Quality Assurance Code of Practice

Annual Monitoring of Units and Programmes

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1. This QA statement relates to the annual monitoring of units and programmes for all taught programmes of study leading to an award of the University of Bath. This QA statement also applies to programmes involving collaborative provision and student exchange. (see QA20 and QA37).

1.2. Annual monitoring is a key component of the University’s mechanisms for monitoring and review of its provision. It draws upon the related processes of external examining (QA12), input from Staff/Student Liaison Committees (QA48), as well as the views of professional or regulatory accrediting bodies (QA8). Annual monitoring reports for programmes feed into the periodic review of programmes, forming part of the evidence base for Degree Scheme Review (QA13).

2. Principles

2.1. The University is committed to the regular evaluation of its units and programmes in order to:
- maintain the quality and validity of units and programmes;
- facilitate continuous enhancement of provision to reflect developments in the sector, institution and discipline;
- record the quality and standards of its provision.

2.2. The University recognises that the process of evaluation and enhancement of units and programmes is iterative and happens through a range of informal and formal mechanisms. Annual monitoring provides Departments/School/the Learning Partnerships Office (LPO) with a defined opportunity to take a holistic view of both the unit/programme(s) and the environment in which learning and teaching occurs, drawing together evidence and observations from a range on internal and external sources, in order to identify actions to be taken and report on progress being made.

2.3. Annual monitoring is an academic process underpinned by peer review and informed student involvement.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. The Head of Department/School/LPO is responsible for ensuring that annual monitoring of units and programmes is undertaken and that the actions identified are completed.

3.2. The Unit Convenor is responsible for undertaking annual monitoring of the unit(s) for which s/he is responsible, and for co-ordinating the actions that are identified.
3.3. The Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring that annual monitoring is undertaken for each unit for which the Department/School/LPO is responsible; for ensuring feedback via Moodle on Online Unit Evaluation outcomes and unit convenors’ responses; for undertaking annual monitoring of the programme(s) for which s/he is responsible; and for co-ordinating the actions that are identified.

3.4. Link Academic Advisers are responsible for commenting upon annual monitoring reports for programmes produced by partner organisations involved in collaborative provision (see QA20).

3.5. Within Faculties, departmental Learning Teaching and Quality Committees are responsible for the timely delivery and initial review of annual monitoring reports for programmes (including NSS action plans, External Examiners’ reports and replies to External Examiners) prior to their consideration by the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee.

3.6. Faculty/School Learning, Teaching & Quality Committees are responsible for detailed consideration of annual monitoring reports for programmes received from departmental Learning Teaching and Quality Committees (where applicable) and making a summary report to the University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (ULTQC).

3.7. ULTQC is responsible for the consideration of institutional issues arising from summary annual monitoring reports for programmes and for the consideration of action plans and actions taken by Departments/School/the LPO in relation to survey data, such as the National Student Survey and internal university student surveys.

3.8. Assistant Registrars in the Faculties/School (or equivalents) are the first port of call for advice on the production and submission of annual monitoring reports for programmes.

3.9. The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office is responsible for providing:
- advice to Assistant Registrars in the Faculties/School (or equivalent) on the process of and documentation for annual monitoring;
- advice to Departments/School on the online tools for unit and programme evaluation;
- National Student Survey, the HEA’s Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and internal university student survey data to support annual monitoring;
- producing an overview annual monitoring report on collaborative provision for presentation to ULTQC.

3.10. The Academic Registry is responsible for the provision of student data to support annual monitoring and for responding to queries arising from that data.

4. Annual Monitoring of Units

4.1. The purpose of annual monitoring of units is to maintain and enhance the quality of units. Annual monitoring encompasses two elements:
- evaluation of the unit (e.g. unit aims, learning outcomes, teaching modes, unit content and structure and assessment practice, notably formative assessment (see QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback, paragraph 5.6) as well as the environment in which learning and teaching occurs (e.g. teaching space, support services and staff development issues);
- recording that evaluation.

4.2. Unit convenors are responsible for undertaking monitoring of the unit(s) for which they are responsible at the end of the academic session. The process of evaluation is common to monitoring of all units and should encompass the following:
• reflection on the actions taken since last year to support enhancement and improvement, and evaluation of the effectiveness of those actions;
• evaluation of the effectiveness of formative assessment opportunities (see QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback paragraph 5.6);
• evaluation of feedback from staff, students including online unit evaluations, External Examiners, formative and summative assessment results;
• identification of areas for improvement and enhancement and planning of appropriate action to be taken as a result.

4.3 It is open to the Department/School/Learning Teaching and Quality Committee to decide how the outcomes of this monitoring should most appropriately be recorded. This may be through a series of separate written reports for each unit; through the minutes of discussion of the units in the appropriate programme/teaching committee (or equivalent) or the Board of Examiners for Units; or through a summary report that forms an appendix to the annual monitoring report for the programme. Whichever method is deemed most appropriate, the core elements that should be recorded are:

• the names of the units being evaluated;
• a note of actions taken since the previous year;
• formative assessment methods (not specified in the unit description)
• a summary of the unit convenor’s evaluation highlighting issues to be addressed, and identifying aspects of good practice to be shared across the University;
• a note of actions planned for the coming year.

4.4 Where a unit is offered in more than one cycle per year, the process of ongoing evaluation and enhancement will necessarily be undertaken in stages aligned with the cycles in which the unit is offered. However, the formal monitoring of units and recording of that monitoring should still be undertaken on an annual basis, with appropriate attention being given in the resulting report to any differences between cycles.
4.5 Unit convenors may wish to involve staff external to the Department/School/LPO in the process of monitoring. This would be particularly appropriate where the unit is taken by students from other Departments/School/LPO.

4.6 Departments are expected to undertake unit evaluation using the University’s online tool and incorporating agreed core common questions [http://www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/surveys/unitevaluation/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/surveys/unitevaluation/). The evaluation of student feedback is normally undertaken by the unit convenor. A summary of the outcomes of unit evaluation and unit convenors’ feedback (strengths identified, areas for development, proposed actions) should always be fed back to students in a timely manner via Moodle.

5. **Annual monitoring of programmes**

5.1 The purpose of annual monitoring of programmes is to maintain and enhance the quality and standards of programmes. Annual monitoring draws upon a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence to support the identification of good practice, success and areas for improvement in relation to the programme (e.g. aims, learning outcomes, teaching modes, programme evaluation, unit content and structure, assessment practice, placements and exchanges) as well as the environment in which learning and teaching occurs (e.g. teaching space, support services and staff development).

5.2 Directors of Studies are responsible for compiling an annual monitoring report. An annual monitoring report may relate to a single programme or a group of inter-related or cognate programmes. For programmes involving collaborative partners, a report should be completed by each partner for each of the programmes they deliver.

5.3 The annual monitoring report for programmes should encompass:

**Report**

A. **Brief** introductory reflective statement of the year under review.

B. Update on progress with the action list from the previous report.

C. Evaluative summary of significant issues arising from:
   - vital statistics data (i.e. demand, recruitment, retention, progression, classifications and first destinations);
   - External Examiner feedback;
   - student feedback (SSLC annual report, programme and unit evaluations, survey data, including National Student Survey);
   - staff feedback (e.g. annual monitoring of units, minutes of the relevant programme/teaching committee or equivalent);
   - operation of placements and student exchange arrangements during the year;
   - feedback relating to improving advice on careers education and guidance provided within the programme;
   - other feedback e.g. any issues raised in meeting the needs of particular groups of students (including disabled students), recommendations from professional accrediting bodies, employers, placement providers and action taken or proposed to be taken in response to each issue.

D. Evaluative summary of significant positive feedback, good practice and success in relation to the programme(s).

E. Consideration of any special themes set at University or Faculty/School/LPO-level (see 5.6 below).
F. Consolidated action list: This should include any outstanding actions referred to in Sections B and C of the Report.

Appendices to the Report

i. Vital statistics report (where available)
ii. External Examiners’ report(s) and Departmental response(s)
iii. List, in summary form, of major and intermediate changes to programme and the core units comprising the programme since last Degree Scheme Review or Programme Approval. This is to assist Faculty/School/Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees to monitor the impact of incremental changes (see 6.3).

5.4 The Academic Registry is responsible for providing statistical data relating to the admission, retention, degree classification and first destinations of students. For undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, this information is provided via a central website to assist Directors of Studies in compiling annual monitoring reports (see http://www.bath.ac.uk/internal/mgmtinfo/dos/).

5.5 The University considers student retention rates of less than 90% in the first year of an undergraduate programme to be a marker of concern, except for programmes overseen by the LPO where the marker for concern is a retention rate of less that 80%. In such instances, Directors of Studies are expected to include within their reports an evaluation of the reasons for the lower retention rate, identifying the actions that are being taken in response.

5.6 ULTQC may indicate a theme to be addressed in annual monitoring reports for programmes. This theme will usually relate to an emerging area of strategic or institutional interest (e.g. feedback to students). Similarly, Faculty/School Learning, Teaching & Quality Committees may wish from time to time to indicate additional themes of Faculty/School significance for consideration.

5.7 A significant element of annual monitoring of programmes is the gathering and evaluation of feedback from students. Departments/School Learning Teaching and Quality Committees are expected to ensure that arrangements are made for the collection of student opinion on their programme of study, including that from Programme Evaluation and Staff Student Liaison Committees (see QA48 for information on the SSLC annual summary that can be utilised in annual monitoring reports). These arrangements should ensure that all students are encouraged to provide feedback on their learning experiences in ways that enable them to express their views freely, and that enable the widest range of students to engage, including part-time students, distance learners, students in partner organisations and those with a disability. It is expected that Departments/School/LPO will engage with students, including the involvement of the departmental or programme level SSLC, when formulating action plans in response to student survey data. Departments/School/LPO should also ensure that feedback is provided to students on actions taken in response to student feedback.

5.8 The Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Office coordinates an annual Programme Evaluation Survey in conjunction with Directors of Studies incorporating a common set of core questions. (see http://www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/surveys/ProgrammeEvaluation/index.php). This survey has been developed to meet the differing needs of distinct cohorts of students, such as final year undergraduates, face-to-face and distance-learning postgraduate taught programmes.
5.9 The annual monitoring report, including those for relevant LPO programmes, should be considered
- within the School/LPO or its partner organisation, by the programme/teaching committee (or equivalent);
- by the departmental Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee, including confirmation that all required sections have been completed and that adequate action plans have been put in place with timelines and clearly attributed responsibilities;
- subsequently by the Faculty/School Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Department/School/LPO to ensure that the action plan is implemented.

5.10 Departments/School/LPO may wish to provide copies of annual monitoring reports to the relevant External Examiners for information; and are strongly encouraged to share the key findings of annual monitoring reports with student representatives.

6. Scrutiny of Annual Monitoring Reports for Programmes

6.1 The aim of undertaking scrutiny of annual monitoring reports for programmes at Faculty/School and institutional level is to:
- ensure accountability for action plans and identify issues of concern;
- incorporate an element of peer review into the annual monitoring process;
- offer an opportunity for wider themes to be highlighted at institutional level;
- promote enhancement and to disseminate good practice across the University.

6.2 For programmes delivered by collaborative partners, the Link Academic Adviser should be invited to comment upon the annual monitoring report prior to its consideration by the Faculty/School Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee.

6.3 The Faculty/School Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee is responsible for considering the annual monitoring report in detail, assuring itself that the report covers all required areas and that the action plan is both specific and sufficient to the purpose of ensuring that the process results in quality enhancement. The Faculty/School Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee is also responsible for:
- ensuring that good practice identified is shared across the Faculty/School/LPO
- assuring itself that the quality of the action plan is appropriate;
- monitoring implementation of the action plan;
- ensuring that the overall focus and coherence of the programme has been maintained in the light of any incremental changes to the programme since the last Degree Scheme Review or the Programme Approval;
- ensuring that any Faculty/School-level issues are addressed;
- assuring itself that each programme is covered by an annual monitoring report.

Where necessary the Faculty/School Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee may refer a report back to the relevant Director of Studies for further work.

The Faculty/School Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee is responsible for drawing to the attention of the ULTQC:
- areas of good practice to be shared across the institution;
- principal themes arising, including any issues requiring consideration at institutional level or by a professional service e.g. Student Services, Careers Service;
- programmes where there are particular issues for concern and the actions that are being taken in response (including a retention rate for the first year of undergraduate programmes of less than 90% or less than 80% in the LPO);
- particularly critical External Examiners’ reports;
particularly poor student feedback; or instances of non-submission of an annual monitoring report); 
sections of annual monitoring reports relating to institutional student survey data and the action plans and actions taken by Departments/the School in relation to survey data, such as the National Student Survey and internal university student surveys.

A template is available for reporting purposes (QA51 form 5).

6.6 ULTQC will consider reports from Faculty/School Learning, Teaching & Quality Committees alongside institutional management information on student retention and progression, in order to:
- evaluate the effectiveness of the annual monitoring process;
- address any issues of institutional-level significance that arise, referring matters to relevant University officers, committees and services as appropriate;
- disseminate aspects of good practice;
- monitor student progression and retention trends;
- assure itself that where issues of concern have been raised with regard to particular programmes, that these issues are being appropriately addressed.

6.7 In accordance with QA20 Collaborative Provision, ULTQC will monitor new collaborative arrangements through the receipt of annual monitoring reports after the first year of a collaborative programme.
## Statement Details

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<th>Issue Version:</th>
<th>2.5</th>
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<td>Date:</td>
<td>1st August 2014</td>
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### Antecedents:

- **Quality Assurance Committee**
  - 15th November 1999, Minute 139b
  - 8th May 2000, Minute 166
  - 5th June 2006, Minute 623 (1)
  - 1st July 2008, Minute 857 (5) (8).
  - 3rd July 2009, Minute 976 (7)
  - 13th July 2010, Minute 1098 (8)

- **University Learning Teaching and Quality Committee**
  - 13 July 2011, Minute 121
  - 27 September 2011, Minute 140
  - 31 May 2012, Minute 240
  - 10 July 2012 Minute 279
  - 9 July 2013 Minute 428
  - 8 July 2014 Minute 552

- **Senate**
  - 11th December 1991 Minute 8666
  - 14th June 2006, Minute 12387

- **Academic Studies Committee**
  - 19th May 1992, Minute 50
  - 23rd June 1992, Minute 62
  - 5th November 1992, Minute 75(iii)
  - 3rd December 1992, Minute 94
  - 11th February 1993, Minute 103

- **QA27 Undergraduate Retention Rates**
  - Version 1.1

- **QA36 Quality Management in Teaching - Student Feedback and Evaluation of Programmes**
  - Version 1.2

- **Report of the Teaching Efficiencies Working Group**

- **Registrar’s Office document at October 1994**

### Related Documentation:

- QAA Quality Code [Chapter A4](#): Programme Approval and Review:

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