

QUALITY FRAMEWORK

QUALITY MANUAL SECTION 5

PERIODIC REVIEW

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QUALITY FRAMEWORK

1 PERIODIC REVIEW - AN OVERVIEW

- 1.1 At Sheffield Hallam University, Departmental Periodic Review is one of the processes through which the University assures itself that the academic quality and standards of its award-bearing provision are maintained. All academic departments' portfolios of award-bearing provision will be subject to an in-depth Periodic Review at least once every six years. Academic courses that are delivered in collaboration with partner organisations may also be included in a department's Periodic Review. Collaborative partner organisations (and the associated provision) are also subject to a separate review process, known as Collaborative Periodic Review (CPR). CPR operates on a separate, three-yearly cycle from departmental Periodic Review and is informed by the University's approach to risk management. Separate procedures for Collaborative Periodic Review are detailed in the relevant section of the Quality Manual.
- 1.2 The six-yearly cycle of Departmental Periodic Review, and the schedule for individual departments' reviews, is agreed by the University Teaching Quality Committee (UTQC).

2 AIM AND PURPOSE OF PERIODIC REVIEW

Quality and Standards of Academic Provision

- to review how departments are managing and assuring the academic quality and standards of their award-bearing provision in accordance with the University's Academic Quality Framework, Academic Awards Framework, Assessment Regulations and other related policies (the department's provision to be scrutinised as part of the Review may include collaborative provision, though not collaborative partnerships as these are subject to separate Collaborative Periodic Review procedures)
- to consider 'indefinite approval' of departments' award-bearing provision, subject to regular Periodic Review at least once every six years
- to review departments' future development plans for their provision
- to contribute to and inform the future review and enhancement of the department's provision
- to identify and commend aspects of good practice
- to agree appropriate remedies to address any issues or deficiencies which may be identified through the Review process

Student Learning Experience

- to review the quality of the learning opportunities provided by departments and the factors, such as resourcing, that impact on it
- to provide departments and subject groups with an opportunity to undertake a critical review of, and enable departmental staff to reflect on and evaluate, their approaches to enhancing the student learning experience
- to consider how feedback from students, employers, professional bodies, subject associations and professional practice is used in the development of the department's portfolio, including individual subject areas

Teaching Quality, Staff Development and Engagement

- to review the academic standing of departments in relation to teaching quality and the arrangements in place to support and enhance it
- to enable an 'exchange of ideas' with external academic and professional peers in relation to teaching in the department and to support staff in their aims to develop their programmes
- to consider the range and nature of scholarly activities of staff and to evidence how staff draw upon these to maintain currency within the curriculum
- to review evidence of staff awareness of, and engagement with, subject and sector pedagogic developments and to provide examples of how such engagements have impacted positively on student learning
- to review departments' engagement with University themes, initiatives and strategic drivers

3 PERIODIC REVIEW - OPERATION AND PROCESS

3.1 Operation of the Periodic Review

Departmental Periodic Reviews are organised and supported by Academic Quality and Standards. Reviews are conducted by a specially convened panel of peer reviewers. The Review Panel will include both external academic representatives and student panel members approved by the Panel Chair. The Reviews are chaired by a senior academic from outside the faculty and department under review.

3.2 Pre-Review Stage: Informal and Preliminary Meetings

Before the formal stages of the Review process begins, an informal meeting between the Head of Department, departmental Quality Lead and the Review Secretary (AQS Officer) is arranged, usually during the academic year prior to the year in which the Review will be held. The meeting will provide an overview and introduction to the process. The aims of Periodic Review and the expected timeline will be discussed in outline and the department will be made aware of the information that will be required for the formal Preliminary Meeting. The initial informal meeting with the Review Secretary provides department representatives with the opportunity to ask questions about the process, proposed timeline and support arrangements, to help the department in the initial stages of preparing for Review. At this point, the department will be asked to identify a departmental contact that will provide co-ordination and a consistent point of liaison between the department and AQS during the lead-up to the Review. The departmental contact (this will usually be a member of staff in addition to the departmental Quality Lead) will liaise on a regular basis with the departmental Quality Lead and the Review Secretary, to ensure deadlines are adhered to and the necessary arrangements are in place to ensure the smooth running of the Review.

3.3 A formal Preliminary Meeting will be arranged by the Review Secretary, to be held with the Head of Department and other key departmental staff approximately six to nine months before the proposed date for the Review. The Preliminary Meeting will be chaired by the designated Chair of the Review

Panel. The preliminary meeting will be used to agree the scope and timeframe for the Review, the constitution of the Review Panel, the documentation to be provided in advance as part of the evidence base for the Review and arrangements for the production of the Self-evaluation Briefing Paper (SEBP) according to agreed deadlines. The Review Secretary will produce a draft schedule for the Review following the Preliminary Meeting.

3.4 Pre-Review Stage: Self-Evaluation Briefing Paper (SEBP)

A number of documents are required in advance of the Periodic Review to be collected together to form the 'evidence base' for the Review. The aim is to use extant documentation and existing information sources (drawn from within the department, at institutional level and from external sources such as PSRBs, where applicable) as much as possible, to inform the Review process. The key document to be produced specifically for the Review itself is a Departmental Self-evaluation Briefing Paper (SEBP). The SEBP is intended to provide a reflective, critical review and analysis of the department's provision and a concise account of the department's approach to the management of quality and standards.

- 3.5 The SEBP should provide the Review Panel with a sufficient overview of the department's approach to its management of quality and standards and its plans for future development to enable the Panel to make informed judgements when undertaking the Review. The SEBP is required for circulation to the Review Panel 12 weeks before the Review event. A template is provided for the production of the SEBP. It is expected that the SEBP will be co-authored by the Head of Department and the relevant departmental Quality Lead, with input from departmental colleagues as appropriate. The Head of Department will be responsible for authorising the final submission of the SEBP to the Review Panel.

3.6 Pre-Review Stage: Collecting the Evidence Base for Review

In addition to the SEBP, extant documentation (including MI, corporate reports and other statistical information) is provided for scrutiny by members of the Review Panel during the weeks leading up to the Review event. Where appropriate, the existing documentation provided will relate to the three years' prior to Review. Statistical reports will be provided from those published on the staff intranet, via The Source (University Business Intelligence Portal). The reports will include corporately-defined departmental and course performance reports created and published using the Tableau reporting tool.

- 3.7 The evidence base will begin to be collected by AQS from the formal Preliminary Meeting stage onwards. As part of supporting the Review process, AQS will collate a standard 'Information Set' about the Department and its portfolio, to provide the background and context for the Review to the Panel. This information will be derived from extant information held centrally by AQS and Registry Services. Some of the evidence base will be derived from documentation produced for the annual business planning and quality annual review cycle, and from standard quality processes such as validation. As evidence/information is collected, it will be stored in an online evidence 'library' for the Review on the Quality Framework SharePoint Site. The evidence library

can be accessed by both the Review Panel and departmental representatives throughout the period leading up to the Review event. Details of the typical contents of the evidence base for Periodic Review are set out below.

3.8 The Evidence Base for Review will include the following information:

Information to be collated by AQS from extant, centrally held sources

Standard Information Set

- Up to date list of current, approved and actively recruiting award-bearing courses available within the Department
- Up to date list of current modules available within the Department
- Samples of definitive course documents including module information
- Information on modifications to existing courses, approved over the past three years
- Current PSRBs and accredited courses list for the Department
- Current Exemptions List for the Department
- Reports on academic appeals and complaints and extenuating circumstances and exceptional extension requests

Annual Business Planning / Quality Framework inc. Annual Review Cycle

- Student Progression and Achievement Statistical Information for previous three years (NB: these are the corporately-defined reports produced by Strategic Planning and Intelligence and published via The Source Business Intelligence Portal, including Departmental and Course Performance Reviews)
- Annual Course Reviews and Departmental Overview Reports and Action Plans (previous three years)
- Samples of Module Reviews and Module Evaluations (previous three years)
- External Examiners Reports and Responses for the previous three years
- Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Body reports and PSRB annual reviews for the past three years (applies to accredited courses only)
- NSS and PTES results
- Recruitment / applicant information
- Recent Validation Reports and responses to conditions of approval (as applicable)
- Departmental Board papers and minutes

Information to be supplied by the Department from extant sources at dept level

Staff and Student Information

- Additional information on departmental staff profile if not covered by SEBP including details of staff (teaching and subject) qualifications and accreditation (e.g. HEA), details of CPD activities undertaken within the department and the department's strategic plan for the development of staff.
- Research Degrees Information (details of current students, supervisors and programmes)
- Samples of staff/student committee/ other student liaison meetings - minutes and examples of student feedback (other than module evaluations) NB: this

may include student feedback specifically commissioned for the Periodic Review (e.g. workshops/focus groups or via Research and Development Interns Programme)

- Student Handbooks e.g. samples of course and module handbooks
- Any additional information that may be identified and requested by AQS or Review Panel members during the period leading up to and / or during the Review itself. Wherever possible this will be extant information generated through routine (quality or other) processes.

- 3.9 Evidence will be collected from the point at which the Preliminary Meeting is held. The evidence base will be available to the Review Panel no later than three months prior to the Review, to coincide with the circulation of the department's Self-Evaluation Briefing Paper. Further evidence will be added as it becomes available throughout the run up to the Review (e.g. most recent NSS results, external examiner reports, etc). The evidence base will be reviewed and checked by the Secretary and departmental contact and Quality Lead prior to the Review. Any items that raise particular quality and/or standards issues or which highlight aspects of good practice will be brought to attention of the Review Panel to inform their reading of the SEBP. However, Panel Members will have access to the full evidence base and may wish to raise other issues identified through scrutiny of the evidence base. The department will be asked to provide samples of student work for the Panel to examine at the Review event. The Student Panel Member does not look at this evidence, as it will include work produced by their peers.

3.10 Review Panel Constitution

A Review Panel will normally comprise the following membership:

- Chair (a senior academic from outside faculty and department under review, e.g. Director of Learning and Teaching, PVC Dean, Deputy or Assistant Dean, Head of Department or similar)
- One member of senior academic staff with a role and responsibilities relevant to quality and standards from **outside** the department under review (e.g. a departmental Quality Lead from another dept within the same faculty or academic with a similar quality-related role in another faculty)
- One member of senior academic staff from outside the dept under review but from within the same faculty or from another faculty (e.g. HoD, principal lecturer, faculty HoLTA, etc)
- One member of senior academic staff from another faculty **or** from a central directorate (e.g. HoLTA from another faculty, representative from L3S, LEAD, STEER, Head of Research Centre, etc)
- Head of Academic Quality and Standards or Deputy Head of Academic Quality and Standards

- One to two external members from an external institution with relevant subject expertise and experience of internal review processes, audit or similar (e.g. an HoD from another institution with a similar department with similar subject areas)
- One or two student members (normally departmental representative from within the department under review)
- Secretary to the Review Panel (AQS Officer)

Typical Review Panel size: 6 members plus Chair and Secretary

3.11 Review Panel Briefing and Guidance

Following the Preliminary Meeting, a detailed briefing session will be held for the Chair and Panel Members, led by the Review Secretary. The session will provide the Panel with an overview of the process, a timeline for the Review and details and further guidance about their specific role on the Panel. The session will also be used to familiarise members with the evidence base and how it is to be used. Nominations for External Review Panel member(s) are made by the Head of Department, subject to meeting agreed criteria and subject to approval by the Review Panel Chair and the Head of Academic Quality and Standards. Once the External Panel Member(s) nomination has been approved (and has accepted the invitation to join the Panel) they will receive detailed guidance about their role in the Review process. The Student Panel Member will receive a specific briefing from the Review Secretary. Support and advice will be available to all members of the Panel, from the Chair and Secretary, throughout the Review process.

3.12 Pre-Review Stage: Panel Briefing Meeting

Panel members will be invited to submit initial written comments to the Chair and Secretary ahead of the Review, to provide an early indication of emerging issues and findings and to raise any specific questions or queries to be addressed as part of the Review. Initial comments will be shared with all Panel Members and departmental representatives. The Review Panel will convene four to six weeks before the Review to discuss the emerging issues and themes, based on their scrutiny of the evidence base and their reading of the SEBP. In view of their initial findings, the Panel will agree a draft structure for the Review event. The Chair will agree specific areas for individual Members to lead on, in discussions with departmental representatives and students at the Review event. At this stage, the programme / schedule of meetings for the Review event will be confirmed by the Panel and circulated to departmental representatives. The department will be asked to confirm attendee details for each of the scheduled meetings at the Review event.

3.13 Pre-Review Stage: Departmental Briefing Meeting

A Briefing Meeting will be held with the Head of Department and other relevant department staff usually between two to three weeks before the Review event. This final pre-Review meeting will provide the department with an indication of the key issues emerging from the Review Panel's reading of the SEBP and scrutiny of the evidence base. The Departmental Briefing Meeting also provides

the opportunity to clarify any issues arising from the documentation or evidence base, to indicate key issues and themes to be followed up during the Review and to finalise the programme / schedule of meetings for the Review event.

3.14 Periodic Review Event

The Periodic Review will normally be conducted over one to two days, depending on the size and scope of the department's portfolio and will follow a standard programme. At the Review event, the Panel will meet with a wide range of departmental representatives drawn from course teams, current students and other key members of the department's academic staff and associated professional services staff. Discussions throughout the Review will be informed by the department's SEBP and the evidence base.

3.15 Outcomes of Periodic Review

The Review Panel will provide detailed feedback on its findings and recommendations at the end of the Review event. Before presenting its conclusions and feedback to departmental representatives, the Panel will hold a private meeting (either at the end of the Review day or during the following morning after the Review day, if more time is required for this stage of the process). At the private meeting, the Panel will discuss its findings and conclusions and agree a set of recommendations. The Panel will also commend features of good practice identified throughout the Review process. As a result of the Review, the Panel may recommend the following outcomes:

That the department's award-bearing provision (or specific areas of provision) should:

- **Continue in Indefinite Approval, subject to regular Periodic Review, with or without conditions and/or any advisory recommendations**
- **Continue for a limited period of approval subject to further review within a specified period, during which time essential actions must be taken to address the concerns of the Review Panel**
- **Be discontinued according to an agreed timescale (this may apply to specific courses, programmes or areas of provision). *NB: any proposed recommendations for discontinuation of provision are subject to prior discussion between the Review Chair, Head of AQS and Chair of University Teaching Quality Committee (UTQC) before final Review outcomes will be confirmed.***

3.16 Reporting the Outcomes of Review

The Panel's recommendations and commendations will be confirmed in writing to the Head of Department within one week of the Review event. A full and detailed report of the Review will be produced by the Review Secretary and submitted to the Department approximately one month after the date of the Review. The department will have the opportunity to comment on any issues of factual accuracy in the report. If no issues are raised, the Chair of the Review Panel will confirm the report and a full copy of the report will be submitted to the relevant departmental board, the relevant Faculty Pillar Board and the University Teaching Quality Committee(UTQC) . The Head of Department will

be invited to attend the UTQC meeting at which the Departmental Review Report and Action Plan is to be presented (the Action Plan may be submitted to a later meeting of UTQC, dependent on the timing of the Review and the schedule of UTQC meetings). The Review Panel's recommendations on the continued approval status of the department's academic provision will be reported to the UTQC.

3.17 Departmental Action Plan and Follow-Up

In all cases, the department will be required to produce a PR Action Plan in response to the Panel's recommendations arising from the Periodic Review. Actions may be identified at course, department, faculty or institutional level. The department should also identify an 'action owner' for all departmental and faculty level actions, in consultation with senior managers, as appropriate. The department should complete and return the Action Plan within six weeks of receiving the full report of the Review.

3.18 Once the department's Action Plan has been received, the Review Chair and Secretary will meet to discuss the Action Plan. If any institutional-level actions have been identified via the Review and/or Action Plan, the Chair, Head or Deputy Head of AQS and Secretary will consider and propose the allocation of suitable 'action owners', subject to confirmation by UTQC. The Chair and Secretary will also agree whether it will be necessary to hold a meeting with senior representatives from the relevant faculty to consider any faculty-level actions that have been identified in the Action Plan. If it is agreed that a faculty meeting is required, the Review Chair, Secretary, Head of Department and the faculty Assistant Dean, Academic Development (ADAD) will meet to discuss the department-level actions and to agree the approach to be taken on faculty-level actions and to identify relevant 'action owners'.

3.19 Following a Periodic Review, the department's Action Plan will be submitted to UTQC (including suggested allocation of 'owners' of any institutional-level actions, for UTQC endorsement). The Action Plan may be considered by UTQC at the same time as the full report of the Periodic Review or at a later meeting, dependent on the timing of the Review. If UTQC agrees that institutional-level actions and 'owners' identified in the Action Plan are appropriate, the Review Secretary will write to the relevant staff to inform them of the outcomes of the Periodic Review and the allocated actions, as agreed by UTQC.

3.20 Periodic Review - Follow-Up Meeting, Monitoring of Action Plans

A follow-up meeting will be held between the relevant Head of Department and the Review Chair and Secretary approximately six months after the Periodic Review to discuss progress on the actions arising from the Review. Following the Review, staff from the Learning, Enhancement and Academic Development (LEAD) Directorate will work with the department to develop specific learning, teaching and assessment initiatives relevant to the department. The department's PR Action Plan will also feed into the following year's Departmental Overview Report, as part of the University's Annual Review Cycle. All Action Plans are monitored by the Departmental Board.

3.21 Periodic Review and Annual Review Cycle

In the academic year when a department undergoes a full Periodic Review, dependent on timing, the Self-Evaluation Briefing Paper (SEBP) may be used as an alternative/replacement for the annual Departmental Overview Report that is produced by the department at the end of January each year, as part of the annual review cycle. The associated annual review and PR action plans will still need to be monitored throughout the year and updated toward the end of the year, to feed into the spring meeting of the Departmental Board, when the outcomes of annual review are considered. Departments undergoing Periodic Review should seek further advice from AQS on this aspect of the Review process if the head of department wishes to use the SEBP to replace the annual Overview Report.

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December 2015 (Approved by Academic Board)	1	AQS	December 2015
February 2018	2	AQS	February 2018

PERIODIC REVIEW

STANDARD DOCUMENTS, FORMS AND TEMPLATES
Self-Evaluation Briefing Document (SEBP) Template
External Review Panel Member - Nomination Form
Review Panel Member Initial Comments Template
Periodic Review Checklist for Courses (Indicators for Indefinite Approval)
Preliminary Meeting Agenda
Standard Programme/Agenda for Periodic Review Event
FURTHER GUIDANCE
Guidance for Panel Members
<i>Guidance for Student Members of Review Panels</i>
Guidance for Departments Undergoing Review
Guidance for Meetings with Students
Guidance for Students attending a Periodic Review Meeting
University PR Schedule
QAA Code of Practice, Section B, B8, Programme Monitoring and Review