

Policy Coversheet

Name of Policy:	Periodic Review
Purpose of Policy:	To ensure that all educational provision is subject to an in-depth periodic review normally once every five years.
Intended audience(s):	Staff/External Parties
Approval for this policy given by:	Academic Board
Last Review Date:	26/10/2016 Minor Amendment – 06/10/2017 Minor Amendment – 10/10/2018
Review Due Date: (3 years from last review)	26/10/2019
Individual responsible for review:	Director of Quality Enhancement and Standards
Authorising department:	Academic Development Unit



PERIODIC REVIEW

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At Staffordshire University all educational provision is subject to an in-depth periodic review normally once every five years. Reviews are normally undertaken by subject area, however for particularly large areas of provision further sub-groups may be determined (for example separate reviews of undergraduate and postgraduate provision etc.). The University's Quality Committee is responsible for monitoring the effective operation of the periodic review procedure; approving the clustering of courses for reviews; and overseeing the review schedule. The Chair of Quality Committee may request that an earlier review be scheduled should concerns about a particular subject area emerge.
- 1.2 All courses leading to an award of Staffordshire University (including collaborative provision – please see section 3 below) are subject to review in accordance with this procedure with the exception of MPhil and PhD provision, which is reviewed in line with the University's procedure for the periodic review of MPhil and PhD degrees.
- 1.3 The purpose of periodic review is:
 - 1.3.1 To critically review the health of the courses under review;
 - 1.3.2 To review how the subject area is assuring the quality and standard of the courses against internal and external reference points;
 - 1.3.3 To enhance the University's educational provision by highlighting and sharing good practice and identifying areas for improvement;
 - 1.3.4 To review and consider mechanisms for further enhancing the student experience;
 - 1.3.5 To review the subject area's engagement with the University's Quality Enhancement Theme and other strategic initiatives as appropriate;
 - 1.3.6 To ensure that effective mechanisms are in place for monitoring and supporting student progress; and
 - 1.3.7 To support staff in their aims to develop their courses.
- 1.4 This procedure has been developed with reference to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

2. Relationship between Course Approval/Withdrawal and Periodic Review

- 2.1 Quality Committee is responsible, on behalf of Academic Board, for the approval of new courses, and the roll-out of existing courses to collaborative academic partners, in line with the University's course approval procedures.

- 2.2 Courses are normally approved by Quality Committee for an indefinite period. However, the expectation is that course teams are continually reviewing the structure and quality of their provision in light of internal and external requirements, student feedback etc. During periodic review teams will be asked to evaluate the changes they have made over the preceding period as detailed in section 5 below. Periodic review panels will be asked to form judgements on the standard and quality of the provision under review but are not tasked with recommending re-approval. An unsatisfactory periodic review outcome could however prompt a request that a course(s) be refreshed and considered for approval again – or closed.
- 2.3 Similarly courses should be withdrawn at the appropriate time in line with the University's course closure procedure. Courses should not be withdrawn through the periodic review, though a list of courses that have been withdrawn over the preceding period should be provided as detailed in section 5 below.
- 2.4 New courses will not be considered for approval as part of the periodic review process. Teams wishing to put forward a new course(s) for approval should follow the course and delivery approval procedures.
- 2.5 Whilst all courses are normally approved for an indefinite period, partnership agreements are signed for a fixed period of up to five years. The decision as to whether a partnership should continue is informed by the outcome of partnership review. Courses bespoke to a particular partner (for example validation arrangements or dual award courses) will only be made available for the duration of the partnership.
- 2.6 On approval all courses are assigned a periodic review grouping. Any requests to amend a review group must be approved by the Director of Quality Enhancement and Standards and Chair of Quality Committee.

3. **Collaborative Provision and Periodic Review**

- 3.1 The focus of a periodic review panel's consideration when reviewing collaborative courses will be the health of the curricula. Assessment of a collaborative academic partner's ability to assure the quality and standard of the courses and students' experiences at the partner are assessed separately through Partnership Review.
- 3.2 Franchise provision will normally be considered as part of the 'home' subject area's review in order that the review panel can gain an overview of the health of an area's courses both on campus and at collaborative academic partners and the relationship between the two.
- 3.3 Where courses are bespoke to a particular collaborative academic partner (for example validation arrangements or dual award courses) it may be more appropriate to undertake a fully separate review of that provision. In such instances the 'home' subject area should record its involvement in these collaborations as part of its review submission (please see section 5 below) but noting that the courses are subject to a separate review.
- 3.4 The University's review schedule will clearly outline for each review whether/how collaborative academic partner provision is included. Each review panel will also receive a document outlining the scope of their review, including the extent to which collaborative provision is incorporated (please see section 5 below).

4. Format of Review

- 4.1 The periodic review will be undertaken by a panel normally comprising:
- A senior member of the University (normally a member of Executive, Dean, Associate Dean, or Head of Department from outside the School in which the provision under review sits) as Chair
 - Two members of academic staff from outside the School in which the provision under review sits (normally an Associate Dean, Head of Department or Course Leader)
 - At least one external academic panel member with relevant subject expertise and experience of course review
 - An employer representative
 - A current student (normally a student representative) from outside the School in which the provision under review sits
 - An officer from the Quality Enhancement Service (QES) who will act as secretary
- 4.2 Final selection of internal panel members will be undertaken by QES (on behalf of Quality Committee) in consultation with the Registrar as required.
- 4.3 The School responsible for the provision under review should nominate an appropriate external panel member(s) and employer representative as appropriate. Nominations should meet the selection criteria for external panel members agreed by the University. Final approval of external panel members will be undertaken by QES (on behalf of Quality Committee) in consultation with the Registrar as required. Additional external subject specialists may be appointed to the panel as required to ensure appropriate coverage of the area under review.
- 4.4 The review exercise comprises consideration of a document submission by the individual members of the panel followed by a review event, which will normally take place over 1-2 days. Reviews of particularly large subject areas may be longer. In determining the scope of a review, the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies may be taken into account in order to avoid where possible duplication between PSRB and internal review processes.
- 4.5 Periodic review event dates should normally be agreed in the academic year preceding the year of the review. The QES officer assigned to a review will be available to provide guidance to course teams in their preparation for review. All review events for a given year should normally have been held by March unless an exceptional later date is been agreed.

5. Review Submission

- 5.1 The review submission should be submitted electronically to QES at least four weeks before the date of the panel's visit. The documentation/information provided should be approved by the relevant School(s) (normally by the Dean or their nominee) prior to submission to the review panel.
- 5.2 The review submission should include the items listed below. (It is recommended that the structure below is used when collating the submission.)

- 5.2.1 Scope of Review This is a short document briefly the outlining the area under review. This should detail the portfolio of courses and current student numbers; and collaborative provision for which the area is responsible (detailing for each collaborative academic partner courses and current course numbers). The introductory document should make clear to the panel the scope of the review; for example to what extent the collaborative provision is included. It should also detail whether any of the courses are accredited by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory body/bodies. This document should be prepared by the School/course team in consultation with the QES officer as early as possible in the preparation for the review.
- 5.2.2 Self-evaluation document (SED) This is the key document for the review panel, which should cross reference as appropriate to the supporting evidence provided (as outlined in section 5.2.3 below). Ideally live electronic links to the supporting evidence should be embedded in the SED. The SED should be prepared in consultation with staff teaching on the courses, including at collaborative academic partners as appropriate. The SED should also be shared with students studying on the courses under review before being submitted to the panel. It should be a reflective and evaluative document.
- 5.2.3 Supporting Evidence
- 5.2.3.1 Programme Specifications and module descriptors for the courses under review. (Where more than one version of a course is running - either on campus or at a partner (for example the 15 and 30 credit structures of a course) – all versions of the Programme Specifications should be made available, clearly indicating to which cohort they apply.)
- 5.2.3.2 Statistics for the previous five years (where available) by course and study mode, compared with institutional and sectorial trends as appropriate. Data to support the review group under consideration will normally be supplied by Corporate Information and will include:
- Applications
 - Enrolments
 - Attendance Monitoring
 - Progression
 - Retention
 - Achievement
 - Withdrawal and intermission rates
 - Widening participation/equality and diversity data
 - The number of appeals and complaints, the reasons for them and how many were upheld
 - The number of cases of academic misconduct
 - Survey results (National Student Survey, Student Viewfinder Survey, PTES and PRES survey results etc. as appropriate)
 - DLHE results

- 5.2.3.3 Annual monitoring reports/continuous monitoring plans for the last five years.
- 5.2.3.4 External examiner reports and responses to external examiners for the last five years.
- 5.2.3.5 Sample course handbooks for the courses under review (at least one for on-campus provision and one for each collaborative academic partner).
- 5.2.3.6 Sample module handbooks for the courses under review (at least one for on-campus provision and one for each collaborative academic partner).
- 5.2.3.7 University teaching staff CVs for the area under review and statistics for the previous five years (where available) showing, for the area, the number of staff with HEA Fellowships and the number of staff with a level 8 qualification. A report detailing staff scholarly activity over the last five years should also be provided.
- 5.2.3.8 Any publicly available information relating to the courses, such as prospectus and specific publicity materials.
- 5.2.3.9 A chart showing, for each collaborative academic partner, the curricula in place – and cross referencing to the relevant Programme Specification(s) (please see section 5.2.3.1 above).
- 5.2.3.10 Course Committee and/or Joint Management Committee minutes for the last 12 months. (For collaborative provision the Panel will only consider comments made on the curricula.) .
- 5.2.3.11 Access to the relevant VLE.
- 5.2.3.12 Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Body reports for the past five years (where applicable).
- 5.2.3.14 An overview report of key changes made to the courses under review that have resulted in a Programme Specification amendment in the last five years; details of course closures over the last five years.
- 5.2.3.15 Course approval/major amendment reports and responses to conditions of approval for the last five years.
- 5.2.3.16 The report of the last periodic review and resulting action plan(s).

6. **Review Meeting**

- 6.1 While the review meeting will normally be held over 1-2 days, reviews of particularly large subject areas may be longer. A template agenda for the review is available from QES. Panel members will be asked to submit initial comments on the documentation to the QES Officer two weeks in advance of the meeting. All initial comment forms will be circulated to the other panel members and the course team. Additional documentation may also be requested at this stage. The QES Officer will then work with the Chair of the Panel to finalise the meeting agenda, to be circulated ahead of the review meeting.

6.2 The review meeting will be an opportunity for the panel, using the SED as the core text (supported by the evidence outlined in 5.2.3 above) to come to an informed judgement with regard to the health of the courses under consideration. The event will include meetings with senior staff responsible for the area under review; teaching and where applicable relevant support staff; and a range of students, including a selection of student representatives. Partner staff may be included as appropriate. Students studying at a distance may be contacted by telephone during the meeting or submit comments prior to the event.

7. **Review Outcomes**

7.1 Following the meeting, a full report will be produced by the QES officer and agreed by the panel. The area under review will have the opportunity to comment on the factual accuracy of the report. Once any resulting queries are addressed the report will be presented to Quality Committee (see section 7.5 below).

7.2 The University is keen to use the periodic review process as a means of highlighting and sharing examples of good practice. The panel will therefore highlight any good practice identified as part of the review and make commendations as appropriate.

7.3 The report will also include an evaluation of the provision under review. The panel will be required to confirm:

For all provision:

- Whether it has confidence with the academic standards of the provision (including course aims, curricula and assessment).

For on-campus provision only:

- Whether it is satisfied with the quality of students' learning opportunities in relation to (a) teaching and learning; (b) student achievement; and (c) learning resources; and
- Whether it is satisfied with the arrangements for quality assurance and mechanisms for quality enhancement.

In making its conclusions, the panel may differentiate some or all of its conclusions by course as appropriate.

7.4 The panel may also make essential recommendations (to be addressed by a date prescribed by the panel) and advisory recommendations (to be considered by the team and addressed as appropriate).

7.5 The review report will be considered by Quality Committee. The Chair of the review panel will be invited to present the report to Quality Committee. A senior representative from the area under review should also be present to contribute to the discussion.

8. **Review Follow-Up**

- 8.1 An action plan, outlining the action to be taken to respond to the recommendations arising from the review, should be submitted to the Chair of the review panel and QES Officer for approval, normally within a month of receipt of the final review report.
- 8.2 A formal follow-up report to Quality Committee, incorporating the action plan and outlining progress taken to date, should be received by the Committee six months after consideration of the Review Report by Quality Committee unless an earlier timeframe for reporting is determined by the Committee.

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