

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
- Composition and key trends in the School's student population, including typical routes into and through the School
- Summary of the School's follow up to previous ITR

2. ENHANCING LEARNING & TEACHING

- Strategic approach to enhancement.
- Approaches to identifying, sharing and extending good practice
- Engaging and supporting staff
- Effectiveness of the approach to implementing strategies, identifying and promoting good practice and enhancing learning and teaching

3. ENHANCING THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE – UG, PGT AND PGR

- Engaging and supporting students in their learning, including the learning environment. Student representation and engagement.
- Effectiveness of the approach to enhancing the student learning experience

4. MANAGING QUALITY & STANDARDS

- Features of the School's approach to setting, maintaining, reviewing and assessing academic standards, including the management of assessment
- Securing academic standards of collaborative provision
- Effectiveness of arrangements for managing academic standards

Guidance for Completion of the Critical Analysis

The **Critical Analysis (CA)** should be *evidence-based*, and structured around the headings which follow. Its preparation should involve staff and students, and Schools should refer to their School Action Plans and planning metrics. Annual Course (ACR) and Programme Reviews (APR) and External Examiner Reports since the Schools' previous ITRs, and PSRB reviews and reports where applicable should also be drawn upon.

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 makes reference 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 overarching strategic priorities

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, cross referenced to later sections to provide greater detail as appropriate. The School should refer to the data it uses in its School planning process in identifying its strengths and challenges.

Because 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.

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
- Include consideration of both UG and PG (taught and research) provision.
- Include 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 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, in advance of, or on the day of the review, or post-review.

- 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 Teaching and Learning 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 (including students) was involved in the process and how was consultation and feedback managed?
- **Key features of the School's content and mission. Consider:**
 - the range of provision under review; Staffing (summary of staff cohort, FTEs and SSR); significant changes since the last review e.g. restructuring, physical resources)

- **Composition and key trends in the School's student population, including typical routes into and through the School. Consider:**
 - (inc student numbers over the review period, UG, PG, PGT, Online, those on collaborative programmes, articulation routes and targets being worked towards)
- **Strategic approach to enhancing and evaluating learning and teaching. Consider:**
 - the School's key aims, how the School Plan maps with institutional priorities and activities.) This should be a high-level summary. Detail can be provided in the appropriate sections below.
- **Follow up to previous ITR – areas for development and follow up**

2. ENHANCING LEARNING & TEACHING

- **Strategic approach to enhancement. Consider:**
 - Activity in relation to curriculum design and development; lecture/tutorial delivery; assessment & feedback
 - Approach to intended learning outcomes, use of MyAberdeen and digitally –enhanced methods and activities, pedagogic initiatives; work-based learning, the impact of PSRB requirements (where applicable) on policy and practice
 - Assessment & Feedback: range of assessment methods, how students receive feedback on assessment, balance of formative and summative assessment, innovation in assessment, A&F Task Force activities
- **Approaches to identifying, sharing and extending good practice. Consider:**
 - Feedback on, evaluation, and impact of activities and the mechanisms are used to share good practice across the School
 - The School's contribution to institutional projects and opportunities. E.g. Annual Symposia, LTEP activities and L&T 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
- **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
- **Effectiveness of the approach to implementing strategies, identifying and promoting good practice and enhancing learning and teaching. Consider:**
 - the effectiveness of the School's approached to enhancing learning and teaching
 - Aspects of provision that are considered to be particularly successful and or worthy of wider dissemination as examples of good/best practice, where the evidence supports this
 - Areas recognised for improvement, which should be prioritised, with indications given of how they will be tackled.
 - Consider: data on uptake of training opportunities (School-based, CAD-based and external), feedback from staff, feedback from students (SSLC, SCEF, NSS), trends in student outcomes, staff promotions

3. ENHANCING THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE – UG, PGT AND PGR

- **Engaging and supporting students in their learning, including the learning environment. Consider:**
 - How equality and diversity is supported amongst the student body. Consider Athena Swann, Gender Action Plan, Mental health and Wellbeing
 - Transition and induction activities; support for International students, widening participation students, direct entrants, online learners, TNE students; students on collaborative programmes
 - how the development of graduate attributes is promoted. Consider: Intended Learning Outcomes, Work-based learning, placement and study abroad opportunities. Refer to AGA Curriculum Map and Positive Outcomes Task Force activities
 - Key roles: Personal Tutors, Disability Coordinators, Digital Representatives, Retention Officers, Retention Task Force initiatives etc.

- **Student representation and engagement. Consider:**
 - Success of gathering the student voice; methods used to communicate with students and engage them in decision-making and L&T development processes; how the feedback loop is closed
 - The effectiveness of SCEFs and SSLCs, informal feedback mechanisms and School-level engagement/promotion of NSS and Student Engagement Survey

- **Effectiveness of the approach to enhancing the student learning experience. Consider:**
 - The effectiveness of the School/Subject's approaches to enhancing the student learning experience
 - Aspects of provision that are particularly successful and or worthy of wider dissemination as examples of good/best practice, where the evidence supports this
 - Areas recognised for improvement, which should be prioritised, with indications given of how they will be tackled
 - Consider: Trends in the student population (retention, progression, awards, outcomes, DLHE / LEO survey data, study abroad); SCEF, SSLC feedback and NSS and UG and PG Student Engagement Survey (and other activity) outcomes

4. MANAGING QUALITY & STANDARDS

- **Features of the School's approach to setting, maintaining, reviewing and assessing academic standards, including the management of assessment. Consider:**
 - School-based approaches to preparation and review of Course and Programme Approval, Annual Monitoring (ACR and APR) and External Examiner reports (and other feedback) and QAC- responses thereto, including wider dissemination throughout the School
 - Use of External Examiners' and Student Feedback, including wider dissemination throughout the School
 - Use of data to review and assess academic standards and to inform decision-making and evaluation.
 - School approach to dissemination and use of external reference points, including Subject Benchmark Statements, Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCFQ), Accreditation requirements, QAA Quality Code and other external references

- **Securing academic standards of collaborative provision. Consider:**
 - key features of any collaborative activity and range of provision indicating how the School ensures oversight of quality arrangements and academic standards therein
 - Study Abroad arrangements (incoming and outgoing), TNE activity, work with Delivery Partners, articulation activities

- **Effectiveness of arrangements for managing academic standards. Consider:**

- the **effectiveness** of the **School/discipline's** arrangements for securing academic standards (NB: **this should be particular to the School, and not just evidence of School adherence to expected institutional practice.**
 - how effective are processes to analyse SCEFs, APRs, ACRs, external examiner reports? How are examiner meetings handled, how effectively is moderation used in the School, how does the School gather and close the feedback loop etc
 - Aspects of provision considered to be particularly successful and/ or worthy of wider dissemination as examples of good/best practice, where the evidence supports this
 - Areas recognised for improvement, which should be prioritised, with indications given of how they will be tackled.
 - Consider feedback from students and external examiners, PSRB accreditations, School-based Student Appeal and Complaints data
 - Consider trends in student outcomes, and those of benchmark institutions (where available).