should take into account:   * any relevant [subject benchmark statements](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements) * feedback from External Examiners and from students * the interests of external stakeholders, including employers and where appropriate, the role and requirements of a professional body |
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| **7. Learning Opportunities** (including learning and teaching strategies, COURSE delivery, progression, student support, and learning resources) |
| Please evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies employed on the courses for providing all students with good learning opportunities to support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.  Evaluate how you design and develop teaching and learning methods for a diverse student body and how you know whether these methods are effective. You may want to refer to:   * developments/good practice/innovation in teaching and learning * providing students with appropriate opportunities for academic and intellectual progression * providing students with opportunities to achieve the intended learning outcomes * consideration of the diverse needs of learners (including part-time students, mature students, international students and disabled students) in order to provide an inclusive and supportive learning and teaching environment; * the research, scholarship, practice and professional activity of staff * communication of course information * the student learning experience e.g.: study materials, workload, engagement, academic support, * student feedback * where appropriate, use of e-learning * key issues and areas of good practice relating to placements/work-based learning/study abroad/exchanges and their availability.   Tell us how you maintain and enhance the quality of teaching. You may want to refer to:   * staff development * peer review * integration of part-time and, where relevant, external staff * team teaching * induction, development and mentoring of new staff * links with Advance HE * links with any relevant professional and statutory bodies * responses to student feedback. |
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| **8. Assessment** |
| How do you ensure that the design and development of assessment methods are inclusive of a diverse student body and enable students to demonstrate all of the intended learning outcomes at the appropriate level of study? You may want to refer to:   * criteria that enable internal and external examiners to distinguish between different categories of student achievement * the setting, marking and moderation of work * the return of student work with feedback * opportunities for formative assessment in order to develop students’ abilities * assessment of a range of skills: cognitive, subject specific, professional, transferable * feedback from students and external examiners. |
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| **9. Quality and Standards** |
| Please evaluate the effectiveness of your procedures for maintaining and enhancing the quality of your provision, and evaluate the security of your academic standards. You may want to refer to adherence to University quality frameworks e.g. the [Quality Assurance Code of Practice](https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/quality-assurance-code-of-practice/), the university assessment regulations.  You should explain how you make sure that the standards achieved by successful students meet the minimum expectations of the award, as measured against relevant [subject benchmark statements](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements) and the [Sector Recognised Standards](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/securing-student-success-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/).  You should also look at indicators for quality and standards such as:   * management information on student admission, retention, progression and employability * feedback from students and staff * comments from external examiners * reports from professional accrediting bodies * outcomes of annual monitoring. |
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| **10. THE FUTURE** |
| * Identify opportunities for development e.g. student recruitment, curriculum, staff changes collaboration * Evaluate the potential risks to quality of course provision over the next five year period, for example: changes in professional requirements, changes in student expectations, staff changes, capacity issues and competition |
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1. This template is for use in Degree Scheme Reviews conducted under the process set down in QA13 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)