

University of Aberdeen ITR

Critical Analysis (CA)

Headings to be addressed
&
Guidance for completion

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1. SCHOOL CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

- Development of the Critical Analysis
- Key features of the School's content and mission, including any areas of teaching and learning practices specific to the School
- Composition and key trends in the School's student population, including typical routes into and through the School, demographics, and outcomes
- Summary of the School's follow up to previous ITR

2. ENHANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Examples of positive practice and particular strengths of the School
- Approaches to identifying, sharing, and extending good practice within the School and beyond
- Engaging and supporting staff

3. CHALLENGES TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Potential areas identified for improvement
- An action plan outlining how the School intends to handle them. Further discussion to this end can also take place during the ITR

4. FUTURE PLANS

- Identified areas of development over the course of the next five years
- Intended new course or programme developments
- Intended partnership proposals

Guidance for Completion of the Critical Analysis

The **Critical Analysis (CA)** should be *evidence-based, including specific examples throughout*, and structured around the headings above. Its preparation should involve staff and students, and Schools should refer to their School Action Plans and planning metrics. Annual Course and Programme Reviews (ACR and APR), External Examiner Reports (EER), PSRB reviews and reports where applicable should all be drawn upon to inform the creation of the CA.

Internal Teaching Review covers **all credit-bearing provision**: i.e. taught undergraduate provision, taught postgraduate provision, and the training and supervision arrangements for research students, online, on campus and at branch campuses. Please ensure the CA refers to matters relevant to all areas of activity as appropriate.

The CA should identify:

- How it was prepared and approved
- How students were involved and the impact of that student engagement
- Brief background information about the size and scale of the School
- The School's strategic priorities and their relation to the overarching institutional education strategy

The CA should provide information about the contextualisation of the School, to include: areas where the School considers it demonstrates good practice, areas prioritised for development and/or enhancement, and areas that continue to present a challenge. This information should be summarised in the opening section of the Critical Analysis and detailed further in subsequent sections as appropriate. The School should refer to the data it uses in its School planning process in identifying its strengths and challenges.

As ITR is contextualised, it is understood that the themes explored in each review will reflect the strategy, priorities, strengths, and challenges of the School concerned. Schools are expected to address each of the 4 sections and all subheadings of the CA, but it is recognised that the volume and focus of the content provided by each School will vary. It is generally recommended that the CA should be no longer than **25 pages (approximately 11,000-12,000 words)**, excluding appendices.

In the context of each of the headings, the CA should indicate:

- What is distinctive and what is typical about the School
- What the key areas of strength and challenge are
- How the School has evaluated its policy and practice
- How the school intends to build on good practice or address areas for development
- Consideration of both UG and PG (taught and research) provision.
- Consideration of Collaborative, Online and Transnational Education (TNE) provision

NB: this should be particular to the School, and not just evidence of School adherence to expected institutional practice.

Be open and honest. Do not be afraid to discuss aspects of concern. The spirit of ITR is intended to be constructive, not punitive or judgmental, and the exercise is intended to contribute to enhancement of teaching and learning across the University as a whole.

Supporting Documentation

Wherever possible please provide (as hyperlinks or appendices) documentation in support of your critical analysis reflections. It is expected that the following documentation would be submitted to support the CA as a minimum. Please note, the ITR Panel reserves the right to request additional documentation expected of Schools, or alluded to in School submissions, at any time.

- Details of School/Discipline organisation, management, and administration (including collaborative arrangements). Please include an organogram and list of key post holders including Disability Coordinator, Communications Champion etc.
- Examples of course and programme information provided to student e.g. course and programme handbooks, mapping of any School marking scales to CGS, Assessment and Feedback Guidance, standard MyAberdeen templates used within the School etc.
- In addition to School Education Committees and Staff-student Liaison Committees already on SharePoint, please include membership and remits of any School/Discipline committees concerned with teaching, learning and assessment activities, including Programme Advisory Boards (or equivalents).
- Other documentation (e.g. minutes, agendas, reports) relating to operation or review of courses and programmes (e.g. minutes of meetings about the School's programme portfolio, agendas of School Away Days of Teaching and Learning Fora etc).

CRITICAL ANALYSIS: GUIDANCE ON HOW TO APPROACH EACH HEADING

1. SCHOOL CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

- **Development of the Critical Analysis. Consider:**
 - Who was involved in the process?
 - How was consultation and feedback managed?
 - How were students engaged in the development of the document?
- **Key features of the School's content and mission, including any areas of teaching and learning practices specific to the School. Consider:**
 - The School's key aims, how the School Plan maps with institutional priorities and activities
 - The range of provision under review

- Staffing matters, such as a summary of staff cohort, FTEs and SSR
- Significant changes since the last review e.g. restructuring, physical resources
- Specific examples of teaching and learning unique to the School, or those which are particularly challenging or successful
- **Composition and key trends in the School's student population, including typical routes into and through the School, demographics, and outcomes. Consider:**
 - Student numbers throughout the period since the last ITR (UG, PGT, PGR)
 - Modes of engagement (on campus, online, blended delivery, those on collaborative programmes)
 - Students who begin study through articulation routes and related targets
 - Diversity of the student population, including any specific enhancements in this area or areas for future focus
- **Summary of the School's follow up to previous ITR. Consider:**
 - What were the key actions identified in the previous review?
 - How did the School address these actions?
 - What was the Quality Assurance Committee response to these actions?

2. ENHANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- **Examples of positive practice and particular strengths of the School. Consider:**
 - Evidenced success in relation to curriculum design and development, teaching delivery and assessment and feedback
 - Aspects of provision that are particularly successful and or worthy of wider dissemination as examples of good/best practice, where the evidence supports this
- **Approaches to identifying, sharing, and extending good practice within the School and beyond. Consider:**
 - Feedback on, evaluation of, and impact of activities and the mechanisms used to share good practice across the School
 - The School's contribution to institutional projects and opportunities e.g. Annual Symposia, LTEP activities and educational scholarship networks, and the impact thereof
 - The School's involvement to external, sector- wide enhancement activity e.g. QAA annual conferences, QAA National Enhancement Themes and Subject Networks, and the impact thereof
- **Approaches to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the pedagogic provision and wider within the School. Consider:**
 - Evidenced progress of and involvement with equality and diversity initiatives, such as Decolonising the Curriculum or the Anti-Racist Curriculum
 - Consideration of the closing of the awarding gaps across the School's provision
 - Support for students and staff in relation to protected characteristics, including disability provision
- **Engaging and supporting staff. Consider:**
 - School-based probationer and early career development support, ongoing support, and development during academic careers
 - Support and training for tutors and PGRs who teach
 - Extent of engagement with CAD annual programme of activity; support for staff to undertake HEA fellowships and the PG certificate in Higher Education in Learning and Teaching

3. CHALLENGES TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

- **Potential areas identified for improvement. Consider:**
 - Areas in which the School would appreciate further guidance or opportunity for enhancement

- How these could be tackled: what could the School/institution do to facilitate enhancements in these areas?
- The effectiveness of aligning with Aberdeen 2040 and the University's identified Graduate Attributes

- **An action plan outlining how the School intends to handle them. Further discussion to this end can also take place during the ITR. Consider:**
 - The key areas for improvement and enhancement
 - The actions identified to promote effective changes
 - The resulting impact on resource within the School, in addition to any wider institutional impact

4. FUTURE PLANS

- **Identified areas of development over the course of the next five years, including new course or programme developments and intended partnership proposals. Consider:**
 - The Action Plan created in Item 3 above, and its relation to the existing future plans of the School
 - Any areas of success which are earmarked for further development
 - The University's institutional strategic plan (Aberdeen 2040) and how the School might align its own plans with those of the wider institution
 - What trends exist within the current student population which may shape the School's future plans
 - The impact of student feedback on the plans of the School