UK Quality Code 2024: Institutional Mapping

Principle 5: Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision

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PRINCIPLE 5: MONITORING, EVALUATING AND ENHANCING PROVISION

Introduction
The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) articulates the principles of UK higher education for securing academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality. The Quality Code is a sector-led reference point which can be used in a range of flexible ways. It enables providers to evaluate their policies and practices with reference to Sector-Agreed Principles and it aligns with key international reference points including the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The Quality Code is comprised of two key elements: (i) sector-agreed principles; and (ii) key practices. Sector-agreed principles identify the features that are fundamental to securing academic standards and offering a high-quality student learning experience. Key practices set out how a provider can demonstrate they are adhering to the sector-agreed principles. There are 12 principles and each has a set of key practices which providers can follow to demonstrate how they are adhering to that principle.

Under the theme, evaluating quality and standards, **Principle 5: Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision** outlines the key practices in relation to monitoring and review of provision, including continued enhancement of quality. In doing so, the Quality Code sets out the following: *Providers regularly monitor and review their provision to secure academic standards and enhance quality. Deliberate steps are taken to engage and involve students, staff and external expertise in monitoring and evaluation activity. The outcomes and impact of these activities are considered at provider level to drive reflection and enhancement across the provider.*

In undertaking this mapping to the UK Quality Code, a number of stakeholders were consulted across the University to ensure that the information presented is as accurate and up-to-date as possible. Additionally, it should be noted that the information contained within each section of the mapping is current as at time of publication. Further updates to the UK Quality Code Mapping will follow on an annual basis and will be overseen by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).

Key Practices

Key Practices	University Commentary	Supporting Documentation
(a) Providers agree strategic principles for monitoring and evaluation to ensure processes are applied systematically, operated consistently and appropriate to their operational context.	The University's Academic Quality Handbook (AQH) includes all relevant strategic and operational information relating to the monitoring and evaluation of education provision. The Handbook provides details of the University's policies and procedures for Annual Course and Programme Review, Internal Teaching Review and our processes for obtaining student feedback. All courses and programmes are monitored annually through the University's Annual Course and Programme Review procedures. These procedures draw upon a range of feedback to inform the process of review including student feedback through the Course Feedback and Reflection Forms, Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings, feedback from External Examiners, Programme Advisory Boards and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies together with analysis of course data and feedback from the course delivery team and input from class representatives. While Schools manage the Annual Course Review process reviewing these internally, all forms are submitted to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) by way of the Quality and Planning Sharepoint site. Annual Programme Reviews (APRs) are submitted by Schools to QAC and are discussed with Schools with any issues being referred to relevant committees for consideration, as appropriate. This is also a way of identifying and sharing good practice. The University's Annual Course and Programme Review places an emphasis on enhancement, development, and improvement. These aspects are integral to the processes, ensuring that the University is consistently improving, based on feedback received and perceptions of what is working and what is not. A periodic Internal Teaching Review (ITR) process is used to review all teaching-related activities at a School / Discipline level in line with the requirements of the QAA (Scotland) Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework. The review process seeks to (i) provide assurance regarding quality and standards of provision; (ii) promote dialogue in areas where quality could be improved; (iii) identify good practice; (iv) encourage and support critical reflection on current practice; and (v) encourage and support engagement with relevant professional services. In preparation for the ITR, Schools submit an evidence-based critical analysis and curriculum map(s).	Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (Webpage) Academic Quality Handbook (Webpage) Annual Course & Programme Review (Webpage) Class Representation (Webpage) Course Feedback & Reflection Form (Webpage) Enhancement Themes (Webpage) Good Practice (Webpage) Graduate Outcomes (Webpage) Internal Teaching Review (Webpage) Monitoring & Review (Webpage) New to UoA Survey (Webpage) NSS (Webpage) Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (Webpage) Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (Webpage) Quality Assurance Committee (Webpage) Survey Season (Webpage) Undergraduate Experience Survey (Webpage)

The ITR visit by a panel including External Subject Specialist(s) follows up on key themes identified from the School documentation. Within the ITR, a pedagogic partnership session between staff and students assists with the development of a School action plan identifying actions for improvement and enhancement of provision. These sessions also provide a valuable opportunity to share good practice more widely throughout the School or a particular discipline. Following which, a report of the ITR is produced and the School is required to submit to QAC annually a follow-up report detailing progress in regard to the action plan. ITR reports are discussed and approved by QAC, and additionally a dedicated meeting of the QAC considers all ITR follow-up reports to ensure consistency in approach across all Schools and institutional oversight. These also serves as opportunities to identify and share good practice more across the Institution.

Student feedback is also a key component of the University's processes of monitoring and evaluation. The University uses Course Feedback and Reflection Forms to seek views from students on what they have liked about the course and what they have not liked together with areas of good practice. This process provides valuable feedback to course coordinators to inform review of their course and to identify any changes requiring to be made for the next year. The feedback from this process informs the Annual Course and Programme Review process.

An academic *Survey Season* is run in the second term, where students are given the opportunity to provide feedback on academic related matters over a specific period of time. *Survey Season* comprises of the following surveys:
- National Student Survey (NSS): *final year UG students*
- Undergraduate Experience Survey (UES): *UG students not eligible to complete NSS*
- Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)
- Postgraduate Research Survey (PRES)

These surveys allow the University to enhance and improve their services based on the feedback provide by students.

In terms of wider student feedback, the Aberdeen Student Experience and the New to UoA Surveys are used to gauge feedback on non-academic experience,

whilst the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and NSS are used to gauge student feedback on the student's academic experience. The surveys allow the University to enhance and improve their services based on the feedback provided. This is disseminated to students by means of 'You Said: We Did' messaging, which helps to close the feedback loop.

The University places strong emphasis on the involvement of students on committees and in decision making. Each School has a Students' Union elected School Convener who is the lead student representative for each School. They work closely with the elected class representatives to feed any concerns about courses and programmes to the School. The School Convener (or other student representative) attends School-level committees (e.g. School Education Committee) where they can contribute to discussions around future courses and programmes, policy matters, feedback (e.g. NSS results) and other matters. At a University level, Students' Union Representatives are also full members of all Education committees including the University Education Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee along with Senate which is the University's main academic decision-making body.

Class representation also plays a role in evaluation, as class representatives are invited to formal Staff-Student Liaison Committees to raise course, programme, discipline or School-level issues. These issues are also fed into the annual monitoring processes.

The University has engaged actively with the QAA's Enhancement Themes and is continuing to do so with Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP). The University utilises the strategic framework this provides to enhance our educational provision. The University has continued the good practice developed with the Enhancement Themes despite the conclusion of the initiative, and continues to utilise these practices for engagement with STEP. The University is heavily involved in the work of the STEP, participating as a partner in one of the enhancement projects, *the Regional Tertiary Engagement Network*. The work in relation to this project is ongoing with regional partners to look at collaboration in the North East of Scotland.

All Schools and Professional Services Directorates develop annual plans which are reviewed centrally by the Senior Management Team and inform

	budget setting and planning. Within these, Schools and Directorates are required to comment on their strategic priorities relating to Education and how these align with, and report progress made towards Education-related performance indicators. These plans also seek comment on alignment to the Aberdeen 2040 Strategic themes.	
(b) The methods for monitoring and evaluation activity are documented to clarify their aims, objectives, intended actions and targets. They are explicit about how they will be conducted, the nature of evidence (data) to be considered and the form of reporting, along with key indicators of success.	The University makes extensive use of quantitative and qualitative data (e.g. survey outcomes, assessment data and key performance indicators) to inform decision making and support its evaluation. The University uses data to provide an evidence base to inform institutional and School level decision making. As part of an ongoing project to enhance access to data, the University has invested in a business intelligence platform, Microsoft PowerBI, which allows Schools to access data pertinent to their own School and provides data on areas such as student population, student admission applications, research income, research applications and awards, Research Excellence Framework (REF) results, Graduate Outcomes results, National Student Survey (NSS) results, and degree classifications data. Further data will be added to this platform in the next phases of the project. The University uses survey data to inform decision making and enhancement to the student experience. Such survey information includes National Student Survey data, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey. More ad hoc surveys are also used to ascertain feedback on particular services or specific topics. The University's Data Protection Policy outlines responsibilities in regard to the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Retention policies ensure the appropriate management of data and ensure it is disposed of appropriately when no longer required. Staff including External Examiners are trained on how to deal with potentially sensitive or confidential information. Information is provided in induction materials pertaining to the handling of data. These various metrics are used by University and School Committees to provide an evidence base to support monitoring and evaluation and to inform decision making. Such information is also used as part of the Institutional	Annual Course & Programme Review (Webpage) Data & Business Intelligence Hub (Webpage) Data Protection (Webpage) Internal Teaching Review (ITR) (Webpage) Monitoring & Review (Webpage)

	Planning Process through use of key performance indicators to enable monitoring of progress towards objectives. Such metrics are also used in our processes for monitoring and review of teaching and learning: our Annual Course (ACR) and Programme Review (APR) processes and our Internal Teaching Review (ITR) process. In ACR and APR, analysis of course and programme data is an important component of the process. Similarly, within the ITR process, an action plan is identified with key performance indicators identified as to how the School will achieve the actions as set out.	
(c) Staff and students are engaged in monitoring and evaluation activities and receive appropriate training and support to undertake them.	The Vice-Principal (Education) is responsible for leading the effective delivery of the University's strategic objectives for Education including quality assurance and enhancement. A description for the responsibilities of the Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement and the School Director of Education role is available on the University's website. These positions have an extensive focus on the enhancement and assurance of quality. The University committee structure and remits, including the Quality Assurance Committee and the School Education Committee, have a focus on the assurance, management and enhancement of quality issues. The University's annual monitoring processes are outlined in the Academic Quality Handbook and detail relative roles and responsibilities. These are summarised below: - Students should be involved in the evaluation of courses and programmes, and do so by means of Course Feedback and Reflection Forms, Class Representation and Staff-Student Liaison Committees. This feedback feeds into the annual monitoring and periodic monitoring processes. - Programme and Course Coordinators are responsible for completing annual course and programme review forms. - External Examiners are responsible for completing their External Examiner Report. - Heads of School and School Directors of Education are responsible for reviewing annual course and programme review forms, as well as providing a response to External Examiner Reports.	Annual Course & Programme Review (Webpage) Class Representation (Webpage) Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement Description (Webpage) External Examining (Webpage) Internal Teaching Review (Webpage) Monitoring & Review (Webpage) Roles and Responsibilities of External Examiners, Academic Quality Handbook (Document) School Director of Education Role Description (pp.11-13) (Document) Staff-Student Liaison Committees, Academic Quality Handbook (Document)

	▪ Members of the Academic Services team are responsible for undertaking an initial review of APR and External Examiner Reports and providing reports on these for consideration by the Quality Assurance Committee. The Team is also responsible for communicating required deadlines relating to annual monitoring processes to all parties and ensuring that External Examiners have the correct information regarding their role (e.g. contract, roles and responsibilities). ▪ Members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) are responsible for overseeing annual course and programme reviews and responses to External Examiner reports. These are considered at a dedicated QAC meeting where any emerging good practice can be discussed and disseminated, or emerging themes can be identified for further discussion/action. The reports are then returned to the External Examiners with a response from QAC and the Head of School/Nominee. A copy of these reports is made available to students via MyAberdeen. Training is provided as appropriate where staff and students are involved as part of the monitoring and evaluation processes. For example, members of the Quality Assurance Committee receive training throughout their tenure on the Committee regarding their roles. For staff and students engaged as ITR panellists, training is provided by the Academic Services team regarding their roles.	
(d) The actions and outcomes from monitoring and evaluation activities are communicated in an accessible manner to staff, students, the governing body and, where required, external stakeholders.	Communications to students are managed through the Experience, Engagement and Wellbeing team and are handled through the University's Student Communication Policy. The outcomes of course evaluations and student feedback are relayed in a number of ways: ▪ You Said, We Did ▪ Staff-Student Liaison Committees ▪ Focus groups ▪ Informal feedback to student concerns As mentioned previously, an academic *Survey Season* is run in the second term, where students are given the opportunity to provide feedback on academic related matters over a specific period of time. *Survey Season* comprises of the following surveys: ▪ National Student Survey (NSS) ▪ Undergraduate Experience Survey (UES)	Communication with You (Webpage) Course Evaluation (Closing the Feedback Loop) (Webpage) Good Practice (Webpage) Learning & Teaching Enhancement Programme (LTEP) (Webpage) Student Communication Policy (Policy) Staff-Student Liaison Committee (Webpage) You Said, We Did (Webpage)

	▪ Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) ▪ Postgraduate Research Survey (PRES) These surveys allow the University to enhance and improve their services based on the feedback provided. External Examiner Reports are uploaded to the Virtual Learning Environment, MyAberdeen, for all students to access, to ensure the closure of the feedback loop. Feedback is also provided to External Examiners following consideration of their reports by Schools and the Quality Assurance Committee. Similarly, Schools feedback to Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Bodies in regard to any recommendations made in their reports. The University places a strong emphasis on enhancement and as such actively collects and shares examples of good practice. These are valuable resources which academic colleagues can draw upon to inform their pedagogic practices. Examples of Learning and Teaching Enhancement Projects are available on the University's webpages.	
(e) Improvements and enhancements that have been implemented as a result of monitoring and evaluation are, in turn, monitored and evaluated to ensure their impact is positive and remains fit for purpose.	The University operates a range of formal mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation. While these formal review processes are valuable, we also use more informal and ongoing mechanisms to keep activities under review. Any improvements or enhancements to existing provision that have been implemented by way of Annual Course and Programme Review or External Examiner Reports are monitored by the Schools in the first instance to ensure that the changes remain positive for students and staff alike. In the following annual report, it is anticipated that any enhancements made in the previous year would be reflected upon by the Programme Lead. Additionally, the External Examiner will have an opportunity to comment as to whether their advice has been taken into account in the academic year and to reflect on any improvements to the programme in their annual report. The Quality Assurance Committee also reflects on the annual monitoring of provision at one of its meetings during the academic year, particularly in relation to any good practice and areas for enhancement which might require further consideration by the Committee or wider University governance structure.	Academic Quality Handbook (Webpage) Annual Course & Programme Review (Webpage) External Examining (Webpage) Monitoring & Review (Webpage) Quality Assurance Committee (Webpage)
(f) Monitoring and evaluation activity facilitates providers'	The University makes use of key principles in relation to inclusivity and accessibility for all students accessing their education. An Inclusivity	Equality Impact Assessment (Webpage)

insights and promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion, and education for sustainable development.	and Accessibility in Education Framework has been developed which aims to enable inclusion and accessibility to be fully integrated into all aspects of the design and delivery of learning, teaching and assessment. The Framework draws together relevant guidance, policies, resources, support and specialist training relating to accessibility and inclusivity. The University operates Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that no group is unduly discriminated against and to ensure activities are carried out in a fair and transparent way. All new policies should be reviewed by means of Equality Impact Assessments to ensure they are fit for purpose in an inclusive environment.	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Policy) Inclusivity and Accessibility Framework (Webpage)
(g) Programmes and modules are monitored and reviewed regularly by internal and external peers, employers and students, in line with the provider's strategic approach to quality and standards. Outcomes from processes required from funding, accrediting, professional and approval bodies feed into monitoring and review.	The University operates a range of formal mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation. While these formal review processes are valuable, we also use more informal and ongoing mechanisms to keep activities under review. We greatly value and encourage feedback to ensure ongoing enhancement of the student and academic experience. The student feedback webpages offer opportunities to provide feedback on an ongoing basis on the student and academic experience, particularly through the student feedback form, as well as identifying other avenues that students can provide feedback, such as the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey, New to UoA Survey, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey. With all feedback, the University is keen to ensure that the feedback loop is closed, particularly with the 'You Said, We Did' initiative, which aims to inform students of the changes that were made as a result of student feedback. In addition, the feedback from External Examiners is also published via MyAberdeen which can be viewed by students if they wish. In terms of the academic environment, while the Annual Course and Programme Review processes provide a formal review of academic provision, course and programme coordinators use more informal mechanisms such as informal mid-course surveys to seek early feedback from students enabling them to, where possible, adjust their provision to address any issues immediately. Likewise, through the Students' Union Sabbatical Officers, student School Conveners and Class Representatives, there is close partnership between the University and the student body and as such any issues that arise can be addressed in a proactive and timely manner.	Annual Course & Programme Review (Webpage) Class Representation (Webpage) Course Feedback Form (Webpage) External Examiners (PGR) (Webpage) External Examining (UG/PGT) (Webpage) Internal Teaching Review (Webpage) Monitoring & Review (Webpage) Programme Advisory Boards (Webpage) Quality Assurance Committee (Webpage) Roles and Responsibilities of External Examiners, AQH (Document) Student Feedback (Webpages) You Said, We Did (Webpage)

The University's Internal Teaching Review (ITR) process is used to review all teaching-related activities at a School / Discipline level in line with the requirements of the QAA (Scotland) Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework. The ITR process can help to identify areas for further review and programme development within a School's provision. As part of the ITR process, External Subject Specialists are engaged as panel members reviewing the quality and enhancement of any given School's pedagogic offering. External Subject Specialists provide valuable insight into our practices enabling us to learn from good practice across the sector. Additionally, External Subject Specialists may be from another institution or from industry, where appropriate.

The University uses External Examiners to feed into all our Education provision. The role includes consultation on assessment for a particular course, and membership of Examiners' meetings. In the latter aspect of the role, they provide external verification and comparability of student assessment and results aiming to ensure that standards are achieved and maintained. Part of their role includes highlighting good practice as well as identifying areas for development.

In some Schools, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) input into course and programme provision. For example, PSRBs may have a role in curriculum design to meet professional requirements. Input is also obtained from Programme Advisory Boards. These Boards include expertise from industry and employers and can provide expertise in teaching, learning and assessment.