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Academic Review
Guidance for Review Teams

This document aims to provide specific guidance to Academic Review Team members for undertaking their role. It is recommended that all Review Team members familiarise themselves with the Academic Review process and particularly refer to the document titled 'Introduction and Overview'. A 'Useful References and Web Links' document is available to use in conjunction with this guidance.

Purpose of Academic Review

Quality & Standards	**T**o confirm that there are effective processes in place to ensure that academic standards are being maintained and that programmes, and the student learning experience, are of an appropriate quality.
Effectiveness	**A**fter reviewing documentation and meeting with students and staff, the Team will reach a conclusion on the implementation and effectiveness of such processes.
Programme re-approval	**T**he Team will also make a recommendation to the University Committee for Quality and Standards with regard to the re-approval of programmes for ongoing delivery.

Scope of the Review

All locations and modes of study	**A**ggregated by discipline for UK Review; includes all programmes, modes and locations.
	Aggregated by School for Dubai reviews; includes all programmes delivered at the Dubai Campus.
	Experience of all students (undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research).
	Malaysia is subject to a separate bespoke process until all programmes receive full MQA accreditation.

Academic Standards and Programme Quality

QA Processes	**T**he key University-level quality assurance processes include the following: *(see the document titled 'Introduction and Overview')*. ➢ Academic Approval of Courses and Programmes ➢ Annual Monitoring and Review *(including External Examiners)* ➢ Periodic Review **R**eview Teams should familiarise themselves with the University's key quality assurance processes, which are in place for assuring academic standards, and are summarised within the 'Introduction and Overview' document.
Multi-location/ Multi-Mode	**T**he University has a 4-Part Code of Practice for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes, which provides a framework for the assurance of the

academic standards of multi-location, multi-mode programmes. Part 2 of the Code relates to the management and assurance of quality and standards.

Effectiveness of Processes

Review Teams are required to consider the extent to which quality assurance processes are embedded at the discipline level and how effective they are for the assurance of academic standards and the quality of programmes.

Quality of the Student Learning Experience

Review Teams should consider the existence and effectiveness, of processes for ensuring the quality of the student learning experience:

> *For example (but not exclusively):*
> - *personal tutoring*
> - *learning support*
> - *feedback on assessment and progress*
> - *student representative systems (including practices for closing the feedback loop)*

Part 1 of the 4-Part Code of Practice outlines the key principles for ensuring that the student learning experience meets the University's minimum threshold.

Review Documentation

Key Themes

Following consideration of the review documentation, the Team will identify key themes to be discussed during meetings with students and staff. Where possible, initial comments will be collected from the Team prior to the review.

Review Participants

Team

Review Teams comprise 6 members:

- Internal senior academic (chair of meetings with students and staff)
- Other internal academics – 1 for UK; 2 for Dubai
- External specialists – 2 for UK; 1 for Dubai
- Two student

Advisors

Review Advisors will be in attendance:

- Academic Review Manager/Facilitator/Co-ordinator (UK or Dubai)

Further information on specific roles and responsibilities can be found within the document titled 'Review Team: Criteria, Roles and Responsibilities'.

Review Event and Meetings

Reviews follow a structured [schedule](#) of meetings, based on a standard template, customised to suit. Meetings fall into five main areas as outlined below. Less experienced reviewers may find it helpful to refer to the document titled '[Review Meetings: Hints and Tips'](#).

Private Team Meetings

Private time allocated for the Team to agree discussion topics for each of the meetings and to reflect upon the outcomes of previous meetings. The time will also be used to discuss progress towards reaching overall conclusions.

Management Team Meeting

An opportunity to discuss with the Management Team strategic objectives and management of the programmes.

Meetings with Students

An opportunity to explore students' views of their learning experiences. Discussion topics will be agreed by the Team although it is expected that, in order to reach conclusions, the following standard topics must be discussed.

> ➢ Student learning experience
>   - *eg induction, personal tutoring, IT, library, careers, employability, graduate attributes etc*
> ➢ Quality of teaching
>   - *Eg views on teaching, learning materials etc*
> ➢ Assessment and Progress
>   - *eg criteria, feedback on assessment, progress, supervision*
> ➢ Student representation and feedback opportunities
>   - *Including closing the feedback loop*

Other standard topics may be introduced on an annual basis in line with the University's strategic objectives.

An opportunity to discuss topics with staff and seek clarification on points raised during the student meetings. Discussion topics will be agreed by the Team, although it is expected that, in order to reach conclusions, the following topics must be discussed.

Meetings with Staff

> ➢ Assessment policies and practices
>   - *setting, marking, moderating (and particularly across multiple campuses)*
>   - *progress and supervision*
> ➢ Curriculum review and development
>   - *activity across multiple campuses*
>   - *external benchmarks (eg incorporation of External Examiner comments and industrial relevance).*
> ➢ Mechanisms for receiving and addressing student feedback *(including student surveys)*

Other standard topics may be introduced on an annual basis in line with the University's strategic objectives.

Enhancement

Workshop	**T**he Review will include a workshop delivered and facilitated by the School/Discipline, on a topic linked to the School's Learning and Teaching Strategy and Enhancement Plan (LTSEP). The School/Discipline will provide a one page briefing paper in advance.
Outcomes / Implementation	**F**ollowing the workshop, the School/Discipline will develop clear outcomes which will contribute towards the achievement of the LTSEP. Monitoring the implementation of School LTSEPs is the responsibility of the Learning and Teaching Board, which takes place through various activities (eg annual discussion meetings).

Conclusions

Conclusion	**T**he Review Team will reach a conclusion regarding the overall effective management of processes, which are in place to ensure that academic standards and the quality of programmes and the student learning experience, are able to be maintained and enhanced.
	Conclusions should be evidence-based and represent the collective view of the Review Team.
Re-approval of Programmes	**T**he Review Team will make a recommendation to the University Committee for Quality and Standards, with regard to the re-approval and ongoing delivery of programmes.

Recommendations

	Where relevant, the Team may make recommendations, which the School/Discipline must respond to within an action plan, considered and approved by the University's Committee for Quality and Standards. There are three types of recommendations, as follows:
Recommendations for Action	Recommendations for action that is considered absolutely essential to either ensure processes are effective now, or will continue to be so in the future. The overall conclusion of the Review might be conditional upon certain recommendations being met.

> ➢ *Careful consideration must be given to the necessity for, and wording of, 'for action' recommendations, to ensure there are no unnecessary and unintentional negative consequences.*

Recommendations for Consideration	**R**ecommendations that must be considered by the School/Discipline and commented upon in its action plan.
University-Level Recommendations	**R**ecommendations that are outwith the School's control. Appropriate action to address the recommendations will be approved by the University Committee for Quality and Standards.

Writing the Report

Collaborative Effort

The Team will collaboratively write the report. Members will need to take their own notes throughout the review; there are no formal minutes.

Writing Sections

Responsibility for writing sections of the report will be agreed between the Team at the review, with guidance from the Academic Review Manager. The Chair is responsible for editing the final version of the collated report.

Format

The report will follow a basic structure, with headings/sub-headings being added as relevant. The content should provide a brief summary of the Review Team's findings.

Brevity / Clarity

Conclusions and recommendations should be brief and succinct statements.

Brief, contextual information, to support the stated conclusions and recommendations, should be provided under the Review Team's Commentary (*but not in the form of bullet points, ie appropriately structured sentences, suitable for inclusion in a report)..*

> ➢ *A balance of both brevity and clarity, without detailed descriptions of processes.*
> ➢ *Readers of the report should be able to understand why conclusions and recommendations were reached.*

Validate Conclusions

If no recommendations are made with regard to processes that have been identified as standard discussion topics (ie, those which are essential for reaching conclusions), there should always be a brief statement within the Review Team's Commentary section, to support the overall conclusions.

> ➢ *Eg, if assessment policies and practices are viewed as robust and effective, and no recommendations are made, then a brief statement to that regard should be included within the report.*

Timescales

1 week - Members will provide individual commentaries.
2 weeks – Members will receive the combined report for comment.
Timings are approximate.

Post-Review Activity

Report

Submitted to School for the production of an action plan *(within approximately 3 weeks).*

Action Plan

Produced by School; approved by the University Committee for Standards; submitted to Senate and University Executive for information.

One-Year Progress Report

Submitted by School; approved by QSC who confirms completion of process.

Scottish Funding Council.

Outcomes of Academic Reviews are reported annually to the Scottish Funding Council.

Ongoing Monitoring

School continues to monitor progress through the Annual Monitoring and Review process.