



POLICY & PROCEDURE FOR THE QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW OF ACADEMIC PROVISION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
GLOSSARY	1
INTRODUCTION	3
KEY POINTS	3
PROCEDURE	6
TIMINGS FOR QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW	6
DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED TO THE REVIEW PANEL BY THE FACULTY	8
REVIEW PANEL	11
DEPARTMENT PARTICIPANTS	12
STUDENT PARTICIPANTS	12
REVIEW PROGRAMME	12
REVIEW PANEL REPORT	13
QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Review Panel Report Template	Error! Bookmark not defined.

GLOSSARY

Enhancement-Led Institutional Review	Higher Education Institutions are judged on their ability to manage the standards of their academic awards and the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students. These judgements are made by a review team appointed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Scotland (QAA Scotland), which evaluates the effectiveness of the institution's own quality assurance processes.
Faculty	A sub-division of the University, comprising a group of departments. The University of Strathclyde has four faculties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering • Humanities and Social Sciences • Science • Strathclyde Business School
Internal Review Framework	A document detailing the University's approach to reviewing its own provision, including Quinquennial Review, annual faculty reporting, annual programme review, module evaluation, and Thematic Review.
Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)	A University compliance committee that reports into Senate, QAC is responsible for ensuring that the quality processes within the University comply with academic standards.
Quality Enhancement and Assurance Team (QEAT)	The QEAT sits within the Education Enhancement Directorate and is responsible for the operational oversight of the University's activities in relation to the enhancement of the student learning experience and quality assurance mechanisms, for example, internal review, academic regulations, external examiners, academic policies and procedures.
Quinquennial Review of Academic Provision	An internal review of Department undertaken on a rolling five-year basis, with the aim of scrutinising learning and teaching provision at undergraduate and postgraduate level for all modes of study, as well as undertaking a broader holistic review of the Department's activities.
Review Panel Manager	The Faculty Manager (or nominee) who performs a coordinating and advisory role for the Review Panel and produces the Review Panel Report and the <u>Report of Action Taken in Response to Recommendations</u> .

Review Panel	An appointed group of internal and external academic, industry and professional services staff tasked with conducting a thorough and fair analysis of each Department's provision, to confirm that the information provided in the Self-Evaluation Document reflects the experience of students as reported through the review process, that academic standards are being maintained and that the Department's broader strategies are in line with those of the Faculty and the University.
Self-Evaluation Document (SED)	A document produced by the Department that comprises a reflective and critical analysis of learning and teaching and broader Department activities. The SED and supporting information is shared with the Review Panel in advance of the review.
Senate	The academic governing body within the University, responsible for all academic matters including academic standards and quality.
TESTA (Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment)	A methodology and suite of tools designed to help Departments reflect on assessment and feedback approaches and enhance the student experience.

POLICY

INTRODUCTION

1. Quinquennial Review of Academic Provision, (known henceforth as Quinquennial Review), is an essential pillar of the University of Strathclyde's institutional quality assurance and enhancement activities. Quinquennial Review forms part of the University's [Internal Review Framework](#)¹, which reflects the requirements of [Institution-led Review](#) as described by QAA Scotland. In producing this Policy, account has been taken of the [QAA's Advice & Guidance on Monitoring & Evaluation](#) and the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC's) [Guidance to Higher Education on Quality from August 2017-2022](#).
2. This Policy underlines the priority of learning and teaching in undertaking Quinquennial Review, while also considering wider factors relevant to provision. The University therefore aims to take a holistic approach to Quinquennial Review, with the outcome being a Review Report that is a balanced account of strengths, challenges, opportunities and risks, and makes both commendations and recommendations.
3. The SFC and QAA Scotland require that periodic review of provision should take place at the maximum of once every six years. At the University of Strathclyde, Quinquennial Review is implemented on a rolling five-yearly basis, with the Faculty having responsibility for reviewing Departments.
4. Through the process of QAA Scotland's [Enhancement-led Institutional Review \(ELIR\)](#), institutions are judged on their ability to manage the standards of their academic awards and the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students. Evidence from the Quinquennial Reviews of Department, and other internal review processes set out in the University's Internal Review Framework, are an important component in the ELIR process.

KEY POINTS

5. An annual report is submitted to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in September each year. QAA Scotland also receives a copy of this report. Within the report, universities are required to provide details of the Quinquennial Reviews that took place in the preceding academic year, (i.e., for the report submitted to the SFC in September 2021, Quinquennial Reviews undertaken in 2020/21 would be referenced). Copies of the Review Panel Reports and the Department's response to the recommendations, are appended to the annual report. As these reports must be reviewed by QAC before they can be submitted, **it is important that reviews taking place in Semester Two are scheduled early enough for the Review Panel Report to be generated, the Department to provide a response, the documentation to be considered by the Faculty Academic Committee and a submission made to QAC by 1 June.**
6. The Review Panel must dedicate at least 50% of its time to reviewing the student experience in relation to learning and teaching activities (see the [Indicative Review Panel Agenda](#)).

¹ Currently in development

7. Each Quinquennial Review includes scrutiny of all credit-bearing provision at undergraduate and postgraduate level for all modes of study. Any collaborative provision, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and continuing education provision, is also scrutinised by the Quinquennial Review Panel, as is the supervision and experience of postgraduate research students.
8. A primary aim of Quinquennial Review is to understand the student experience at a local level and for the University to be assured, via both self-evaluation by the Department and the outcomes of the Review Panel Report that:
 - a. the student experience is positive;
 - b. the programmes of study offered by the Department are of an appropriate academic standard; and
 - c. the content of programmes offered by the Department is both current and relevant to the wider national and international context.
9. The University expects each Department to be reviewed by the Faculty at least once every five years, considering the two key areas of focus set out in paragraphs 10 and 11 below.
10. At least 50% of the quinquennial review event should be utilised to review all aspects of the Department's learning and teaching activities. This part of the review provides the majority of the content of the Review Panel Report which is provided to QAC. This will include consideration of the following factors:
 - a. The overall student experience and the students' perceptions of the Department;
 - b. The research student experience and community;
 - c. The approach to learning and teaching, including consideration of any strategies;
 - d. The student experience of assessment and feedback and the Department's response to this;
 - e. Methods for obtaining student feedback;
 - f. Levels of student engagement;
 - g. Responsiveness to student feedback, including how students are updated on actions taken in response to their feedback;
 - h. Currency and relevancy of academic provision;
 - i. Programme design and contact hours;
 - j. Access to teaching staff and supervisors;
 - k. Student career aspirations and associated support within the Department;
 - l. Managing student progression at all levels of study;
 - m. Support for undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations/projects;
 - n. Placement opportunities and the management of these;
 - o. Collaborative provision with other HEIs or companies and how these activities are managed;
 - p. The Department's future educational aims and plans.

11. The other part of the review should focus on the broader aspects of the Department's activities. Outcomes emerging from this part of the review which directly relate to learning and teaching should be included in the Review Panel Report submitted to QAC. All other outcomes should be formally reported to the Faculty Management Committee (or equivalent) for discussion and action. This part of the review will include consideration of the following factors:
 - a. **Management and Organisation:** overview of the management and organisation of the Department, including communications and business structure (e.g., committees, management groups) and the leadership provided by that management;
 - b. **Research:** overview of research structure including how postgraduate research students fit within this structure and how are they supported. Detail what research facilities are available to support teaching and learning. Provide information on postgraduate research student progress tracking. Consideration of how postgraduate research students who teach are trained and supported. Details of research collaborations that take place, and how postgraduate research students from collaborating institutions are supported;
 - c. **Knowledge Exchange:** identifying opportunities that are provided to students to engage in entrepreneurship, industry engagement etc. Consider what opportunities are there for students to get involved in Public Engagement initiatives i.e., outreach;
 - d. **Resources:** reflecting on the learning and teaching resources available within the Department and how successfully these meet the needs of students. Consideration of additional resources that would be desirable to improve the student experience.

PROCEDURE

TIMINGS FOR QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW

12. An important element of managing Quinquennial Review is recognising the time scales for the activities that feed into the process. The table below sets out timescales for undertaking aspects of the review. A further [Example Timeline for a Review](#), covering the key activities to an example timeline can be referred to for planning purposes.

Timescale (before the review)	Activity	Responsibility
36 months	Approve the timing of the Review and communicate this to the Faculty	Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)
35 months	Confirm the schedule of review to Department	Faculty Offices
18 months	Contact the Faculty to remind them of the Review in the following academic year and provide updated guidance	Quality Enhancement & Assurance Team (QEAT)
17 months	Liaise with Department and set the approximate deadline date for the submission of the SED and confirm any supporting information the Faculty can provide and what the Department will need to produce	Faculty Office
16 months	Hold an initial meeting to agree work allocation for the SEDs	Department
9 months	Review Panel identified	Department & Faculty
9 months	Approximate Review date set and confirmed to the final QAC meeting of the preceding academic year	Department & Faculty
6 months	Department prepares SED, and the Department and Faculty gather any supporting information	Department & Faculty
At least 3 months	Finalisation of the SED and accompanying information begins	Department & Faculty
8 weeks	Submission of documentation to the Faculty Office	Department
6 weeks	Faculty Office to finish reviewing documentation and any liaison with Department over any additions/amendments required	Faculty
At least 4 weeks	SED and supporting information circulated to Review Panel Members	Faculty

Timescale (before the review)	Activity	Responsibility
2 weeks	Structured preliminary meeting of the Review Panel takes place online or via correspondence, with any further information required from the Department identified by the Review Panel	Faculty
Day of Review	Usually two days long, but potentially less for small Department	Faculty
Day of Review	Post-Review Meeting: Mid-afternoon of final day for Review Panel to consider and record findings	Faculty

Timescales (after the review)	Activity	Responsibility
2 weeks	Review Panel Manager circulates draft report to Review Panel Members, having obtained Convener approval	Review Panel Manager
4 weeks	Review Panel members provide feedback on the draft Review Panel Report	Review Panel Members
6 weeks	Report submitted to Department to check for factual inaccuracies	Review Panel Convener
9 weeks (no later than)	Response from Department confirming any factual inaccuracies and providing a response to the Faculty in the form of completion of the <u>Report of Action Taken in Response to Recommendations</u>	Head of Department
Approximately two weeks ahead of Faculty Academic Committee (FAC) meeting (latest meeting needs to meet prior to 1 June for submission to QEAT)	Report submitted to FAC with updates to responses to recommendations	Head of Department
FAC meeting	FAC scrutinises the final submission from the Department and determines whether any additions/amendments required	FAC
1 June	Report is submitted to QEAT	FAC Convener & Manager

June - August	<p>QEAT and QAC Convenor consider the report and provide feedback to the Faculty on any further information it wishes to receive in advance of the first QAC of the following academic year.</p> <p>The QEAT will also produce an accompanying summary paper for presentation at the first QAC of the academic year.</p>	QEAT and QAC Convenor
September - October	<p>QAC receives the QQR reports from the previous academic year and the follow-on reports from the QQR exercises conducted in the academic year before that,</p> <p>QAC confirms that initial responses from Departments are appropriate and looks forward to receiving the follow-on reports in the next academic year.</p> <p>QAC reviews the follow-on reports from the reviews taking place the academic year before last and confirms whether further information is required or if the review is formally closed.</p>	FAC Convener & QEAT
Within two weeks of the review QAC meeting	Faculty members on QAC inform the Department of the discussions and outcomes of QAC and ensure that Review Panel members are updated where necessary.	QAC & FAC Managers

DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED TO THE REVIEW PANEL BY THE FACULTY

13. The Faculty is responsible for obtaining the relevant documentation from the Department to meet the deadlines set out in paragraph 12.

14. The Department is required to create a Self-Evaluation Document (SED), which should be critically reflective and evaluative in nature and, where possible, utilise data and information to provide context to observations and statements made within the SED. Department are required to use the Self-Evaluation Document Template when preparing the SED.
15. To accompany the SED, the Department and the Faculty will gather existing supporting documentation to provide to the Review Panel. The supporting documentation should be clearly cross-referenced within the SED.
16. The suggested list of supporting documentation below is not exhaustive, and requirements should be agreed by the Convener of the Review Panel and the Head of Department at an early point in the process:
 - a. Any documents the Department has that outline its learning and teaching strategy, for example, Learning and Teaching Improvement Plans;
 - b. External Examiners' reports and Department responses for the last three academic years;
 - c. Programme review reports from the last three academic years, which feed into the Faculty Annual Reporting process;
 - d. Summaries of student feedback gathered by, or available to, the Department, for example NSS, PTES, PRES, and Graduate Outcomes Surveys;
 - e. The most recent Quinquennial Review Panel Report and associated follow up reports;
 - f. The most recent reports from accreditation visits by Professional and Statutory Bodies;
 - g. The Department's Strategy Statement/Plan and any implementation updates;
 - h. A diagram showing the Department management structure (including committees and sub-committees);
 - i. A Management Information Set for the Department, obtained by the Department from SUnBIRD. This is likely to include details of:
 - i. numbers of postgraduate taught and undergraduate students over the past five years, including progression, withdrawal, and completion information;
 - ii. numbers of postgraduate research students, their completion rates and their funding sources;
 - iii. trend data for key performance indicators.
 - j. Minutes of Department Committee/Sub-Committee/Student-Staff Liaison Committee meetings for the past three academic years, including the current academic year;

- k. The University's Strategic Plan and Outcome Agreement;
 - l. Any other material that the Department considers essential in allowing the Review Panel to form its views and recommendations.
17. The documentation provided to the Review Panel should enable them to:
- a. Evaluate the student experience across all demographics of students within the Department;
 - b. Understand the Department's approach for engaging with its students and working them in partnership with regards to programme design, enhancing assessment and feedback etc.;
 - c. Assess the extent of collaboration in both research and learning and teaching at all levels: within the Faculty, the University, the UK, the EU and internationally;
 - d. Assess how the Department's strategy aligns with the Faculty Plan and with the KPIs and targets set out in the University's Strategic Plan;
 - e. Understand the Department's learning and teaching strategy;
 - f. Be assured of the currency and relevancy of the Department's programmes in supporting students in achieving their career aims;
 - g. Assess the extent of staff engagement with internal seminars and workshops with the national Enhancement Themes;
 - h. Understand how the Department has responded to learning and teaching issues raised by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) during accreditation visits and by External Examiners;
 - i. Understand the structure of the Department and how all aspects of its functions are managed;
 - j. Assess, as far as is possible, Department performance in research, learning and teaching and knowledge exchange against that of benchmark Department and institutions identified by the Department;
 - k. Gain an understanding of resource distribution and the strategy the Department has in place for career and succession planning.
 - l. Test the strength and validity of decisions taken by the Department on targets and priorities, including admissions requirements and intake targets, and retention and progression.

REVIEW PANEL

18. The Review Panel has the responsibility to conduct a thorough and fair review of the Department's provision, and to confirm that the information provided in the SED reflects the reality of the student experience.
19. The Review Panel is tasked with producing a full report, based on its findings, using the Review Panel Report Template.
20. The Review Panel will be convened by the Executive Dean of Faculty (or nominee) and will comprise the following members:
 - a. At least two members external to the University, with discipline expertise and including one assessor from outwith Scottish Higher Education or Industry;
 - b. At least one member of academic staff (but not normally more than two) from another faculty;
 - c. Two faculty representatives from outwith the Department under review (one professorial, one non-professorial);
 - d. One member of Professional Services staff from another Faculty or a central service (Administrative and Professional Services Grade 7 or above);
 - e. One student member from another Department within the University;
 - f. Review Panel Manager (typically the relevant Faculty Manager or nominee).
21. Review Panel Members are expected to scrutinise the SED and accompanying information with a critical eye in advance of the review date and to input to the preliminary meeting of the Review Panel. In some instances, supplementary information may be made available to the Review Panel during the Review visit, but every effort should be made to ensure that all primary documentation is circulated in advance.
22. During the review event, Review Panel members will meet with members of the staff and student community, to obtain information from the former and understand the experience of the latter. The Guidelines on Student Participation in Quinquennial Review provides suggested questions for Review Panel meetings with students in relation to learning and teaching.
23. Following the review event, Review Panel members will receive a copy of the draft Report for final comment before this is circulated to the Head of Department. Once the report has been finalised and approved for factual accuracy, it will be circulated to Review Panel members for information.
24. A copy of the Head of Department's initial response to the Review Report, via completion of the Report of Actions Taken in Response to Recommendations will also be circulated to Review Panel members and will be received by Quality Assurance Committee for consideration.

25. Once the Quality Assurance Committee has formally closed the review, usually at the start of the next academic year, the Review Panel Manager will send Review Panel members the final report from the Department and the relevant minutes of any Quality Assurance Committee meetings where the report was discussed.

DEPARTMENT PARTICIPANTS

26. Wherever appropriate, the Head of Department should ensure that Department staff are afforded the opportunity to contribute to the review process, including at the preparatory stages to:
 - a. Raise issues for further discussion;
 - b. Share examples of good practice which they have found to be beneficial; and
 - c. Discuss the operation of the Department in an open and frank manner.
27. Individual comments will not be personally attributed in the final report, although information from specific role holders may be referenced.
28. Meetings with the Review Panel should be viewed as a dialogue between Department participants and members of the Review Panel. The Review Panel will wish to find out as much as possible about learning and teaching activities within the Department and the operation of the Department, and should be viewed as a 'critical friend'.
29. Department participants are encouraged to demonstrate a reflective approach to responding to Review Panel questions, to enable the Review Panel to identify and understand areas of good practice and those areas where the Department is seeking to enhance practices.

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

30. The Department is responsible for sharing with students the Guidance for Students Meeting with the Quinquennial Review Panel in advance of the Review Panel date. The Guidance sets out what to expect on the day and suggestions on how to interact with the Review Panel members.
31. To ensure that an accurate representation of students is achieved, the Department should encourage student participation from a broad group of students with potentially differing experiences:
 - a. Home/EU/International students;
 - b. Part-time/full-time students;
 - c. Undergraduate/postgraduate taught/postgraduate research students;
 - d. Students on placements from partner institutions or study abroad placements;
 - e. CPD participants.

REVIEW PROGRAMME

32. Most Quinquennial Reviews will take place over two days, however for smaller Department it may be that one day suffices. The Department should discuss plans for the review length with the Faculty, depending on the breadth and depth of the learning provision, to ensure the quality of learning and teaching at subject level is thoroughly scrutinised.

33. The agenda (see the Indicative Review Panel Agenda) should be flexible and include opportunities for the Review Panel to meet formally with the Head of the Department, the Senior Management Team and other groups as appropriate, for example:
 - a. A broad section of postgraduate taught/research and undergraduate students;
 - b. Student-Staff Liaison Committee/class/Faculty student representatives.
 - c. Academic staff;
 - d. Research staff;
 - e. The course co-ordinator(s) and teaching support staff;
 - f. Other professional administrative, technical and support staff.
34. Space should be reserved within the programme to allow opportunities for the Review Panel to meet privately to take stock, reflect on discussions and re-direct focus where appropriate.
35. It is recommended that the Review Panel should meet informally with students over coffee or lunch after meeting with them formally. Consideration should be given to the timing of the Review to optimize opportunities for a wide cross-section or representative group of students to either meet with the Review Panel or provide comments remotely.
36. The Department is responsible for inviting members of staff and students to the appropriate sessions.
37. Sufficient time should be allocated for the Review Panel to agree findings, record commendations and recommendations and provide initial feedback to the Department.

REVIEW PANEL REPORT

38. The Review Panel will prepare a report as follows:
 - a. The Review Panel Manager will prepare the draft Review Panel Report, in consultation with the Convenor, using the Review Panel Report Template;
 - b. The Review Panel Report must be evaluative as well as formative and provide a balanced account of strengths, areas for improvement, opportunities and risks, with a focus on commendations and recommendations;
 - c. The draft Review Panel Report will be agreed by all Review Panel members;
 - d. Once agreement on a first draft is reached, the Review Panel Report will be issued to the Head of Department under review for comment on any factual inaccuracies and for an initial response to the recommendations, utilising the Report of Action Taken in Response to Recommendations.
 - e. The Review Panel Report and the Report of Action Taken in Response to Recommendations, will be scrutinised by the Faculty Academic Committee before being submitted to Quality Assurance Committee.
 - f. A summary of the outcomes and actions to follow up will be included in the annual Faculty Academic Report, highlighting any University-level issues or risks

so that these can be taken forward by the Department or Faculty with relevant parts of the University;

- g. Quality Assurance Committee will receive the Review Panel Report and updated Report of Action Taken in Response to Recommendations at the beginning of the next academic year, and determine whether to formally close the review.

39. The University expects that:

- a. The Faculty Manager (or nominee) will take responsibility for initiating any follow up actions required to ensure the report, and completed forms, are provided to the Quality Assurance Committee by the required deadline.
- b. The Department will take responsibility for sharing content and communicating feedback from the Review Panel to staff and students.