Policy Coversheet

Name of Policy:	Periodic Review
Purpose of Policy:	To ensure that all taught provision is subject to an in-depth periodic review normally once every six years.
Intended audience(s):	Staff/External Parties
Approval for this policy given by:	Academic Board
Last Review Date:	05/06/2020
Review Due Date: (3 years from last review)	04/06/2023
Individual responsible for review:	Head of Academic Quality
Authorising department:	Academic Development Unit

PERIODIC REVIEW

1.   **Introduction**

1.1   Staffordshire University's quality framework is in place to ensure that all courses meet appropriate standards, provide current and coherent curricula and deliver a high-quality student learning experience and positive outcomes. The framework:
- Supports the University's Academic Strategy and achievement of our KPIs;
- Provides assurance of the quality and standard of the provision;
- Facilitates quality enhancement;
- Facilitates the assessment of risk, focusing attention where it is most required.

Periodic review is a key component of this framework. The University's approach to periodic review has been informed by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

1.2   At Staffordshire University all academic Departments' award bearing provision is subject to periodic review normally once every six years unless risk indicators determine that a shorter review period would be beneficial. Reviews are normally undertaken by Department, however where a Department comprises a number of discrete subject areas, further periodic review sub-groups may be agreed by Quality and Enhancement Committee (QEC). Each Departmental review will cover all the taught courses and apprenticeships offered including the taught components of Professional Doctorate courses. Reviews will also include those courses delivered with collaborative academic partners. Assessment of a collaborative academic partner's ability to assure the quality and standard of the courses and students' experiences at the partner is not however covered by this process (this is assessed separately through Partnership Review); the focus in this context will be on the Department's approach to overseeing the delivery of its courses by collaborative academic partners.

1.3   MPhil and PhD degrees and the research components of Professional Doctorates are not included as part of the Departmental periodic review; these are reviewed in line with the University's procedure for the periodic review of research degrees.

1.4   Periodic review is a supportive, enhancement-led process, enabling Departments to critically review their provision and also consider their future plans and objectives with a panel of peers. The relevant Dean of School (or their nominee) and Head of Department will agree focus areas with the Review Chair and Academic Quality Service (AQS), ensuring that attention is directed where it is most required (see section 3.9 below).

1.5   The outcomes from the periodic review will form a plan for the further enhancement of provision in the Department.

1.6   QEC is responsible for monitoring the effective operation of periodic review and overseeing the review schedule. The Chair of QEC may request that an earlier review be scheduled should concerns about a particular subject area emerge.

2.   **Purpose of Review**

2.1   The purpose of periodic review is:

2.2.1   To recognise and share good practice in learning and teaching, identifying mechanisms for its further development.

2.2.2   To review the Department's approach to managing and assuring the academic quality and standard of its provision in line with internal and external reference points.

2.2.3 To review the quality of learning opportunities provided by the Department, including oversight of the learning opportunities for students at collaborative academic partners, and enable staff to critically evaluate their approach to enhancing these.

2.2.4 To review the performance of the courses in the Department.

2.2.5 To review mechanisms in place for monitoring and supporting student progress.

2.2.6 To consider how student, employer and professional body feedback is used to inform the Department's provision.

2.2.7 To review how the Department's provision is informed by scholarly activity, pedagogic developments and educational research.

2.2.8 To discuss the Department's engagement with the Academic Strategy and plans for future development.

2.2.9 To recommend whether the indefinite approval of the courses offered by the Department should continue.

3. Format of Review

3.1 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 Director of Learning and Teaching) as Chair. The Chair should be from outside the School in which the Department under review sits.
- Two members of academic staff from outside the School in which the provision under review sits.
- At least one external academic panel member with relevant subject expertise and experience of course/departmental review.
- An employer representative.
- A student representative.
- Head of Academic Quality.
- A representative from a collaborative academic partner with whom the Department works (where applicable).
- One Service User and Carer (as appropriate for Departments offering courses where there is a professional requirement).
- A Quality Manager from AQS (normally the Quality Manager for the Functional Area for Monitoring and Reviews) supported by:
- A Quality Officer from AQS who will act as the Review Secretary.

3.2 Periodic reviews are managed by AQS. Final selection of internal panel members will be undertaken by AQS (on behalf of QEC) in consultation with the Chair of QEC as required. All Chairs and panel members should attend a briefing/training on periodic review before the review event.

3.3 Support and guidance will be available from the Quality Manager and Review Secretary throughout the process.

3.4 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 AQS (on behalf of QEC) in consultation with the Chair of

QEC as required.   Additional external subject specialists may be appointed to the panel as required to ensure appropriate coverage of the area under review.

3.5   The formal 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 1day.   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.

3.6   Periodic review event dates should normally be agreed in the academic year preceding the year of the review.

3.7   Departments should identify a lead contact for the review (Review Lead), with whom AQS will liaise regarding preparations.

3.8   In the academic year preceding the Review the Quality Manager and Review Secretary will meet with the Dean of School (or nominee), Head of Department and Review Lead to introduce the review and agree a timeline for the process. The timeline will be confirmed by the Secretary following the meeting. As it is essential that the Review incorporates meeting(s) with students the timeline will take into account student availability.

3.9   The timeline will include a formal preliminary meeting between the Review Chair, the Quality Manager, Review Secretary, the Dean of School (or nominee), Head of Department and Review Lead to confirm the scope of the review and prepare a schedule for the review event normally at least six months before the periodic review date. At this meeting any areas of particular focus for the panel will be agreed between the School/Department and Panel Chair. The Review Secretary will circulate the latest Course Health Check Report for the Department and departmental continuous monitoring report ahead of the preliminary meeting to inform these discussions. The draft Agenda for the event will be circulated by the Review Secretary following the meeting. A template Agenda for Reviews is available from AQS.

4.   **Review Submission.**

4.1   The review submission should be submitted electronically to AQS normally at least six weeks before the date of the panel's visit. The documentation/information provided should be approved by the relevant Dean of School (or nominee) prior to submission to the review panel.

4.2   The key document for the Review is the Departmental Self-Evaluation. This should be the only item produced specifically for the Review; the other supporting evidence should be routinely available.

4.3   **Self-Evaluation Document (SED)**
        The purpose of the SED is to provide a concise, reflective review and analysis of the Department's provision and its approach to managing quality and standards. A template is provided for the SED. The SED should cross reference as appropriate to the supporting information provided (please see section 4.4 below; embedded hyperlinks should be used where possible). The SED should be co-authored by the Head of Department and Review Lead and should be prepared in consultation other departmental staff and collaborative academic partners as appropriate.

4.4   **Supporting Information**

        Information Provided with the SED
        The following information about the Department and its portfolio will be provided to the panel along with the SED.   AQS will support the Department in collating this evidence. Hyperlinks to existing information sources will be provided where possible.

- A list of all courses/apprenticeships in the Department's portfolio including approval status and current student numbers. The list should clearly detail where a course is delivered by a collaborative academic partner.
- An up to date list of current modules available within the Department including student numbers and module first time pass rates.
- Current Programme Specifications with embedded links to the relevant module descriptors.
- A summary of course amendments approved in the last three years.
- Sample course handbooks (one UG, one PGT and one apprenticeship handbook where appropriate)
- Sample module handbooks (one UG and one PGT)
- Departmental Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Body register
- Dashboard information showing three years' worth of student data by Department and course and including analysis by student characteristic:
  - Admissions
  - Student Progression
  - Student Retention
  - Timely Completion
  - Good Degrees
  - Graduate Outcomes
  - Complaints, appeals and exceptional circumstances requests
  - Academic misconduct cases
- Student survey results for the last three years (SVS, NSS, PTES and Learner Satisfaction Survey for apprenticeship provision)
- Current apprenticeship tripartite review completion data for the Department where applicable.
- Current course continuous monitoring plans and departmental overview report and continuous monitoring course plans and departmental overview reports/annual monitoring forms for the last three years.
- Sample continuous module monitoring plans (one UG and one PGT)
- External Examiner Reports and responses for the last three years
- Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Body reports for the past three years (where applicable).
- Statistics for the previous three years showing the number of staff with HEA Fellowships and the number of staff with a level 8 qualification.
- Course Committee and/or Joint Management Committee minutes for the last 12 months.
- Reports of recent validation reports and responses to conditions of approval (last 12 months).
- Access to the VLE.

5. Panel Analysis of Submission and Review Meeting

5.1 Initial Analysis of Submission

Panel members will be asked to submit initial comments on the documentation to the Panel Secretary three weeks in advance of the meeting. Each Panel member will be asked to take a lead on certain areas of the analysis based on their expertise; these areas will be allocated by the Review Chair and confirmed by the Review Secretary when the documentation is made available. All initial comment forms will be circulated to the other panel members, the Head of Department and Departmental Review Lead.

5.2 Confirmation of Review Event Agenda

The Quality Manager, Review Secretary and Panel Chair will review the initial panel member comments and use these to confirm the Agenda for the Review Event, in consultation with the Head of Department and Departmental Review Lead. A virtual pre-meeting of the Review Panel may also be arranged to facilitate this. The final Agenda will be circulated at least one week before the Periodic Review event.

5.3 **Periodic Review Event**

The Review will normally be conducted over 1day. The event will include meetings with senior staff responsible for the area under review; course leaders and other teaching staff; where applicable relevant support staff; and a range of students, including a selection of student representatives. Partner staff may be included as appropriate. Full details of those meeting the Panel will be finalised through the confirmation of the Agenda (please see section 5.2 above). Discussions throughout the Review will be informed by the Department's SED and supporting information.

Students meeting the Panel should represent both undergraduate and postgraduate provision and a range of levels and modes of study. Where distance learning students are unable to attend a meeting at the University panel members may contact them by telephone or a virtual meeting may be arranged. This will be confirmed with the Review Chair and Secretary ahead of the Event.

6. **Review Outcomes**

6.1 Review Panels will highlight good practice identified during the Review and make recommendations to Quality and Enhancement Committee (QEC), which can be defined as essential or desirable:
Good Practice is a process or way of working that makes a particularly positive contribution to academic standards and the quality and/or enhancement of the learning opportunities and should be disseminated across the University[1].
Essential Recommendations are made to address issues that in the Panel's opinion are putting quality/standards at risk or have the potential do so and must therefore be addressed. The Panel will recommend a timeframe in which the recommendation must be met.
Desirable Recommendations are set where the Panel considers action could further enhance the quality of the provision. These should be considered by the Department and addressed as appropriate.

6.2 Where an essential recommendation relates to a particular aspect of a Department's provision this should be specified by the Panel. Where such recommendations are made the Panel should recommend to QEC whether indefinite approval of the courses should continue.

6.3 The Review Panel will report indicative outcomes of the periodic review to the Head of Department and Departmental Review Lead orally at the end of the Event.

6.4 Following the Review, a full report will be produced by the Review Secretary and agreed by the Panel. The Department 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 sent to the relevant Dean of School and presented to QEC.

6.5 The Review Chair will be invited to present the report to QEC. The Head of Department (or nominee) from the Department under review should also be present to contribute to the discussion. The final Review outcomes must be approved by QEC.

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[1] Adapted from QAA definition of Good Practice

6.6   The relevant School Academic Committee should also receive the Review report and monitor the follow-up action required.

7.   **Review Follow-Up**

7.1   An action plan, outlining the action to be taken to respond to the recommendations arising from the review, should be agreed with the Dean of School (or nominee), Panel Chair and Secretary, normally within a month of approval of the final review report and recommendations by QEC. Progress against the agreed Plan should be monitored at each meeting of the School Academic Committee.

An update on progress should also be received by QEC no later than nine months after approval of the original Review Report by the Committee (unless an earlier timeframe for reporting is determined at the time the Report was originally considered).

7.2   Good practice identified at periodic review panels will also be disseminated to the University by AQS in consultation with the Director of Learning and Teaching.