

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
Academic Quality Handbook

Annual Monitoring: Annual Course and Programme Review

1. Introduction

The University requires all undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses and programmes to be monitored annually. The responsibility for such monitoring and review rests with Heads of School. A flow chart summarising the process and the proformas to be used by Schools to report the outcomes of annual monitoring can be [here](#). The Annual Course Review and the Annual Programme Review proformas are also available from the [AQH policy repository](#).

2. Aims

The aim of annual monitoring in accordance with the QAA Quality Code, is to examine the effectiveness of our courses and programmes:

- to ensure that they remain current and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline, and practice in its application
- to evaluate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes are being attained by students
- to evaluate the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and of assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes
- to ensure that recommendations for appropriate actions are followed up to remedy any identified shortcomings and
- to monitor and review the student experience

3. Process

The stages in the annual monitoring process are as follows:

3.1 Student Feedback

- i. Collation of **Student Feedback** via (a) the Course Feedback Form; (b) Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLC) and (c) other in-School methods undertaken to capture student opinion such as focus groups, mid-term student feedback or other questionnaires.
- ii. Please note: the Course Feedback Form is tablet-friendly and as such can be completed by students at any time.

3.2 Course Review

- i. **Course Review** and completion of the Annual Course Review report by the Course Team, incorporating (i) Course Feedback Form returns and other student feedback (ii) SSLC meetings, (iii) feedback from External Examiners, Programme Advisory Boards (PABs) or equivalent and Professional and Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) (where available), (iv) analysis of course data where appropriate (registrations, withdrawals, pass rates) and (v) feedback from the course team including class representatives where appropriate.
- ii. There are two versions of the ACR form: the abbreviated “short” form and the more detailed ACR form. It is standard practice for most course leaders to complete the “short” form. The

detailed form would be required to be completed for courses where one or more of the following applies:

- A course has a new course coordinator;
 - A course has been newly introduced (defined as within 2 years of introduction) or has been significantly amended;
 - A course for which there has been an anomalous pass rate or satisfaction rate (as determined by the programme leader, Head of School, or QAC)
 - A course for which it has been determined that a more in-depth review is required (as determined by the programme leader, Head of School, or QAC)
- iii. All ACRs are to be considered by the School Director of Teaching (DOT) / Head of Discipline or PGT equivalent who should ensure ACRs are considered by SSLCs at the next available opportunity.
- iv. Each School is responsible for determining its own deadlines for submission of ACR documentation, but it is encouraged that Schools ensure that ACR forms are completed as soon as possible after the end of teaching for each course. An overall institutional deadline applies of **31 August** for undergraduate ACRs, and **30 November** for postgraduate ACRs.
- v. Prior to the published deadline, each School must ensure that all ACRs have been submitted to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) via the [Quality and Planning SharePoint site](#) . ACRs will also be made available to students, a process for which will follow shortly.
- vi. The **Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)** may consider a sample of ACRs annually, with feedback to Schools as appropriate. Sampling will target 'critical' courses that QAC have a particular interest in, for example, courses that are delivered by a delivery partner, new courses that have been developed to support a new programme or courses where issues of concern have previously been noted.

3.3 Programme Review

- i. Each School is responsible for the completion of an Annual Programme Review (APR) form for each programme or cognate group of programmes, as appropriate. Approximately 2-3 months ahead of the submission deadline, the Clerk to QAC will send a list of all expected APRs to the School Administration Manager, Director of Teaching and Learning and QAC member for the School. The responsibility for the completion of the APR form ultimately lies with the Director of Teaching and Learning, but this team is encouraged to share responsibility for the administrative process as they see fit.
- ii. It is recommended that Schools take a collaborative approach to the completion of the APR documentation. Schools may undertake this process in their own way, but it is suggested that the Programme Team for each grouping arranges to meet, usually at a time to include the External Examiner(s) for their input. It would therefore be prudent to do so as part of the Examiners' Meetings programme of events. The relevant programmes are discussed, including (a) all ACRs for the full academic year; (b) feedback from Programme Advisory Boards (PABs) or equivalent, where available, External Examiners' Reports (EERs), and Professional and Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), if applicable, and (c) Internal Teaching Review recommendations (if ITR'd within the past 12 months). This discussion would form the basis of the APR documentation.
- iii. Schools which maintain partnerships and collaborative agreements will review these arrangements either in a separate collaborative provision APR, or within the appropriate existing APR form.
- iv. Completed APRs should be considered by the School Teaching and Learning Committee or equivalent and signed off by the Head of School. They must then be submitted to the QAC via the [Quality and Planning SharePoint site](#)

- v. The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) will consider all APRs annually, and discuss them with Schools at their respective annual forum meetings with QAC, or via alternative methods of feedback. Any policy issues arising from the review will be referred to the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (UCTL).
- vi. The annual deadlines for the submission of the completed, signed APR documentation is **31 August** for undergraduate programmes and **30 November** for postgraduate programmes.

3.4 Closure of Feedback Loop

- Closing the feedback loop is of utmost importance, and Schools are reminded that students should be kept informed of the contents of ACR and APR documentation as appropriate via the available online channels.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The **Course Coordinator** is responsible for:

- Stressing the importance of completing the Course Feedback Form positively to students and ensuring that it is made available to students online, providing adequate time for completion.
- Analysing the computer-generated Course Feedback Form summary sheets. The Course Coordinator is encouraged to skim through the written comments by students as soon as possible to enable the Course Coordinator to gain a quick impression of student opinion, take action if possible or necessary, and report back to students at the earliest opportunity.
- Attending the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC)
- Convening, where appropriate, a meeting of the Course Team (i.e. those who delivered the course), to discuss the course, feedback from the SSLC, the Course Feedback Form summary sheets and students' written comments; this should occur as soon as possible after the course has ended.
- Producing the Annual Course Review report and submitting to the Head of Discipline or School Director of Teaching.

4.2 The **Programme Leader** or equivalent is responsible for:

- Ensuring that Annual Course Review forms for the courses within their programme are completed fully and on time.
- Compiling information from the relevant Annual Course Reviews which, along with conversation at the Programme Review Meeting and the other feedback mechanisms as detailed in 3.3(ii), will enable the completion of the Annual Programme Review.
- Completing the Annual Programme Review documentation in conjunction with the Head of Discipline or School Director of Teaching, where appropriate.

4.3 The **Head of Discipline** or **School Director of Teaching** or PGT equivalent is responsible for:

- Ensuring Annual Course Reviews, for all courses in the Discipline (or School for single discipline Schools) for which students are registered in the current academic year, are undertaken, forwarded for SSLC consideration and posted to the [Quality and Planning SharePoint site](#) by published deadlines.
- Analysis of the Annual Course Reviews and supporting documentation, including, though not limited to, feedback from External Examiners, Professional Statutory Bodies and Internal Teaching Review Recommendations. It is encouraged to discuss these more widely at School or Discipline level as detailed in 3.3(ii).
- Production of the Annual Programme Review Report to the School Teaching and Learning Committee (or equivalent) and Head of School.

4.4 The **Head of School** is responsible for:

- Ensuring Annual Course Reviews, for all courses in the School for which students are registered in the current academic year, are undertaken and reviewed by the Head of Discipline or School DOT or PGT equivalent and that the Annual Programme Review Report Report(s) are prepared and considered by the School Teaching & Learning Committee (TLC).
- Ensuring that Annual Course and Programme Review reports are submitted to the QAC via the [Quality and Planning SharePoint site](#) by published deadlines.
- Ensuring that feedback provided by the School TLC (or equivalent) and Head of Discipline/School Director of Teaching /PGT equivalent is provided to (i) the Course Coordinator and (ii) the appropriate Staff-Student Liaison Committee.
- Ensuring that copies of the Annual Course Review reports are made available to students, to ensure transparency and to close the feedback loop.